



Mapping the luxury research landscape: A bibliometric citation analysis



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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a systematic review of the current state of luxury research by mapping the research landscape to identify key research clusters, publications, and journals that have relevance to the luxury subject across disciplines. Thereby, it contributes to the literature by providing a state-of-the-field review of the broader luxury research field. Using the ISI Web of Knowledge Core collection, this study conducts a document co-citation analysis of 49,139 cited references from 1,315 publications that study luxury. The combination of bibliometric methods and a systematic review allows this study to overcome barriers of traditional literature reviews by integrating a large set of publications across various disciplines and leveraging the insights of the larger scientific community. It identifies ten major research clusters that characterize the different research streams and discusses their intellectual foundations. Moreover, this research develops a conceptual framework that can be a valuable guide for researchers and practitioners.

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1. Introduction

Spanning a wide range of categories from fashion, accessories, and cars to art and luxury experiences, the global luxury market totals > 1.8 trillion US Dollar (Abtan et al., 2014). Research in the luxury field is increasing at a rapid pace. Publications of special journal issues focused on luxury consumption and the emergence of new journals in the field confirm luxury as an established area of study, fostering attention within the research communities as well as prompting new researchers to enter the field. But what is really known about the intellectual foundations of luxury research? While early sociological and economic research (Veblen, 1899) describe a number of phenomena associated with luxury consumption, the vast majority of studies in the business literature has been published since the early 2000s. The emerging research field focuses on the investigation of the luxury phenomenon and its implications for consumer behavior and marketing management (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2008; Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). However, the multidisciplinary scope has resulted in a vast amount of literature, and presents a research challenge—particularly to those new to the field—to achieve an overview of the luxury research landscape and to keep pace with its evolution. Despite this growing body of literature, no study has yet investigated luxury research across disciplines to provide further insights into the intellectual base of this field. While some qualitative overviews of luxury exist, they are limited in scope—they are not interdisciplinary (such as Mason, 1993 study of

the economic perspective of conspicuous consumption), are not up-to-date with recent developments in the research field (Reich, 2005; Valtin, 2005), or lack bibliometric methods (Berghaus, Müller-Stewens, & Reinecke, 2014).

This study addresses these limitations and provides a multidisciplinary, comprehensive, up-to-date, bibliometric overview of the current state of the luxury research field and its intellectual foundations. To broaden the perspective of luxury research beyond the domains of marketing and consumer behavior, this study includes related fields of research across the range of social sciences and humanities, including sociology, anthropology, economics, psychology, and cultural studies. This interdisciplinary approach supports discovery of the various intellectual bases of contemporary luxury research, providing further insights into the multifaceted nature of luxury. Using a combination of bibliometric analysis and a systematic review, this paper sets out to answer the following research questions:

Which research areas and journals dominate the luxury research field?

Which articles are most influential?

What are the dominant intellectual foundations, theories, and research clusters in the field of luxury research?

How has the research landscape evolved over time?

What are current evolving topics and promising areas for future contributions?

This study advances the luxury research domain in multiple ways. First, using a bibliometric citation analysis, the study contributes to a

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definition of the interdisciplinary field of luxury research, and to a better understanding of its current state, by identifying the key publications and their interrelationships. Second, this study uses a cluster analysis to identify the various intellectual perspectives underlying luxury research and enhances the quantitative analysis with a qualitative interpretation. Third, based on these research clusters, this article develops a conceptual framework that integrates the findings and provides guidelines and directions for the emerging luxury research community, to prevent the inefficiency of repetitive research and to bridge disciplines in order to generate new findings.

This paper is organized as follows. Section 2 gives a brief introduction on bibliometric citation analysis to establish the approach and to discuss methodological considerations. Section 3 examines the intellectual base of the luxury research field through a network-analytical model, based on co-citation of references. Section 4 conducts a cluster analysis to identify research fields within the luxury domain and discusses the key contributions and views of each cluster. Section 5 develops a conceptual framework based on the literature review and cluster analysis. Section 6 discusses analysis findings, and concludes by discussing potential areas for further research contributions and practical implications.

2. Literature reviews and bibliometric citation analysis

In an information age that produces an ever-increasing number of publications, acquiring an overview of the relevant research and the interconnections between studies has become both increasingly challenging and valuable. Thus, a review of the current state-of-the-field that integrates previous findings can provide value to the field as it adopts a meta-perspective.

In an interdisciplinary field such as luxury marketing, traditional qualitative literature reviews are limited in the amount of data they handle and are reliant on the author's subjective judgment (Jacoby, 1978). In contrast, a bibliometric citation analysis offers an approach that is able to handle large sets of data for quantitative analyses, and is able to prioritize and cluster existing publications based on the citation behavior of the overall research community (Zupic & Cater, 2015). Bibliometric methods have a long tradition in the study of the intellectual structure of science (Hood & Wilson, 2001), and are also used in the marketing domain (Baumgartner & Pieters, 2003; Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2015; Huber, Kamakura, & Mela, 2014; Yadav, 2010). Because quantitative bibliometric methods rely on the judgment and citation behavior of the broader scientific community, this approach can help researchers avoid potential shortcomings of traditional methods, such as limited scope or an individual researcher's selection bias (Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2015). The meta-analytical and historical views of bibliometric analysis can help to identify the intellectual structure of a research field with its key works and research clusters (Seyedghorban, Matanda, & LaPlaca, 2015). This study complements the quantitative approach by applying a qualitative systematic study of the key publications and clusters, further detailing the substantive contributions to the field (e.g., as proposed by Börner & Scharnhorst, 2009). Based on these findings, this study develops a conceptual model of luxury and the luxury research field.

2.1. Search strategy

Our study uses data from the ISI Web of Knowledge Core collection database. This database has previously been used across a wide range of scientometrics studies, and it provides broad coverage in the social sciences and in the arts and humanities (for example Arik, 2015; Baumgartner, 2010; Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2015; Wang, Zhao, & Wang, 2015). A broad search strategy that maximizes coverage of relevant publications is ideal for this multidisciplinary study of the luxury domain. The sample includes publications that contain the keywords "luxury," "conspicuous consumption," "status consumption," "prestige

brand," or "status brand," and is derived from the fields of anthropology, philosophy, social sciences, history, literature, business and economics, psychology, and sociology, as categorized by the ISI Web of Science (data retrieved Nov. 14, 2015). The retrieval strategy thus extends beyond the term "luxury" to include related terms often used synonymously in academic publications—as, for example, the term "conspicuous consumption" in the field of economics (Mason, 1993; Veblen, 1899). The sample is limited to all available articles in English that comply with the criteria above. This approach generates the broadest sample possible that is still relevant to the research field. As we are primarily interested in recent developments in the field, this analysis focuses on publications since 2000, limiting potential issues arising from unsystematic coverage of earlier years. A timeline analysis of the 1,503 retrieved publications shows that 1,315 (87%) were published after 2000 (see Fig. 1). The number of publications has increased substantially, which is likely to be caused by multiple factors such as the growth of the luxury industry, growing interest from management and academia in luxury research, an increase in publication opportunities due to a larger research community with targeted journals. Our focus on publications within the broader luxury domain from 2000 to 2015 leads to a dataset with 1,315 records from 2,425 authors that were published in 533 journals, with 49,139 cited references and 5,028 retrieved keywords. The publications in the cited references are not limited to the time period from 2000 to 2015, but can take any value for the publication year.

2.2. Method and tools used

To analyze the key publications, research clusters, and development of the luxury research front and intellectual base, this study uses a document co-citation analysis (DCA) of 49,139 valid references from our sample that have been cited by the luxury publications in this sample (Boyack & Klavans, 2010). A research front represents the articles of the field in a given time period—that is the articles retrieved by the Web of Science search (Chen, Dubin, & Kim, 2014). The intellectual base consists of all articles cited by the research front—that is, all cited references (Chen et al., 2014). This study uses Citespace Version 4.0.R3 (Chen, 2006). The software tool is well accepted in the academic literature, freely available for download, relatively easy to use, and constantly updated (Chen et al., 2014; Cobo, López-Herrera, Herrera-Viedma, & Herrera, 2011; Kim & Chen, 2015). In addition to facilitating the analysis of descriptive statistics such as citation count for the individual papers, Citespace facilitates network analytic methods that allow mapping of the interrelationships between scientific publications (Chen, 2006). Within the terminology of network analysis, we will use "node" to refer to individual papers in the network—the references cited by the papers in the sample—and the term "link" (the connection between two nodes) to refer to the co-citation of two papers—two publications that are cited together by another paper, both appearing in the paper's list of cited references (Chen, 2006). The degree of relatedness of the co-cited papers is measured using their cosine-coefficient of co-citations, which measures how often the papers are cited together in relation to their overall citations (Chen, 2012).

To improve the interpretability of the network and to focus on the key publications, we set thresholds to include only papers with at least 5 citations, 5 co-citations, and a co-citation cosine coefficient of >0.15. In order to focus on content contributions, after applying the selection criteria we manually screened the resulting 133 nodes for methodological papers, which led to the exclusion of 15 highly cited methodological contributions from the network analysis. In order to focus on the most important interconnections between papers and to improve the clarity of the resulting network structure, we applied pathfinder pruning to the 1,646 links in the merged network, thereby retaining only the shortest paths between nodes (Chen, 2005, 2006). These simplification steps resulted in a final network with 118 nodes and 136 links.

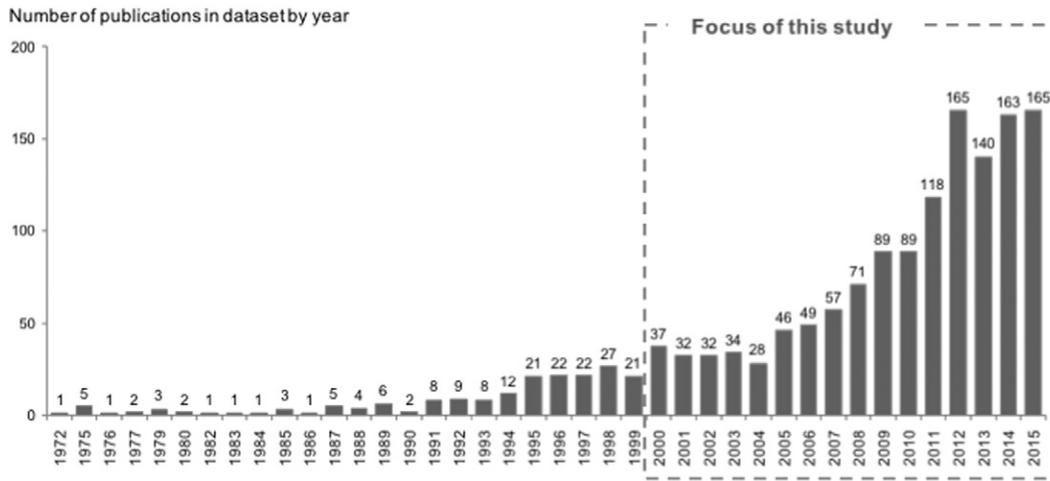


Fig. 1. Number of publications in dataset per year.

2.3. Analysis of the sample

Based on the classification of the ISI Web of Knowledge, the sample includes publications from 89 different research fields. The most active research fields dealing with the broader luxury domain are “Business & Economics” (849 publications), “Business” (457), “Economics” (310), “Social Sciences - other topics” (202), “Psychology” (171), “Management” (160), “Hospitality” (112), “History” (95), “Sociology” (72) and “Social Sciences” (65).

The key academic journals in the sample are Journal of Business Research (41 records), Psychology & Marketing (28), Journal of Consumer Research (27), International Journal of Hospitality Management (23) and Journal of Consumer Psychology (20), Applied Economics (19), European Journal of Marketing (18), Harvard Business Review (18), Journal of Marketing Research (16), and Journal of Personality and Social Psychology (14). Identifying the top journals (excluding books) by the number of citations they received from publications within the sample, the top-ranked journals are Journal of Consumer Research (296 citations), followed by Journal of Marketing Research (286), Journal of Marketing (224), American Economic Review (221), Journal of Personality and Social Psychology (215), Quarterly Journal of Economics (196), Journal of Business Research (193), Psychology & Marketing (182), Journal of Consumer Psychology (181), Journal of the Political Economy (174), Advances in Consumer Research (170), Psychological Bulletin (168), Econometrica (134), European Journal of Marketing (132), and Journal of the Academy of Marketing Sciences (131). This analysis shows that leading marketing, economics and social psychology journals, particularly, are heavily cited by publications in the luxury field, which gives an indication of the importance of these publication outlets as contributors to the intellectual base of luxury research.

3. Analysis of the key publications

This study conducts a content analysis of the 118 key publications in the network in order to identify the research approach and the type of contribution of each publication. We then distinguish between four different types of study (cf. Yadav, 2010). The first type is conceptual studies, including review studies and mathematical models that develop and establish a theory. The second category is qualitative empirical studies, including interviews, focus groups, or ethnographic field studies that contribute to theory development or theory testing. The third type includes empirical studies based on secondary data, survey data with

exploratory-descriptive or confirmatory purposes, as well as scale development studies aimed at delineating and establishing theoretical constructs. The fourth type is experimental studies that test theories and aim to identify causal relationships.

Excluding books from the study, the remaining 106 publications have been primarily quantitative (42 publications that include 26 surveys, 10 scale development papers, and 6 papers analyzing secondary data), followed by experimental (28 papers), conceptual (27 papers), and qualitative empirical papers (9 papers). Looking at the development over time (Fig. 2), we notice both an increase in the number of publications over time and a shift in the contribution type. The number of publications has increased over time, with the most heavily cited contributions found in the period from 2005 to 2009. This is in line with the logic of the bibliometric analysis and the number of total citations as an indicator as, while the number of publications after 2000 has been increasing, it takes time for the contributions to be reflected in the scientific discourse and for the publications to receive a sufficient number of citations. The contributions have shifted from more conceptual and theoretical contributions to explorative-descriptive research and, more recently, to experimental, causal-inferential research. This development hints at a maturing research field and a solid conceptual base (Kuhn, 1962), yet can also be seen as reflective of the overall decline of conceptual articles in the broader marketing field (MacInnis, 2004; Yadav, 2010).

3.1. Analysis of the key publications

This section examines both structural properties and temporal properties of the individual papers. The structural properties help to identify each paper's enduring significance for the research field, while the temporal properties highlight the paper's significance for a specific time interval. The structural properties used in this study are derived from the citation count to identify landmark publications—the publications considered most important by the research community (Chen, 2004). Betweenness centrality is a measure for identifying pivotal publications—the publications that connect research nodes or clusters. A high betweenness centrality can indicate an intellectual turning point in the field (Seyedghorban et al., 2015). The temporal properties are captured by burst values which identify trending articles in a specific time period, and also give indications about emerging research fronts (Chen, 2006). Table 1 provides an overview of the Top-30 publications ranked by their citation frequency, including the structural characteristics of the network analysis. Fig. 3 provides a graphical illustration.

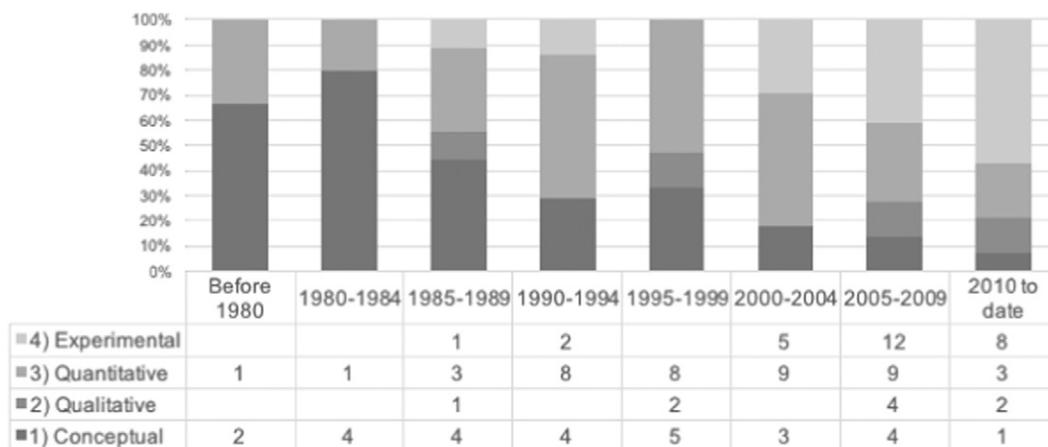


Fig. 2. Development of key publications' contribution types over time.

3.2. Analysis of the network-structural properties

3.2.1. Landmark publications in the luxury domain (high citation count)

Citation frequency is often used as an indicator of the works' importance and adoption in the research field (Garfield, 1979). For this study, citation frequency is measured by the total number of citations for a document found in the 49,139 cited references from the 1,315 publications within the sample. In Citespace, nodes with a high citation frequency are also called landmark nodes, as they provide intellectual landmarks for the research field (Chen, 2004). While it is easier for older works to receive a high total citation count, some of the most cited papers are recent publications, which confirms their high relevance and fast adoption within the scientific community (such papers as Griskevicius et al., 2007 and Han, Nunes, & Drèze, 2010).

Table 1

Top-30 most cited references ranked by citation frequency.

Rank	Reference	Freq.	Centrality	Burst	Cluster
1	Veblen (1899)	122	0.00	–	1
2	Belk (1988)	94	0.96	–	6
3	Bagwell and Bernheim (1996)	76	0.70	9.86	1
4	Bourdieu (1984)	65	0.03	5.27	1
5	Leibenstein (1950)	64	0.19	3.43	2
6	Corneo and Jeanne (1997)	53	0.52	4.85	3
7	Bearden and Etzel (1982)	52	0.00	–	4
8	Griskevicius et al. (2007)	50	0.39	–	9
9	Han et al. (2010)	49	0.00	–	2
10	Wong and Ahuvia (1998)	46	0.52	–	4
11	Vigneron and Johnson (1999)	44	0.10	–	5
12	Frank (1985a, 1985b)	43	0.10	–	3
12	Wiedmann et al. (2009)	43	0.80	–	7
14	Fournier (1998)	40	0.00	–	6
15	Sundie et al. (2011)	38	0.35	3.51	9
15	Eastman, Goldsmith, and Flynn (1999)	38	0.24	–	2
17	O'Cass and McEwen (2004)	37	0.23	–	2
18	Wilcox et al. (2009)	35	0.25	–	8
19	Blomqvist and Carter (1997)	34	0.00	7.55	Other
19	Keller (1993)	34	0.00	4.64	7
21	Newhouse (1977)	33	0.00	5.45	Other
21	Duesenberry (1949)	33	0.03	3.73	3
21	Vigneron and Johnson (1999)	33	0.31	–	7
24	Richins and Dawson (1992)	32	0.00	–	2
25	Zeithaml (1988)	31	0.04	3.24	7
25	Aaker (1997)	31	0.00	–	7
27	Dubois et al. (2005)	30	0.16	–	5
28	Nueno and Quelch (1998)	29	0.04	–	10
29	Charles et al. (2009)	28	0.00	–	2
30	Bearden et al. (1989)	27	0.00	–	4
30	Escalas and Bettman (2005)	27	0.00	–	2
30	Amaldoss and Jain (2005a)	27	0.00	–	2

The most cited study is Veblen's (1899) study on conspicuous consumption (122 citations), in which he claims the emergence of the leisure class that spends their "unproductive" time in conspicuous consumption of goods, and thereby demonstrates their wealth and status. The second most cited paper is Belk's (1988) paper on possessions and the extended self (94 cit.), which proposes that possessions are relevant to the construction of identity, and has consequently spurred high interest, particularly among consumer researchers. The third most cited paper, that of Bagwell and Bernheim (1996), reflects an economic perspective and discusses the prerequisites and consequences of Veblen effects for luxury brands, as well as implications for public policy (76 cit.). From a sociological perspective, Bourdieu's (1984) work on the role of economic, social and cultural capital in the construction of social class has been heavily cited, as it extends the sources of status construction into the social and cultural realms (65 cit.). Leibenstein's (1950) work is the fifth most cited (64 cit.), and extends classic economic theory to integrate social utility. Among the other most cited works are Corneo and Jeanne's (1997) model of conspicuous consumption (53 cit.), Bearden and Etzel's (1982) study of reference groups (52 cit.), the work of Griskevicius et al. (2007) on luxury goods as costly signals (50 cit.), the work of Han et al. (2010, 49 cit.) on status signaling and the taxonomy of luxury consumers, and the paper by Wong and Ahuvia (1998, 46 cit.) on cultural differences between Western and Eastern cultures and their impact on luxury consumption.

3.2.2. Pivotal publications (high betweenness centrality)

A high betweenness centrality in the context of this citation analysis can indicate pivotal publications and intellectual turning points (Chen, 2005, 2006). Betweenness centrality is a graph-analytic metric that measures the number of shortest paths that pass through that node, and thus gives an indication of the probability that the node acts as a gatekeeper between different nodes and clusters (Chen, 2005; Freeman, 1979). In this study, a high betweenness centrality indicates that the paper has been cited together with publications from different research clusters. The publication of Belk (1988) has the highest betweenness centrality, with a centrality score of 0.96, and is thus a pivotal publication for the field. The paper connects various research streams from economics, social psychology, and marketing to the concept of the extended self and the importance of consumer choice for the formation of self-concept. Belk's paper connects research on materialism (Richins, 1994), conspicuous consumption (Bagwell & Bernheim, 1996), reference groups (Escalas & Bettman, 2003), status signaling and compensatory consumption (Rucker & Galinsky, 2008; Sivanathan & Pettit, 2010), identity signaling (Berger & Heath, 2007), and consumption values (Wiedmann, Hennigs, & Siebels, 2009). The 2009 study by Wiedmann et al. has the second highest centrality score (centrality of 0.80). It develops an integrated framework on consumer value, and is

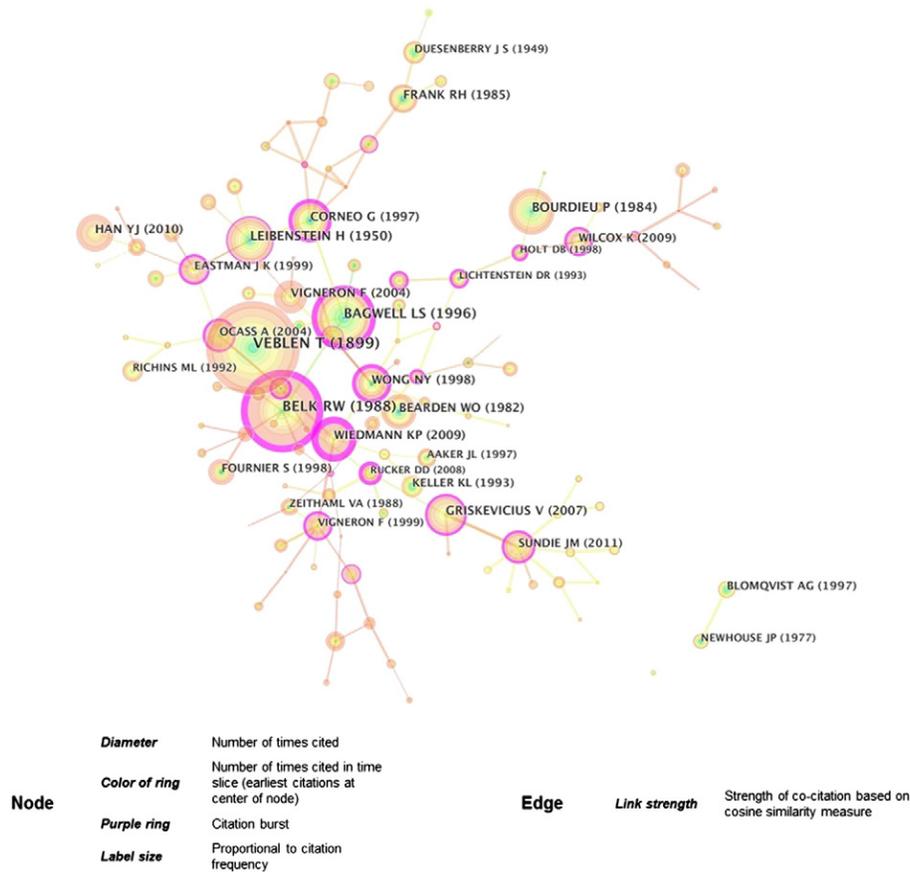


Fig. 3. Illustration of citation network of document co-citation analysis.

often co-cited with publications from a diverse range of clusters that connects the fields of consumption and self-concept (Belk, 1988) with branding (Aaker, 1991), early luxury marketing literature on prestige-seeking (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999), cultural values (Wong & Ahuvia, 1998), and conspicuous consumption (O’Cass & McEwen, 2004). The paper by Bagwell and Bernheim (1996) has the third highest centrality score (centrality of 0.70) and connects economic literature on status signaling (Amaldoss & Jain, 2005a; Ireland, 1994) with early work on hedonic consumption (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982) and on the self-concept (Belk, 1988).

3.2.3. Trending articles (high burst count)

The burst value is a temporal property that indicates high citation values during a specific time period, and thus highlights trend articles for certain time periods (Chen et al., 2014; Kleinberg, 2003). Fig. 4 shows the articles with the strongest citation bursts in chronological order. An external influence in the advancement of various fields comes into effect here. In the early years of luxury research, the research field mainly focused on economic studies modeling conspicuous consumption (Bagwell & Bernheim, 1996, burst strength 9.86; Corneo & Jeanne, 1997, 4.85), general marketing publications and their application to the luxury context, for example Zeithaml’s (1988) means-end model on service quality or Lichtenstein, Ridgway, and Netemeyer’s (1993) work on price perceptions and shopping behavior. As well, Berry’s (1994) historical analysis of the luxury concept has been notable in shaping the domain. In the years from 2000 to 2010, economic publications dominate, with the works of Ireland (1994, 3.87), Duesenberry (1949, 3.73), Leibenstein (1950, 3.43), Frank (1985a, 1985b, 3.92), and Frank (1999, 3.70) among the other publications with high spikes in citations. Between 2005 and 2010 the cultural capital view of Bourdieu (1984, 5.27) and the brand-equity view of Keller

(1993, 4.64) received strong citation bursts with a shift of the field toward the luxury brand and the consumer’s perceptions as central elements of luxury consumption, and toward a broadened view that not only takes economic and social class variables into account in the construction of status, but turns to different ways to symbolize status, such as aesthetic tastes and cultural capital. The most recent five years

Top 21 References with Strongest Citation Bursts

References	Strength	Begin	End	2000 - 2015
Berry (1994)	3.1308	2000	2010	[Bar chart showing citation burst from 2000 to 2010]
Gerdtham et al. (1992)	4.909	2000	2010	[Bar chart showing citation burst from 2000 to 2010]
Bagwell & Bernheim (1996)	9.8637	2000	2009	[Bar chart showing citation burst from 2000 to 2009]
Newhouse (1977)	5.4527	2000	2010	[Bar chart showing citation burst from 2000 to 2010]
Blomqvist & Carter (1997)	7.5505	2000	2009	[Bar chart showing citation burst from 2000 to 2009]
Zeithaml (1988)	3.2414	2000	2008	[Bar chart showing citation burst from 2000 to 2008]
Corneo & Jeanne (1997)	4.8474	2000	2006	[Bar chart showing citation burst from 2000 to 2006]
Lichtenstein et al. (1993)	2.891	2001	2005	[Bar chart showing citation burst from 2001 to 2005]
Ireland (1994)	3.8687	2002	2009	[Bar chart showing citation burst from 2002 to 2009]
Duesenberry (1949)	3.7345	2004	2009	[Bar chart showing citation burst from 2004 to 2009]
Bourdieu (1984)	5.2741	2005	2010	[Bar chart showing citation burst from 2005 to 2010]
Leibenstein (1950)	3.4332	2005	2009	[Bar chart showing citation burst from 2005 to 2009]
Keller (1993)	4.6417	2005	2009	[Bar chart showing citation burst from 2005 to 2009]
Frank (1985)	3.9179	2008	2011	[Bar chart showing citation burst from 2008 to 2011]
Frank (1999)	3.7015	2009	2011	[Bar chart showing citation burst from 2009 to 2011]
Li et al. (2002)	2.9885	2011	2012	[Bar chart showing citation burst from 2011 to 2012]
Roney (2003)	3.1141	2011	2012	[Bar chart showing citation burst from 2011 to 2012]
Buss & Schmidt (1993)	3.0795	2011	2012	[Bar chart showing citation burst from 2011 to 2012]
Li et al. (2002)	3.4921	2011	2012	[Bar chart showing citation burst from 2011 to 2012]
Sundie et al. (2011)	3.5062	2012	2015	[Bar chart showing citation burst from 2012 to 2015]
Berger & Ward (2010)	3.3511	2013	2015	[Bar chart showing citation burst from 2013 to 2015]

Fig. 4. Top 21 references with strongest citation bursts.

have been dominated by high citation rates from publications in the fields of social psychology and consumer research. Much research has examined luxury consumption from an evolutionary perspective—for example, how mate preferences influence consumption choices, which is studied in the papers of Buss and Schmitt (1993, 3.08), Roney (2003, 3.11), Li, Bailey, Kenrick, and Linsenmeier (2002, 3.49), Li and Kenrick (2006, 2.99) and more recently Sundie et al. (2011, 3.51). Another new stream that has recently received attention is the research on inconspicuous consumption (Berger & Ward, 2010, 3.35).

4. Co-citation network and research clusters

To identify related research clusters within the luxury field, this study conducts a cluster analysis based on the co-citation patterns of the papers in the sample. The analysis of the network reveals both structural properties of the network as well as of the clusters. At the global network level, the key measures are density and modularity. Density measures how well connected a network is. The network has a density of 0.0197, which shows that the network is relatively sparse, with few connections among the key publications (Albert & Barabási, 2002; Börner, Sanyal, & Vespignani, 2007). Modularity measures how well the network can be partitioned into clusters. In the clustering procedure, the modularity of the network is maximized using a smart local moving algorithm for community detection to identify clusters within the network of cited references (Waltman & van Eck, 2013). Within the network, the analysis identifies 10 major clusters, as illustrated in Fig. 5 (cluster view). The cluster solution has a modularity of 0.79, which shows that the network has relatively clear partitions (cf. Newman & Girvan, 2004). The silhouette value is a measure for the validity of the obtained cluster solution. All major clusters have a silhouette score > 0.85, indicating the high quality of the obtained cluster solution and revealing that the clusters are fairly homogenous (cf. Rousseeuw, 1987). The mean year of a cluster is the mean year of the

publication dates of the papers within this cluster. Table 2 provides an overview of all clusters and their characteristics. The following section briefly describes the different clusters and provides a qualitative assessment of the cluster content. In order to trace the development of the field within and between clusters, the clusters are presented in chronological order based on the mean year of publication of the cluster members.

The following section discusses the 10 clusters in chronological order, by the mean year of publication of the cited references. For the cited references in the citation network, the description highlights key intellectual contributions to the research field. The ten major clusters focus on the foundations of luxury research (Cluster 1), a signaling view closely related to conspicuous consumption (Cluster 2), an economic view with a strong focus on public policy (Cluster 3), an intercultural research stream that investigates how luxury differs between countries and cultures (Cluster 4), a stream dealing with luxury consumer culture (Cluster 5), the consumer's self-concept and the formation brand relationships (Cluster 6), brand equity (Cluster 7), counterfeiting as an applied topic (Cluster 8), the evolutionary view based on costly signaling theory (Cluster 9), and luxury brand management (Cluster 10).

4.1. Analysis within clusters

Cluster 1 (Foundations), with 9 cluster members and a silhouette score of 0.87, has a mean year of publication of 1978 and is, thus, on average the oldest cluster. It contains a broad range of publications, setting up a theoretical basis for luxury research and outlining the theoretical bases for luxury consumption on various dimensions. The publications have in common that they extend the former perspective on consumer behavior, which focused on functional utility and rational decision making, by stating that consumption is a social phenomenon (Veblen, 1899). Consumers are driven by a variety of non-functional needs

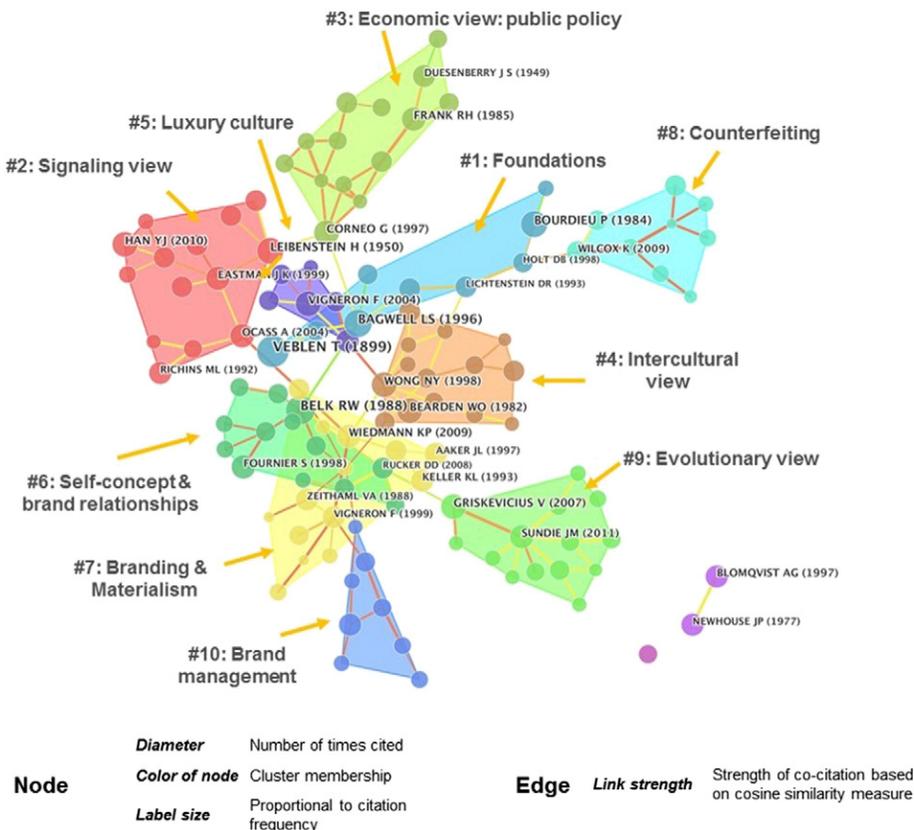


Fig. 5. Cluster view of citation network.

Table 2
Overview of clusters.

Cluster number	Size	Silhouette	Mean year	Label	Description	Papers in cluster and citation count
1	9	0.874	1978	Foundations	Luxury consumption as a social phenomenon	Veblen (1899, 122 citations); Bagwell & Bernheim (1996, 76 cit.); Bourdieu (1984, 65 cit.); Lichtenstein et al. (1993, 25 cit.); Amaldoss & Jain (2005b, 24 cit.); Hirschman & Holbrook (1982, 23 cit.); Ireland (1994, 23 cit.); Holt (1998, 21 cit.); Levy (1959, 12 cit.)
2	14	0.934	1991	Signaling/consumption as social interaction view	Luxury goods as a status signal	Leibenstein (1950, 64 cit.); Han et al., (2010, 49 cit.); Eastman et al. (1999, 38 cit.); O'Cass & McEwen (2004, 37 cit.); Richins & Dawson (1992, 32 cit.); Charles et al. (2009, 28 cit.); Amaldoss & Jain (2005a, 27 cit.); (Escalas & Bettman (2005, 27 cit.); Mason (1981, 25 cit.); Tian & Hunter (2001, 25 cit.); Belk (1985, 18 cit.); Fishbein & Ajzen (1975, 13 cit.); Holbrook & Hirschman (1982, 12 cit.); Belk (1984, 10 cit.)
3	14	0.972	1995	Economic view: public policy	Macro-perspective: income, materialism and welfare	Corneo & Jeanne (1997, 53 cit.); Frank (1985b, 43 cit.); Duesenberry (1949, 33 cit.); Hopkins & Kornienko (2004, 26 cit.); Frank (1985a, 26 cit.); Chao & Schor (1998, 23 cit.); Solnick & Hemenway (1998, 19 cit.); Griskevicius, Tybur, & Van den Bergh (2010, 17 cit.); Easterlin (1995, 17 cit.); Frank (1999, 16 cit.); Alpizar, Carlsson, & Johansson-Stenman (2005, 14 cit.); Dupor & Liu (2003, 13 cit.); Johansson-Stenman, Carlsson, & Daruvala (2002, 10 cit.); Solnick & Hemenway (2005, 9 cit.)
4	14	0.885	1997	Intercultural view	Culture as key determinant of luxury consumption	Bearden & Etzel (1982, 52 cit.); Wong & Ahuvia (1998, 46 cit.); Dubois & Duquesne (1993, 30 cit.); Bearden et al. (1989, 27 cit.); Markus & Kitayama (1991, 21 cit.); Tynan, McKechnie, & Chhuon (2010, 21 cit.); Tsai (2005, 19 cit.); Hofstede (1980, 19 cit.); Kapferer (1998, 14 cit.); Shukla (2010, 12 cit.); Kastanakis & Balabanis (2012, 12 cit.); Commuri (2009, 12 cit.); Dubois & Laurent (1994, 9 cit.); Schwartz (1992, 8 cit.)
5	6	0.961	1999	Luxury culture and meaning	Luxury goods as a carrier of meaning	Vigneron & Johnson (2004, 44 cit.); Dubois et al. (2005, 30 cit.); Berry (1994, 21 cit.); McCracken (1986, 21 cit.); Phau & Prendergast (2000, 21 cit.); Atwal & Williams (2009, 10 cit.)
6	13	0.901	2000	Self-concept and brand relationships	The brand as an identity-source	Belk (1988, 94 cit.); Fournier (1998, 40 cit.); Rucker & Galinsky (2008, 24 cit.); Rucker & Galinsky (2009, 23 cit.); Escalas & Bettman (2003, 23 cit.); Berger & Heath (2007, 21 cit.); Richins (1994, 20 cit.); Braun and Wicklund (1989, 19 cit.); Berger & Ward (2010, 17 cit.); Sivanathan & Pettit (2010, 15 cit.); Sirgy (1982, 15 cit.); Brewer (1991, 13 cit.); Nelissen & Meijers (2011, 12 cit.)
7	14	0.876	2001	Brand equity	The brand as the source of financial value	Wiedmann et al. (2009, 43 cit.); Keller (1993, 34 cit.); Vigneron & Johnson (1999, 33 cit.); Aaker (1997, 31 cit.); Zeithaml (1988, 31 cit.); O'Cass & Frost (2002, 26 cit.); Aaker (1991, 24 cit.); Vickers & Renand (2003, 21 cit.); Truong, Simmons, Mccoll, & Kitchen (2008, 13 cit.); Ajzen (1991, 12 cit.); Husic & Cacic (2009, 10 cit.); Sweeney & Soutar (2001, 9 cit.); Amatulli and Guido (2011, 5 cit.); Hennigs et al. (2012, 5 cit.)
8	9	0.95	2001	Counterfeiting	Legitimacy and authenticity of luxury signals	Wilcox et al. (2009, 35 cit.); Nia & Zaichkowsky (2000, 26 cit.); Grossman & Shapiro (1988, 21 cit.); Bloch, Bush, & Campbell (1993, 15 cit.); Ang, Cheng, Lim, and Tambyah (2001, 13 cit.); Tom, Garibaldi, Zeng, & Pilcher (1998, 13 cit.); Phau and Teah (2009, 11 cit.); Gentry, Putrevu, & Shultz (2006, 7 cit.); Eisend & Schuchert-Guler (2006, 5 cit.)
9	14	0.972	2003	Evolutionary view	Luxury as a costly signal to indicate reproductive value	Griskevicius et al. (2007, 50 cit.); Sundie et al. (2011, 38 cit.); Trivers (1972, 21 cit.); Li et al. (2002, 17 cit.); Saad (2007, 16 cit.); Buss & Schmitt (1993, 16 cit.); Kenrick, Griskevicius, Neuberg, & Schaller (2010, 14 cit.); Griskevicius, Goldstein, Mortensen, Cialdini, & Kenrick (2006, 14 cit.); Durante, Griskevicius, Hill, Perilloux, & Li (2011, 12 cit.); Roney (2003, 11 cit.); Janssens et al. (2011, 10 cit.); Li & Kenrick (2006, 9 cit.); Griskevicius et al. (2009, 9 cit.); Wilson and Daly (2004, 8 cit.)
10	8	0.866	2004	Brand management	Principles to create luxury value	Nueno & Quelch (1998, 29 cit.); Kapferer & Bastien (2009b, 23 cit.); Fionda & Moore (2009, 12 cit.); Silverstein & Fiske (2003, 18 cit.); Berthon, Pitt, Parent, & Berthon (2009, 15 cit.); Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry (1988, 13 cit.); Truong, McColl, & Kitchen (2009, 12 cit.); Schau, Muniz, & Arnould (2009, 10 cit.)
				Other	Health care expenditures	Blomqvist and Carter (1997, 34 cit.); Newhouse (1977; 33 cit.); Gerdtham et al. (1992, 16 cit.)

such as the symbolic meaning of goods (Levy, 1959), the hedonic aspects of consumption—that is, to experience pleasure, emotions through consumption, and use symbolic resources to construct an identity (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). The idea of signaling status through consumption is most prominent and most distinguishing, compared to non-luxury goods and necessities. Because social codes and traditional conceptions of status and identity are not determined by a closed social group, with the transformation from a traditionally structured society to a consumer society, those social codes and conceptions of identity change. They become more variable, and consumption provides a new way of constructing identity and interacting with others through the symbolic codes of consumption (Veblen, 1899). The choice of products and their salient and implicit characteristics also have a symbolic content. The prices of goods, themselves, can have a meaning, as when they signal quality or prestige (Lichtenstein et al., 1993). In the basic argument, the price paid for a good is an indicator for the prestige and economic capital of its owner, and thus is an indication of its social class (Amaldoss & Jain, 2005b). Yet the association of social class goes beyond

economic capital. Particularly, cultural capital and taste can create social class distinctions through the possession and consumption practices of luxury (Bourdieu, 1984). Cultural capital shapes consumption practices through aesthetic preferences, the mode of interpretation, materialistic orientation, tastes, consumer subjectivity, or the use of leisure time, and thus plays an important role in the construction of social class (Holt, 1998). Recognition of the changing nature of consumption and luxury also raises normative questions that trigger discussions about implications for public policy (Bagwell & Bernheim, 1996) and taxation (Ireland, 1994). The contributions in this research cluster are mainly conceptual in nature and come from a variety of different perspectives, that all recognize the inadequacy of previous purely economic models to understand luxury consumption. This study terms cluster 1 “foundations,” as the papers in this cluster bring together the diverse intellectual ideas to build the luxury research field.

Cluster 2 (Social consumption and signaling) has 14 cluster members, a silhouette score of 0.93, and a mean year of publication of 1991. This cluster builds heavily on the ideas that luxury consumption is a

social activity, and luxury goods can act as a signal for associating with another group of consumers (also called the bandwagon effect) or dissociating from others (also called the snob effect; [Leibenstein, 1950](#)). From a social perspective, therefore, both the conformity and the uniqueness needs ([Tian & Hunter, 2001](#)) of an individual can provide explanations for conspicuous consumption, which is seen mainly as externally motivated and with goods overtly displayed ([Amaldoss & Jain, 2005a](#)), and status consumption, which can include subtler ways of gaining prestige ([O’Cass & McEwen, 2004](#)). The reference group itself is a source of brand meaning that consumers can try to affiliate with by conforming to their consumption choices ([Escalas & Bettman, 2005](#)). Based on their need for status and wealth, luxury consumers can be classified into four types that show the social dynamics behind their consumption motivations and behavior: The Patricians, who convey subtle signals of group membership to each other; the Parvenus, who use loud signals to dissociate themselves from groups at lower wealth levels; the Poseurs, who mimic the loud signals of the parvenus in order to symbolically associate themselves with their aspired target community; and the Proletarians, who do not engage in signaling ([Han et al., 2010](#)). How and to what extent luxury goods can act as a status signal depends on the society ([Charles, Hurst, & Roussanov, 2009](#); [Mason, 1981](#)) and the cultural environment ([Belk, 1984, 1985](#))—the degree to which materialism plays a role, for instance ([Richins & Dawson, 1992](#)). Social consumption motives can be understood both from an information processing view ([Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975](#)) or from an experiential perspective ([Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982](#)). Research in the social consumption and signaling cluster draws heavily on the concepts of status consumption, self-concept, and signaling theory. It contributes to subsequent research, both through a better understanding of the theoretical processes behind social signaling, and of personal orientation to materialism or the need for uniqueness, as exemplified by the high number of scale development articles in this cluster.

Cluster 3 (Economic view: public policy) has 14 cluster members, a silhouette score of 0.97, and a mean year of publication of 1995. The cluster members come mainly from the economic perspective and have a strong public policy focus. The consumption for status motive is also core to the research in this cluster ([Duesenberry, 1949](#); [Frank, 1985a](#)), yet most publications are concerned with the ways in which this status consumption affects society at a macro level, as in the example of social welfare and happiness. A key idea is that relative income, not absolute income, is key to happiness and well-being, as social consumption choices are interdependent ([Duesenberry, 1949](#)). A key term used by this research cluster of research is that of positional goods—that is, goods that decrease in utility as they become more widely available ([Frank, 1985b](#); [Solnick & Hemenway, 1998](#)), because availability alters the signaling value ([Corneo & Jeanne, 1997](#)). The positional character and the consumption motivations are also determined by the product category ([Alpizar, Carlsson, & Johansson-Stenman, 2005](#)). While visible goods are particularly suited for status consumption ([Chao & Schor, 1998](#)), other products can also act as status signals as long as the signal is recognized ([Griskevicius, Tybur, & Van den Bergh, 2010](#)). The importance of luxury consumption for public policy is underlined by the observation of many authors that the “positional” aspect of goods and the consumers desire to “keep up with the Joneses”, which can create an upward spiral that forces individuals to spend more and more resources on consumption in order for individuals to maintain their social position in the status game ([Hopkins & Kornienko, 2004](#)). From a public policy view of consumption, this cluster examines how consumption, material possessions, and income affect happiness ([Easterlin, 1995](#); [Solnick & Hemenway, 1998](#)) and social welfare ([Dupor & Liu, 2003](#); [Johansson-Stenman, Carlsson, & Daruvala, 2002](#)), and discusses potential implications for public policy ([Frank, 1999](#)). The research in this cluster is based mainly on economic theories and measures, such as the effects of relative income on well-being—conceptual studies that develop mathematical economic methods or use secondary data for econometric analyses.

Cluster 4 (Inter-cultural view) has 14 cluster members, a silhouette score of 0.89, and a mean year of publication of 1997. The main literature in this cluster examines how culture influences luxury consumption through different norms, reference groups and self-concepts, and specifically addresses the influence of different cultures. Across markets, income and cultural affiliation seem to be positively related to luxury consumption ([Dubois & Duquesne, 1993](#)). However, this cluster recognizes the complexity of the luxury concept and the various meanings that luxury can have, depending on the cultural and social environment ([Dubois & Laurent, 1994](#)). Different cultures have varied cultural values and norms ([Hofstede, 1980](#)) that influence individual behavior ([Schwartz, 1992](#)). An example of this influence is susceptibility to interpersonal influences ([Bearden, Netemeyer, & Teel, 1989](#)) such as reference groups ([Bearden & Etzel, 1982](#)) or self-concepts ([Markus & Kitayama, 1991](#)). Thus, while some characteristics of status consumption such as the brand are stable across cultures, their impact differs across countries ([Shukla, 2010](#)). Particularly, the concept of an interdependent Asian self-concept compared to an independent Western self-concept is investigated as a key variable for understanding the extent to which personal and interpersonal motives such as conformity and uniqueness play a role in different markets ([Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012](#); [Tsai, 2005](#); [Wong & Ahuvia, 1998](#)). The luxury brand is an important carrier of meaning ([Kapferer, 1998](#)) that can be appropriated to construct the self-concept in either a genuine or non-genuine way (“non-genuine” referring to the use of counterfeit goods, [Commuri, 2009](#)). Understanding how these cultural differences influence consumer behavior is specifically important because the perceived value of luxury goods is co-created by the consumer ([Tynan, McKechnie, & Chhuon, 2010](#)). A social psychology view constitutes a strong basis for research in this cluster, and the method applied is largely empirical research that explores and tests the theoretical propositions in various cultural contexts.

Cluster 5 (Luxury culture) has 6 cluster members, a silhouette score of 0.96, and a mean year of publication of 1999. This cluster is related to the intercultural cluster through its focus on culture, yet from a theoretical position it is more closely associated with consumer culture theory, drawing on philosophical, historical, and anthropological concepts. The concept of luxury has been a source of public discourse since the era of ancient Greece, yet it has been transformed through the emergence of a consumer society in which status is no longer only ascribed, but can also be achieved and signaled through luxury consumption ([Berry, 1994](#)). Consumption is seen as a cultural activity in which consumption objects have become bearers of cultural meaning. McCracken’s model of meaning movement proposes that meaning moves from a culturally constituted world to consumer goods through the fashion and advertising systems, and ultimately moves to the individual consumer through rituals of possession, exchange, grooming, or divestment ([McCracken, 1986](#)). The conditions of postmodernity, particularly hyper-reality and the concern for personal image, have led to an increased focus on brands as carriers of meaning, and real or imagined experience as a mode of consumption ([Atwal & Williams, 2009](#)). Meanings carried by consumption codes create cultural contexts that, in turn, influence consumption. Other research in this cluster is applied research, focusing on identification of cultural codes and understanding their generalizability across contexts ([Dubois, Czellar, & Laurent, 2005](#)). Western consumers, for example, consider rarity to be a fundamental code of luxury, but this is not necessarily true for Eastern consumers ([Phau & Prendergast, 2000](#)). This cluster also includes the study of [Vigneron and Johnson \(2004\)](#) that identifies different luxury dimensions and measures the luxuriousness of brands based on their potential to fulfill needs for conspicuousness, uniqueness, quality (non-personal), hedonism, and extended self (personal).

Cluster 6 (Self-concept and brand relationships) has 13 cluster members, a silhouette score of 0.91, and a mean year of publication of 2000. The main theme of the cluster is the investigation of how possessions and brands create meaning and are used to construct personal

identity. Material possessions can become part of an extended self-concept, and thereby can influence identity construction (Belk, 1988). The cluster thus builds on materialism (Richins, 1994), how consumers form relationships with brands (Fournier, 1998) and how the self-concept influences consumption choices (Sirgy, 1982). This research cluster proposes self-protection and self-enhancement as primary motivations for luxury consumption. In the case of compensatory consumption, when consumers use luxury goods as a means to restore feelings of power, luxury goods are serving as protection for the self-concept (Rucker & Galinsky, 2008, 2009; Sivanathan & Pettit, 2010). In a similar way, luxury goods can also serve to construct and communicate a desired social identity (Brewer, 1991). In areas that are relevant to identity, consumers are more likely to diverge from others to signal the desired identity (Berger & Heath, 2007). Using luxury goods as a signal can even lead to social benefits if the receiver understands the signal (Nelissen & Meijers, 2011). Recent research has also challenged the view that the signal needs to be conspicuous, which has been a major focus of previous studies before (see Cluster 2). If the receiver has the necessary knowledge and ability to for decoding, the signal can be subtle—a condition referred to as “inconspicuous consumption” (Berger & Ward, 2010). The papers in this cluster are largely experimental studies testing the various conditions and mechanisms under which these social psychological effects take place. While the foundational stem dates from the 1980s and 1990s, this cluster has recently garnered renewed attention, particularly for studies on compensatory and inconspicuous consumption. This cluster is thus related to Cluster 2. Though material possessions can serve as signals to others, this cluster focuses primarily on perceived meaning from the consumer's individual perspective, rather than on the socio-psychological processes of interaction with others.

Cluster 7 (Brand equity) has 14 cluster members, a silhouette score of 0.88, and a mean year of publication of 2001. This cluster frames the brand as a central element of luxury, and provides a conceptual foundation for understanding customer-brand equity and its dimensions. Customer-based brand equity stems from brand awareness and strong, unique, and favorable brand associations (Keller, 1993). Non-product-related brand associations, such as the symbolic content, the brand personality, feelings, the status and conspicuousness or the congruence with the consumer's self-image, play a particularly important role for status brands (Aaker, 1997; O'Cass & Frost, 2002; Truong, Simmons, McColl, & Kitchen, 2008). Related studies have proposed several concepts for characterizing luxury brands. Vigneron and Johnson (1999) suggest that luxury brands differ from non-luxury brands by having greater perceived conspicuous value, uniqueness value, social value, hedonic value, and quality value. Luxury brands can be understood as having mainly functional, experiential, and symbolic value dimensions (Vickers & Renand, 2003), quality, emotional, price, social (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001) or alternatively financial, functional, individual, and social value dimensions for the consumer (Wiedmann et al., 2009). The conceptualization of value dimensions by Wiedmann et al. (2009) has also been shown to be stable across countries (Hennigs et al., 2012). This cluster has a strong managerial orientation: The brand is an asset that translates into the consumer's greater willingness to pay, and the company's financial value generation (Aaker, 1991). Thus, research in this cluster also explores the factors that determine luxury consumption (Husic & Cacic, 2009) and how the consumer perception is linked to behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Zeithaml, 1988). The research in this cluster is often conceptual or takes the form of empirical surveys, and has a strong consumer behavior orientation. The cluster is linked to a variety of clusters, most prominently Cluster 6 to uncover the motivational underpinnings and Cluster 10 to derive managerial implications.

Cluster 8 (Counterfeiting) has 12 cluster members, a silhouette score of 0.95, and a mean year of publication of 2001. This cluster studies a specific practical phenomenon of luxury brands—consumer attitudes, preferences, and purchase behavior regarding counterfeit luxury brand products (Eisend & Schuchert-Guler, 2006). Many consumers are

willing to pay higher prices for counterfeits of prestige brands than for authentic generic brands (Grossman & Shapiro, 1988). Consumers often buy counterfeits willingly and knowingly, and may be motivated by a lack of financial resources or need to increase confidence through the appearance of owning luxury brands (Bloch, Bush, & Campbell, 1993). Conversely, high perceived risk and moral concerns can act as deterrents (Gentry, Putrevu, & Shultz, 2006). The consumption of counterfeits is greater for less functional products such as fashion (Tom, Garibaldi, Zeng, & Pilcher, 1998), and when the consumption is socially motivated (Wilcox, Kim, & Sen, 2009). Sometimes even consumers who buy genuine luxury brands will engage in counterfeit consumption (Nia & Zaichkowsky, 2000). Due to the strong application focus of this cluster, the studies are mainly empirical surveys. The research can be closely linked to the theoretical bases of Cluster 2 and Cluster 6, dealing with social signaling and the consumer's self-concept, respectively.

Cluster 9 (Evolutionary view) has 14 cluster members, a silhouette score of 0.97, and a mean year of publication of 2003. Evolutionary theory proposes that beyond immediate physiological needs and self-protection, the key motivations for humans to act are survival and reproduction (Kenrick, Griskevicius, Neuberg, & Schaller, 2010; Trivers, 1972). This thinking has more recently been applied to consumer behavior, and has been investigated as a fundamental motivation for consumption (Saad, 2007). The core idea of the publications in this cluster is that short-term and long-term mating goals can influence consumption choices (Buss & Schmitt, 1993). The research in this cluster uses “costly signaling theory” as one of their key theories. The theory, originally dealing with reproductive fitness, proposes that mate quality cannot be observed directly. Yet someone who possesses these qualities can use credible signals in order to communicate them. In order for the signal to be credible, only someone who possesses the underlying characteristic should be able to afford the signal due to their high social or economic cost (Griskevicius et al., 2007; Li et al., 2002). Conspicuous goods can act as such costly signals in a mating context, as they increase intersexual attraction, and they can also spur intrasexual competition. It has been shown that mating goals can lead to a heightened perceptual readiness for status products (Janssens et al., 2011). The signaling mechanisms largely happen subconsciously (Roney, 2003), and differ both by mating goal and sex (Durante, Griskevicius, Hill, Perilloux, & Li, 2011; Griskevicius, Goldstein, Mortensen, Cialdini, & Kenrick, 2006; Griskevicius et al., 2009; M. Wilson & Daly, 2004). Status goods have been found to be particularly relevant for short-term mating goals (Kenrick et al., 2010; Li & Kenrick, 2006; Sundie et al., 2011). The research in this cluster is strongly influenced by evolutionary theories from the natural sciences, and applies theories of mating behavior to the context of luxury consumption, mainly in experimental studies.

Cluster 10 (Luxury brand management) has 8 cluster members, a silhouette score of 0.87, and a mean year of publication of 2004. The cluster has a strong managerial focus and combines publications in the field of luxury marketing and brand management to identify management principles of luxury brands. In order to build and maintain their legitimacy, luxury brands need to follow different management principles than non-luxury brands—for example, in their management of customers, products, services, communication or distribution, and may even invert the managerial principles of non-luxury brands (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009b; Nueno & Quelch, 1998). For example, a key value of luxury brands is exclusivity, which presents challenges to strategy and management, as growth of the brand needs to be managed differently than non-luxury brands (Fionda & Moore, 2009; Kapferer & Bastien, 2009b). One way for luxury brands to grow is to extend the brand to lower price points for example through line extensions (Silverstein & Fiske, 2003) or to a masstige concept (Truong, McColl, & Kitchen, 2009). However, (Berthon, Pitt, Parent, & Berthon, 2009) propose that not all luxury brands are the same, but that they can be segmented along two dimensions: their ontological mode (whether they are enduring or transient, such as experiences) and their aesthetic mode (whether they appear on the surface as do highly conspicuous brands,

or whether they require the deep knowledge of an expert or connoisseur). The cluster is linked to the brand equity research in Cluster 7, but deals more specifically with the managerial challenges and specificities of luxury brands. The papers in this cluster have often been co-cited with publications on brand community (Schau, Muñiz, & Arnould, 2009) and service quality (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988), showing their link to managerial and consumer research literature. This cluster is a recent cluster, as indicated by the recent publication dates and the relatively high share of conceptual contributions.

4.2. Analysis between clusters and development over time

While most research streams have been developing in parallel, and nearly all co-citation clusters include works that were published long before 2000, some temporal shifts within the research field can be identified (see Fig. 6). The field evolved from early sociological works that provide the theoretical underpinnings of luxury consumption as a social activity to a focus on economic studies, to cultural research, consumer psychology, and applied managerial research focused on company decision making. The foundational works of Veblen (1899), with his first observation of conspicuous consumption, and later Bourdieu (1984), with his cultural capital account of status construction, have provided the theoretical foundations for many works in the luxury research area (Cluster 1). The research in the early clusters was more strongly focused on how status is constructed and signaled (Cluster 2), and on the implications of status consumption for social welfare (Cluster 3). The research front then evolved to recognize differences not only between social classes, but also between different cultures (Cluster 4). This has led to a view of consumption as a cultural activity, and particularly luxury goods as a source of cultural meaning (Cluster 5). The fields of cultural studies and psychology have come together to study how the cultural environment influences self-concept and, consequently, how culture affects consumption behavior and the formation of relationships to possessions and brands (Cluster 6). The brand has emerged as a central symbol of luxury and is seen as a key asset that creates brand equity and financial value for the company (Cluster 7). This brand focus has also spurred research in the field of counterfeiting, with the motivations and consequences of legitimate and illegitimate brand usage (Cluster 8). More recently, the status signaling perspective (Cluster 2) has been

complemented by a “costly signaling” perspective based on evolutionary theory (Cluster 9). Finally, management-oriented publications have emerged, presenting key findings and best practices for managers in the luxury industry (Cluster 10).

A comparison of the field's evolution with other areas, such as the evolution of the marketing field in general, reveals several parallels. Marketing as a field has moved from its fundamentals to an applied economic view (see #3) to a managerial view (#7, #8, #10) to a quantitative science (#7) to a decision science to an integrative science that brings in insights from related research fields (#5, #9) (Kumar, 2015). The evolution of the luxury research field demonstrates a much stronger focus on the consumer and cultural aspects (#2, #6, #4, #5). Both recently and currently, the marketing field has further evolved along the resource-conscious view, the investment approach, and very recently the emerging approach of a new media age, where marketing is an integral part of the organization that manages a wide variety of stakeholders to better understand consumer phenomena such as customer engagement and social media in order to continuously improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the marketing activities (Kumar, 2015).

5. Development of an integrative framework

In order to add further depth and breadth to the findings of the quantitative and qualitative literature review on the luxury field, we develop a conceptual framework of the dimensions and different levels of luxury. This framework shows the different theoretical perspectives and entities as well as their dominant underlying conception of luxury (luxury definition). The previous section shows the clusters of co-cited papers which are based on the actual citing behavior within the research field and are shaped both by intellectual linkages and the social nature of science and research (Merton, 1957). Thus, there are strong interconnections between some clusters that the framework below illustrates conceptually.

5.1. Conceptual model

The conceptual model developed in this chapter consists of three levels (macro, meso and micro) that comprise different perspectives, that is the philosophical, the historical, cultural, social, and economic

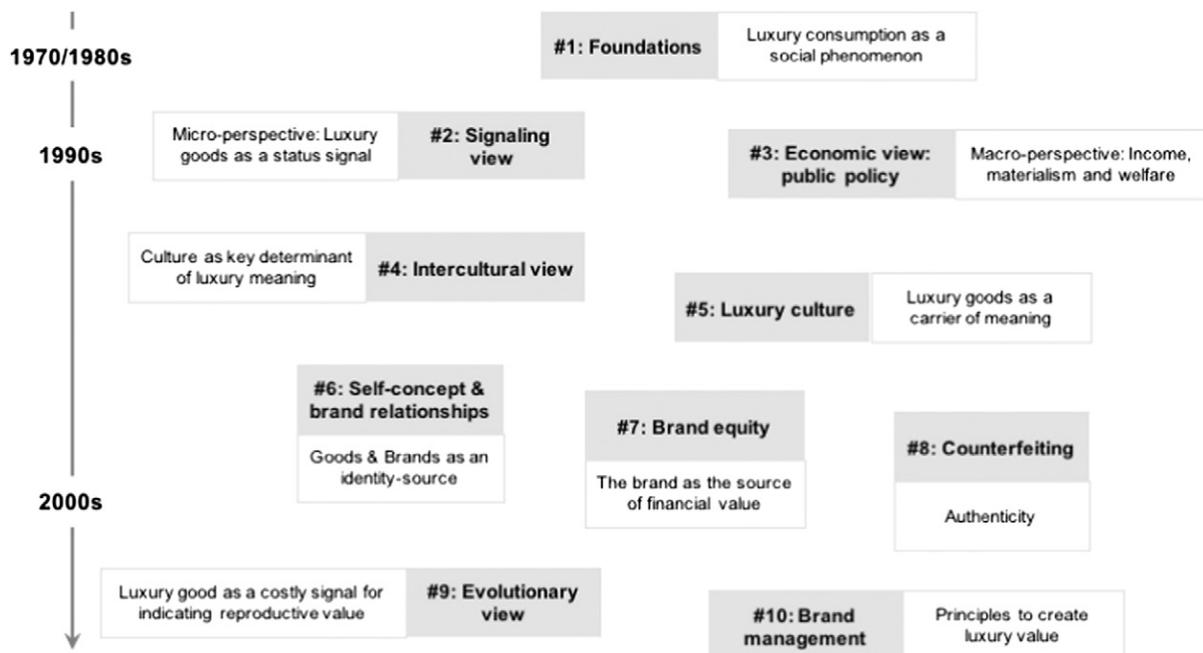


Fig. 6. Timeline of cluster evolution.

perspectives as well as the luxury consumer (individual), the luxury producer (managerial) and the luxury realization (material) perspectives.

The **macro-level** includes philosophical perspective of luxury which is shaped by its *historical* and *cultural context*.

From a *philosophical perspective*, the fundamental characteristic across all studies and perspectives on luxury is that luxury is the “extraordinary” (Berry, 1994; Grugel-Pannier, 1996; Heine, 2012). Thus the definition is relative and depends on the conception of ordinary within its historical-cultural (macro), socio-economic (meso), and individual (micro) context (cf. Heine, 2012).

While the *historical context* of luxury has evolved over time, luxury has always spurred discussions about the role of luxury for individuals and society (for an overview see Berry, 1994). Often these discussions have an implicit normative view, in which many classical discussions (such as Plato and Aristoteles or Seneca and Cicero) morally condemn luxury as something unnecessary and wasteful (Berry, 1994). Thus discussions of luxury were strongly centered around morality and negative connotations of the “extraordinary” as exceeding social norms. With the transition to modernity and the emergence of a market society in the 17th century, the debate shifted from a moral (mainly criticizing the excessive consumption and thus highlighting a quantitative understanding of luxury) to an economic level, highlighting consumption as a democratic instrument of choice (e.g., Adam Smith) the positive economic consequences of trade for society (cf. Berry, 1994; Valtin, 2005). In line with this change in perspective was an increasing focus on the qualitative material aspects of luxury and its refinement (e.g., David Hume, see Berry, 1994). With the emergence of a consumer society, the debate shifted to the relation between consumption and production of luxury and the marketplace as a mediator (for example with the emergence of department stores and the industrial production of goods, cf. Kroen, 2004; Slater, 1999). Some of the foundational works in cluster #1 such as the key work of Veblen (1899) explicitly deal with these phenomena. The other research in cluster 1 also builds on the strong link between luxury, culture, economy and society in its historical context and thus builds the conceptual foundations for many of the other research clusters. From a historical perspective, the most recent shift has been the emergence of a global luxury consumer group and the paralleling institutionalization of the luxury industry with the emergence of large luxury corporations and conglomerates such as LVMH, Kering or Richemont (Som & Blanckaert, 2015). During all these historical developments, the *cultural context* and *cultural changes* have played an important role, which highlights the importance that the context plays in the construction of luxury. Today, in a consumer culture, the boundaries between culture and commerce are vanishing (cf. Lury, 2011). Culture is consumed and consumption has become a cultural activity. Luxury draws on both, culture and consumption, as particularly culture is an integral part of luxury brands. Luxury goods are thus dependent on and reflective of cultural values (see cluster #5). From a cultural perspective, luxury has been a place for collective desire and luxury goods its material realization (Belk, Ger, & Askegaard, 2003; McCracken, 1990). Moreover, producers of luxury build on cultural codes and myths to endow their brands and products with symbolic meaning and to set them apart from the profane (Belk, Wallendorf, & Sherry, 1989). In this process, the dream value of luxury brands is created, which is an important part in the seduction of luxury consumers (Dubois & Paternault, 1995; Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2016). Research in this perspective is centered around the link between culture, consumption and luxury (Cluster #5, which also includes Berry’s historical work) and how differences in cultural values influence the construction of desire, the self-concept and consumption choices.

The **meso-level** includes the social and economic environment of luxury. One fundamental constant on the *social perspective* is that luxury consumption is shaped by its social environment and particularly its construction and signaling of status through consumption (cf. Kapferer & Bastien, 2009a). The emergence of a consumer society

challenged the view that social status is externally determined and inherited (with luxury objects as material reflections) to a view that status is socially constructed and that luxury goods provide an appropriate medium to construct and signal status (cf. Kapferer & Bastien, 2009a). Thus the idea of signaling status through consumption has gained popularity in the research field (Cluster #2). This also traces back to many of the fundamental works in cluster #1 such as Bourdieu’s (1984) forms of economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital in the construction of status. More recently evolutionary psychology has provided a new theoretical explanation for the motivation of this social status-seeking behavior and thus can also be conceptually related to the social-interactionist perspective on luxury (Cluster #9). The economic conditions also shape the concept of luxury and highlight, that to remain extraordinary, the concept of luxury must continuously evolve. The *economic perspective* predominantly focuses on the high price of luxury goods as an extraordinary characteristic. This high price is seen as having a signal value to signal social status and illustrate status-seeking behavior within a rational expectations framework (Cluster #3). Moreover, discussions in the economic perspective link back to socially-normative discussions such as the implication on welfare and consequently public policy decisions.

The **micro-level** includes the luxury consumer and the luxury producer. The *luxury consumer* perspective highlights the subjectivity and multidimensionality of the luxury concept, as a result of the complex interplay between the individual and contextual influences. It is mainly rooted in the psychological tradition and the most prevalent field in luxury research. Key to the conceptualization of luxury is the emotional and cognitive base of the consumer, in which luxury is mainly conceptualized through pleasure and feeling special (and thus different to ordinary experiences, McFerran & Argo, 2014). Much research has focused on understanding consumption through concepts such as identity, values, motivation and the role of cognition and emotion in consumer behavior. Key questions of this perspective are the stability of phenomena, for example, which of the factors that influence luxury perception are stable across contexts (e.g., the identity or values), or highly situation-dependent (e.g., situational factors influencing the luxury perception in a retail environment). Moreover, research in this perspective emphasizes the importance of understanding unconscious factors that influence these perceptions (e.g., store scent, Madzharov, Block, & Morrin, 2015). Other examples comprise values and identity (e.g., socio-culturally created myths and conceptions of desire or the influence of culture on the self-concept as in cluster 4 and 5). In addition, research has contributed to an understanding of the consumer’s perception of luxury’s dimensions and attributes and actual consumer behavior. Research in this area has largely emphasized the formation of identity through consumption, such as the formation of brand relationships from a consumer perspective (Cluster 6), the underlying values and motivations for luxury consumption and the dimensionality of brand equity (Cluster 7).

The *luxury producer* perspective focuses on the management of luxury brands and the creation of a brand symbolism that is core to the value of luxury brands. This encompasses multiple dimensions from strategy, to the product and service design, to marketing and sales, operations, and organizational questions. A dominant view on luxury of this perspective is that luxury firms are selective and manage exclusivity and rarity which differentiates them from mass market brands. This also poses the unique challenge for luxury brands of growing while remaining exclusive (Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2016). Another central aspect is the focus on creative processes and the creation of extraordinary customer experience and symbolic values through storytelling (cf. Fuchs, Prandelli, Schreier, & Dahl, 2013). Much of the recent literature, particularly in the marketing and management fields, has focused on this managerial perspective, particularly with a focus on brand management (as the brand is seen as a key asset for luxury brands) as well as its operationalization in management practices (such as product design, pricing, communication, distribution, and service management). It has

strong interactions with the consumer perspective and research on consumer perception, particularly on topics such as brand equity (Cluster 7). Several theoretically interesting phenomena emerge out of the interplay between the managerial and consumer perspective, such as counterfeiting which is particularly prevalent in the context of luxury brands (Cluster 8).

At the **core of the framework is the concrete luxury realization**, which is defined through the codes (underlying values) and signs (materializations, such as objects, products and experiences) that signify a luxury essence. This is most often the concrete material luxury object in the form of luxury products and experiences. The symbolic content of a brand stands for a context-dependent conception of luxury. The further abstraction which we term luxury essence are the luxury factors that descend the world of material objects, immaterial values and ideas, and represent the constants in the conception of luxury. They are linked to the philosophical idea of luxury within a broader discourse about the nature of existence and being.

Fig. 7 provides an overview of the different perspectives (entities – e.g., consumer perspective), their relationships (e.g., the relationship between a consumer’s self-concept and the social environment) and phenomena emerging from their interaction (e.g., the counterfeiting). The position of the research clusters within this framework indicate their focus and their shading indicates the dominant perspective. As the empirically observed clusters may encompass different theoretical perspectives, Table 3 provides an overview of the dominance of these perspectives within each cluster.

5.2. Recent developments in luxury research field

Based on a qualitative analysis of recent research in the luxury field and the conceptual model, we identify several streams that have

recently emerged and gained prominence. In this summary, we group the studies according to the main conceptual contribution. From a methodological standpoint, we see a trend toward more qualitatively oriented studies, more research across clusters and viewpoints and new methods such as neuropsychological research (Pozharliev, Verbeke, Van Strien, & Bagozzi, 2015) and data sources such as social media (Kim & Xu, 2013). Moreover, special issues (such as Chandon, Laurent, & Valette-Florence, 2016) have contributed to the institutionalization of the field.

Studies from a *philosophical or conceptual perspective* remain rare. Nevertheless there have been theoretical advancements and developments in this direction and attempts to find definitions for luxury (Cristini, Kauppinen-Räsänen, Barthod-Prothade, & Woodside, 2016; Wierzba, 2015; such as Wilson, 2014). In the historical perspective some recent studies have traced the evolution of luxury, often through specific case studies such as a study of 17th century Paris (Dejean, 2014; Faiers, 2014; Kovesi, 2015). Recent studies from a *cultural perspective* have studied the role of luxury in a consumer culture (Armitage & Roberts, 2014; Featherstone, 2014) or specific cultural phenomena such as the construction of luxury sites such as the supercar (Warren, 2014), wristwatches (Oakley, 2015), the Napa Valley Wine region (Taplin, 2015). Moreover recent research from a cultural angle has been applied to managerial settings, for example to understand brand meaning (Al-Mutawa, 2013; Roper, Caruana, Medway, & Murphy, 2013), the cultural construction of luxury brand myths in a retail environment (Dion & Borraz, 2015; König, Wiedmann, Hennigs, & Haase, 2016) or advertisements (Freire, 2014), often through interpretative research. Research in the intercultural perspective has particularly been interested in luxury markets in Asia (Shukla, Singh, & Banerjee, 2015), and specifically China (Forêt & Mazzalovo, 2014; Liu, Perry,

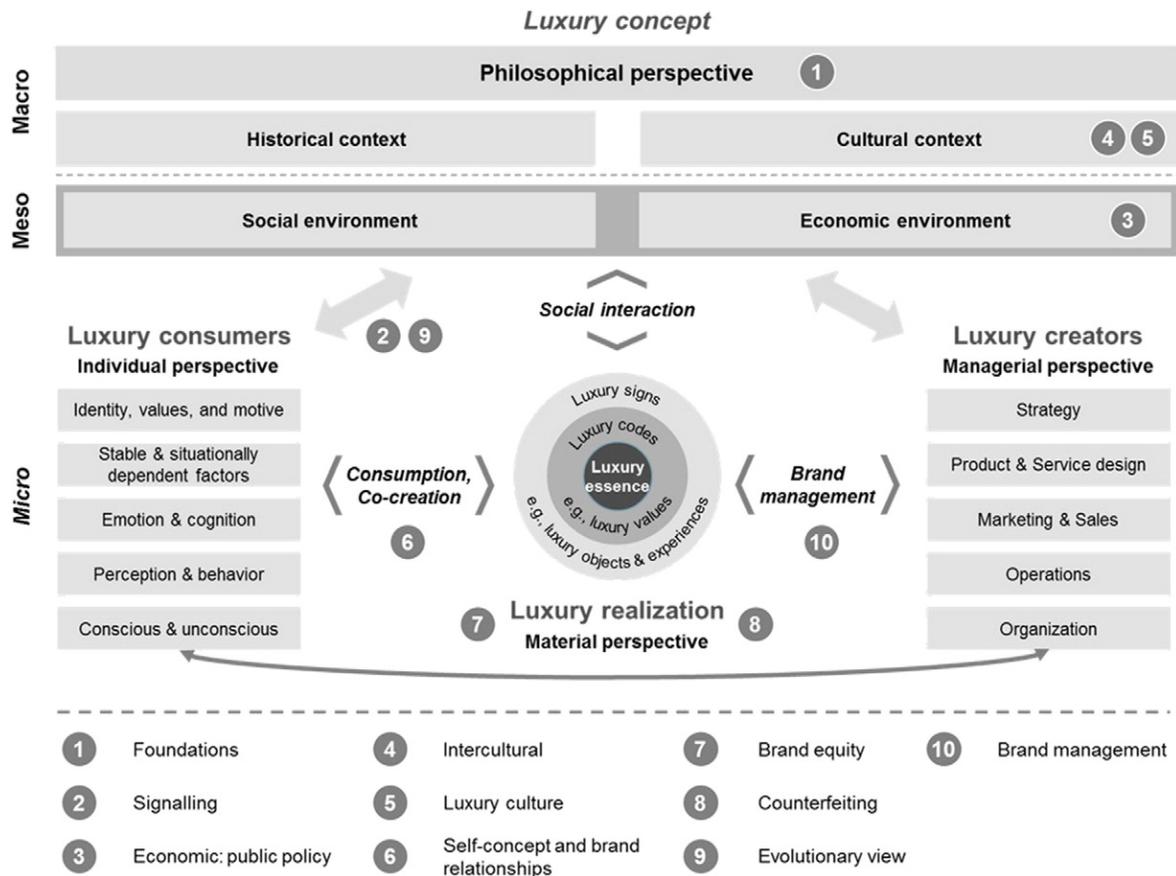


Fig. 7. Conceptual model of luxury.

Table 3
Mapping of empirically observed clusters to theoretical perspectives.

Cluster number	Label	Macro			Meso		Micro		
		Philosophical concept	Historical context	Cultural context	Social environment	Economic environment	Luxury consumers	Luxury realization / object	Luxury producers
1	Foundations		high	medium	medium				
2	Signaling /consumption as social interaction view				medium				
3	Economic view: public policy					medium			
4	Intercultural view			medium	medium		medium		
5	Luxury culture and meaning		high	medium					
6	Self-concept and brand relationships						medium		medium
7	Brand equity							medium	medium
8	Counterfeiting							low	medium
9	Evolutionary view				medium		medium		
10	Brand management						medium		medium

Degree of influence for each cluster

high medium low

Moore, & Warnaby, 2016; Liu, Yannopoulou, Bian, & Elliott, 2015), yet has also been carried out in developed markets (Chattalas & Shukla, 2015).

Recent studies from an *economic perspective* have continued to study conspicuous consumption in emerging economies (Jaikumar & Sarin, 2015), social influence (Amaldoss & Jain, 2015) or market models for fashion products (Kuksov & Wang, 2013). Within studies from a *social and socio-psychological perspective*, the social construction of status and social class and its implications on consumers (Bellezza, Gino, & Keinan, 2014; Ivanic, 2015; Lee & Luster, 2015; O'Guinn, Tanner, & Maeng, 2015) as well as studies within the field of evolutionary psychology have retained its popularity (Butori & Parguel, 2014; Durante, Griskevicius, Cantu, & Simpson, 2014; Wang & Griskevicius, 2014). How status is constructed is undergoing a change reflected in the emergence of studies on inconspicuous consumption (Eckhardt, Belk, & Wilson, 2015). Moreover, research on the decoding of conspicuous symbols used by other consumers (Scott, Mende, & Bolton, 2013) and their effects on self-brand relations (Ferraro, Kirmani, & Matherly, 2013) have gained popularity.

The vast majority of recent studies has contributed to the *consumer perspective*. Transformational consumer research has emerged as a new topic (Llamas & Thomsen, 2016). New cognitive theories such as construal level theory (Hansen & Wanke, 2011) have gained popularity to provide explanations for phenomena associated with luxury such as money (Hansen, Kutzner, & Wanke, 2013), hedonic consumption and indulgence (Mehta, Zhu, & Meyers-Levy, 2014), or gift-giving (Baskin, Waksak, Trope, & Novemsky, 2014). Moreover, new methods have been adopted, for example to study neural reactions to luxury brands and how they are influenced by their social context (Pozharliev et al., 2015). While the predominant focus is on purchase decisions, recent research has also started to study luxury disposition (Lee, Ko, Lee, & Kim, 2015). Other researchers have used socio-demographic variables to study generational effects (Schade, Hegner, Horstmann, & Brinkmann, 2016) or the role of gender (Stokburger-Sauer & Teichmann, 2013) on consumer behavior. Research that builds on existing clusters includes research on brand relationships (Kessous, Roux, & Chandon, 2015), brand personality (Sung, Choi, Ahn, & Song, 2015) and brand archetypes (Kim & Xu, 2013) or consumer-related factors such as intrinsic or extrinsic motivations (Huang, Dong, & Mukhopadhyay, 2014; Kastanakis

& Balabanis, 2014), self-esteem (Loughran Dommer, Swaminathan, & Ahluwalia, 2013), pride (McFerran, Aquino, & Tracy, 2014) or identity and self-definition (Bhattacharjee & Mogilner, 2014).

Research from a *managerial perspective* has strongly focused on retail settings as well as brand management and new production and communication technologies. Research in the retail domain has established a link to the cultural perspective and for example studied luxury stores as art institutions (Joy, Wang, Chan, Sherry, & Cui, 2014). Other studies have studied new distribution concepts such as pop-up stores (Klein, Falk, Esch, & Gloukhovtsev, 2016), in-store preference formation (Ardelet, Slavich, & de Kerviler, 2015; Madzharov et al., 2015) and retail interactions such as employee arrogance (Wang, Chow, & Luk, 2013) and consumer rejection (Ward & Dahl, 2014) or commercial friendships between sales persons and customers (Rosenbaum, Russell-Bennett, & Drennan, 2015).

Research on luxury brand management has focused on general managerial principles (Berghaus, Bossard, & Behni, 2015; Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2016), brand extensions (Albrecht, Backhaus, Gurzki, & Woisetschlager, 2013; Dall'Olimo Riley, Pina, & Bravo, 2015; Som & Pape, 2015), pricing research (Hwang, Ko, & Megehee, 2014; Kapferer & Laurent, 2016; Parguel, Delecolle, & Valette-Florence, 2016; Rao & Schaefer, 2013), or success factors for ingredient branding (Moon & Sprott, 2016). Research on production technologies as investigated the opportunities and risks of mass customization (Yoo & Park, 2016) and user design (Fuchs et al., 2013) for luxury brands and contrasted them to traditional manufacturing (Fuchs, Schreier, & van Osselaer, 2015; Lee, 2015). Research on marketing communications has focused on emerging media such as social media marketing (Godey et al., 2016), traditional advertising (Barry & Phillips, 2015), explored the value of partnerships between luxury brands and charity organizations (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2016) or revisited scarcity effects in communication (Jang, Ko, Morris, & Chang, 2015). Moreover applied research has been conducted, mainly in the setting of the luxury services and hotel industry (Riscinto Kozub, Anthony O'Neill, & Palmer, 2014; Rishi, Jauhari, & Joshi, 2015) or the fashion industry (Hanslin & Rindell, 2014).

Research on luxury *phenomena* has continued to be dominated by counterfeiting (Amaral & Loken, 2016; Chen, Teng, Liu, & Zhu, 2015; Hennigs et al., 2015; Meraviglia, 2015; Randhawa, Calantone, & Voorhees, 2015; Stottinger & Penz, 2015; Teah, Phau, & Huang, 2015).

With sustainability (Cervellon, 2014; Kapferer & Michaut, 2015) and ethical considerations in production, new socially relevant and overarching topics have emerged (Teah et al., 2015).

Based on the combination of the previous analysis, future research can adopt four strategies: 1) deepening understanding, 2) bridging clusters, 3) growing emerging views, 4) reinventing the dominant view. Firstly, research could deepen our understanding of theoretical clusters in the framework that are not yet well understood, such as the neuro-physiological response to luxury brands, differences in cognitive processing between luxury brands and non-luxury brands. Secondly, future research can advance our knowledge of the luxury domain by connecting clusters that are thus far unconnected. Examples could be applying a cultural perspective to the analysis of luxury advertisements or investigating how consumers decode luxury codes in different social and cultural settings. Thirdly, research can identify and contribute to emergent research clusters such as new technologies such as digitalization and social media on the creation and management of luxury brands or transformational consumer research. Fourthly, research could bring in new perspectives from other fields such as methods using big data to identify trends in the luxury segment.

6. Discussion

The concept of luxury is as old as mankind and has evolved substantially over the course of the last centuries (cf. Kapferer & Bastien, 2009a). While a treatment of such a complex, multifaceted, and ever evolving topic can never be exhaustive, this analysis attempts to provide a historical overview of the luxury literature and to develop a comprehensive framework. This paper thus contributes to an understanding of the research field itself—to its key research areas as well as their historic development. Our research shows that a wide variety of research fields, from psychology, sociology, cultural studies, economics, or business and management contribute to the advancement of the luxury domain and are representative of both the long tradition as well as the intellectual diversity of the field. This paper identifies ten major document-co-citation clusters that represent the key research areas within the luxury field, as seen by the broader scientific community. The clusters show an evolution from early sociological research to managerial and applied topics that have recently begun to dominate the research field. While research activity is ongoing across clusters, the current and trending publications come mainly from applied research investigating managerial issues such as counterfeiting or brand management, or from new perspectives on luxury consumption such as the evolutionary view. Moreover, this study develops a comprehensive framework that integrates the findings of the quantitative and qualitative study and highlights dominant viewpoints and discourses. The next section briefly acknowledges the limitations of this study, before the paper concludes with implications for further research and management practice.

6.1. Limitations of this study

A bibliometric analysis can be a good starting point for research in the business domain, particularly for interdisciplinary topics, and should be complemented by a systematic review of papers as in this study. While the bibliometric citation analysis provides quantitative evidence about the importance and connection of the papers in the research field, qualitative analysis continues to involve subjective judgments by the researcher as well as an explorative approach for interpreting the findings (Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2015). While bibliometric methods cannot substitute for a qualitative judgment, they work as a complement toward a more objective assessment of the research field. We believe that the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods can help researchers to overcome the limitations of traditional qualitative or systematic reviews, as well as the shortcomings of solely quantitative analyses.

Nevertheless, this study has certain limitations that are important when considering the method and findings. While bibliometric citation analysis is a valuable tool in prioritizing important contributions based on the importance of the work assigned by the research community and identifying the structural relationships between works, it is based on actual citation behavior. Citations are influenced by scientific factors such as the work's importance, but also by non-scientific factors such as the author's knowledge of the literature or the availability of the article (Bornmann & Daniel, 2008). It is thus possible that publications are cited together not only for purely theoretical considerations. Moreover, the focus on citation count as an indicator of a work's importance can lead to the inclusion of niche articles that can be highly relevant to a specific subfield, yet have not gained a wider popularity (such as Mortelmans, 2005). This can be due to the dominance of certain research approaches in a field, such as an orientation toward empirical quantitative and experimental papers rather than conceptual contributions or qualitative research. It is also likely to be linked to the size of the readership of a certain publication and the “winner-takes-it-all” phenomenon that publications that are already highly cited get read more often, and thus reach a wider target audience (Aksnes, 2003). Moreover, because the document co-citation analysis uses real citation behavior, its focus is backward looking, which has several implications. First, it has a bias toward older publications, as scientific findings and publications need time to be accepted within the scientific community and to receive a high number of citations. However, as we see in the analysis, even relatively recent publications such as (Berger & Ward, 2010; Han et al., 2010; Hennigs et al., 2012) have quickly gained popularity in the scientific community. Second, citation behavior is dynamic, so that the citations and co-citations of papers will evolve over time, potentially connecting unconnected clusters, identifying new ones and re-arranging the map as the scientific community grows and the field matures.

Regarding this study, further studies can refine the scope of the research—for example, either focusing on just a specific subfield or specific journals or extending the scope to include further research fields or keywords (e.g., such as “hedonic consumption,” which is also related to luxury consumption but not equal, which is why this study excludes the keyword). Moreover, with the advance of computer technologies new methods or automatic text analysis and natural language processing are likely to advance studies in the science of science (Garfield, 2009).

6.2. Implications for further research studies in the luxury domain

This paper provides a map and conceptual framework of luxury and its intellectual foundations. This can be insightful for established researchers within the domain, to identify white spots for potential contributions, as well as for new researchers entering the field who want to gain a broad overview of existing studies.

6.2.1. Theoretical perspectives

While existing research in the luxury domain shows a wide variety of theoretical perspectives ranging from sociology, psychology, and economics, some research fields that seem promising for further developing the luxury field are still underrepresented, yet growing in importance (such as cultural studies, cognitive psychology and neuro-psychology). Theories from anthropology or cultural studies could be interesting to better understand the cultural context of luxury brand and its relativity as well as the meaning creation process that companies use to construct a luxury brand or cognitive and neuro-psychology to better understand the mechanical core and the affective layer that has been well researched in consumer behavior, yet has been only sparsely investigated in the luxury context—for example, to understand the applicability and generalizability of existing findings (cf. Pham, 2013, for the research state of consumer psychology).

6.2.2. Methods

This study shows a high number of empirical and experimental studies, and a limited and declining number of conceptual studies and qualitative studies. The field is dominated by hypothetico-deductive approaches, which is likely to be related to the dominant conventions in the theoretical disciplines mentioned above that constitute the core of luxury research. To further evolve the research field, the adaption of different methods and approaches such as field-theory validation and applied empirical generalization for relevant topics could be promising (cf. Pham, 2013). Thus, working with real-life data as well as exploring new phenomena using qualitative approaches such as ethnographies or observational methods, or an increasing focus on conceptual contributions to develop and test generalizable theories that are specific to the luxury context, could be promising. Other fields in consumer research have already begun a shift toward a perspective in consumer research that is less mechanistic and more individual and contextualized with non-positivist assumptions, foundations in sociology or anthropology and focused on macro and cultural phenomena (Ekstrom, 2003). For example, consumer culture theory could provide an interesting angle for adoption in a broader set of luxury publications (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Another promising method could be the combination of big data analytics with data that is publicly available, proprietary online data, or customer data to understand luxury preferences and consumption patterns in a real-life context.

6.2.3. Content

While most research in the luxury field has focused on consumer behavior, economic outcomes, and general management practices, surprisingly little research has investigated luxury advertising, retailing, sales, and service compared to studies in other related fields and journals such as the JMR (Huber et al., 2014). On a theoretical level, bringing in research from new fields such as neurophysiology (Achrol & Kotler, 2011) could generate more insights into the conscious and unconscious nature of luxury consumption.

Moreover, research in consumer behavior has mostly focused on the pre-purchase and purchase phases, with little attention given to the continuous use and disposal phases that could also trigger interesting research questions, such as the impact of sharing and access-based consumption on luxury brand usage, or the disposal and second-hand market for luxury goods which, in practice, have spurred the interest of newly found startups and companies. Another interesting area to explore is the area of co-creation and production in a luxury context (Achrol & Kotler, 2011). Compared to other mainstream marketing journals, the managerial perspective also seems to be underrepresented. Recently, this field has also grown strongly, with further potential in certain areas such as customer experience, service management, and other applied research (cf. Huber et al., 2014). Research in the managerial perspective could provide insights into, for example, how luxury brands make use of new technologies in production, marketing, and sales, or how they manage and orchestrate a network of partners to deliver their customer experience.

Based on the observations from this study and the comparison to other fields, we speculate that the luxury field will continue to grow, is likely to evolve into more sub-specializations bringing in new methods and theories from other fields (as luxury provides an interesting study context across a wide range of disciplines) and will grow to solidify its own theoretical basis to highlight the uniqueness of the research fields from the perspectives mentioned above.

To further advance luxury research, we put forth some substantive research questions based on our integrative framework:

Philosophical perspective: Is luxury something real or imagined, something that exists or something that is individually, socially and culturally constructed? Can there be a saturation level of luxury or is there always something more extraordinary?

Historical context: What are historical constants of luxury and how have they changed the given changes in the broader environment? What does this mean for emerging luxury phenomena and conceptualizations such as collaborative consumption or digital luxury?

Cultural context: How do luxury brands create and manage their brand identity? How do they engage in storytelling? How does the cultural context influence luxury brand consumption?

Social environment: How are luxury and status codes created within certain social groups? How does the luxury adaption process work in the digital age? What is the role of social media in negotiating status symbols?

Economic environment: To what extent are price and rarity still key luxury constituents? Can luxury exist that does not have a high price or rarity?

Luxury consumers: How to consumers co-create luxury? What does collaborative consumption mean for luxury brands? What are the transformational experiences that consumers of luxury brands seek? When do luxury consumers have ambivalent views about luxury brands?

Luxury producers: How can luxury brands innovate while remaining true to their past? Is heritage and history a prerequisite for luxury brands? Can luxury brands be built in a digital age without possessing that heritage? Is exclusivity still a core facet of luxury and what could be alternative routes to brand building?

Luxury realization: How do luxury values and codes differ between product and service categories? Which aspects of luxury are category-specific, which ones are generalizable across different categories of products and services?

6.3. Practical implications

While this study is mainly situated in the tradition of scientometrics and the exploration of the research field, it also delivers practical implications. Brand managers can use this fact base to better understand the prevailing paradigms in their companies, and thereby challenge the fundamental assumptions by which they operate to bring in new perspectives. Every practitioner interested in the history of luxury consumption and the current academic thinking could benefit from this paper and particularly the framework to gain a better understanding of the fundamental principles and complex interrelationships within the luxury field. Luxury brand managers could use the building blocks from this framework to understand for example, how to create an extraordinary customer experience as well as design cues that could help to charge their products with symbolic meaning.

Luxury brands could use this framework to test their relevance with their target group on several dimensions: On an individual dimension, brands could probe deeper to understand the relationships they build with their consumers (brand relationships). Particularly for luxury brands the balance between a creative design-driven approach from luxury brands could create tensions with consumer co-creation, such in the case of identity marketing where recent studies have highlighted the need for consumer agency (Bhattacharjee, Berger, & Menon, 2014).

Brands could use the methods and findings from research to understand how their brand creates meaning for consumers and how consumers extract, develop, and exchange meaning (self-concept and materialism). This could also help them to review their symbolic

inventory and understand current cultural trends, emerging luxury codes and myths that they could leverage in their storytelling. Understanding cultural influences can be crucial to the success of a product, such as the use of sensory metaphors in marketing communication (Akpınar & Berger, 2015). From a social perspective, although not necessarily voiced in traditional market research, status is integral component of luxury. Yet its construction might have changed and shifted from economic to social and symbolic capital as indicated by the emergence of inconspicuous consumption codes and the recent popularity in academia (Berger & Ward, 2010). More recently, the topic of transformational consumer research has emerged, which can also be an interesting area for practitioners to study (Llamas & Thomsen, 2016).

From a brand management perspective, brand managers could review their business practices and strategy and compare them with findings from previous academic research such as the literature in cluster 10. Recent research has had a particularly strong focus on strategy (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009a) or retail management (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2008). Recent research has also highlighted the importance of the cultural background and intercultural research for consumption in a diverse range of markets, including key luxury markets such as Asia (Chadha & Husband, 2010), China (Chevalier & Xiao Lu, 2009; Lu, 2011) or India (Boroian & de Poix, 2009).

Moreover, brand managers could also review the philosophical foundations of the field—as outlined in this study—to think about new conceptions of luxury or their underlying values and discourses. This can also include understanding the role of luxury producers in society (such as the impact on public welfare) and to understand the various needs of the stakeholders in a social environment.

An understanding of the different research clusters and their interconnection can help managers to gain both a broader and deeper understanding of the key concepts that have shaped the discussions of luxury in the academic luxury literature. While most of the research we identified as the intellectual base of the luxury domain is concerned with fundamental mechanisms behind luxury, and thus is not a direct applied research, it can provide managers a theoretical base for evaluating their strategy and adapting the core ideas to their business context. Based on the luxury framework, we propose several directions for brand building that could be relevant to managers. Luxury is about the extraordinary. Thus, brand managers should ask themselves what makes their brand, their products, and services extraordinary. Luxury brands are extraordinary in at least one dimension which sets them truly apart from the mass market, adds to their incomparability and thereby preserves and builds their aura (cf. Kapferer & Bastien, 2009a). Luxury has material, individual, social, economic, managerial and cultural components that need to be interconnected. How they together form luxury can depend on the situation, for examples as they can appeal to different need states and consumer values (cf. Albrecht et al., 2013; Wiedmann et al., 2009). At the material level these states could be the functionality, aesthetics, performance, convenience, quality and comfort of use. At the individual level, they comprise internally oriented needs such as pleasure and well-being and externally focused needs such as self-expression. On a social level, they can be focused on distinction and status motives or the desire to connect with and belong to a specific social community. On an economic level, luxury consumers may seek financial value, often as a purchase justification and rationalization, underlined by the longevity and durability of the products. On a cultural level, luxury brands are about the creation of desire and the building of an aura, often through their reference to values, myths and dreams, and the incorporation of their symbolism into their brand storytelling. Thus, luxury is about making the customers feel special, and providing unique and pleasurable experiences. Hence, customer experience management is a key prerequisite. Today, this requires a clear strategy, an agile and aligned organization, a holistic understanding of consumer interactions and behavior across touch points, and an integrated omni-channel approach. Luxury brand building is about storytelling. Stories can inspire or seduce consumers (Kapferer, 2016) and

thereby fuel their desire for the brand. In order to make the story relevant and interesting, luxury brand managers need a deep understanding of the codes and symbolic value of luxury in its socio-cultural context. Luxury brand managers should be aware of and closely follow emerging trends in the codes and nature of luxury consumption. New emerging research topics and phenomena such as consumer co-creation, new forms of consumption such as collaborative consumption and the emergence of the sharing economy, changing ways of interacting with consumers, such as the rise of digital media are likely to change the nature and conception of luxury in the next years and thus should be key considerations in the strategic and creative process.

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