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Values associated with luxury brand consumption and the role of gender

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ABSTRACT

We investigate the role of gender in the perceptions of and motives for luxury brand consumption. Based on the social structural theory of gender, we propose that differences in men's and women's luxury values result from asymmetries in social status. We conduct three studies with samples of frequent luxury brand buyers. Study 1 ($N = 512$) generates main values associated with luxury brand consumption. Study 2 ($N = 640$) identifies a four-factor model of luxury brand values, including refinement, heritage, exclusivity, and elitism, and shows that women give more importance to refinement, while men give more importance to exclusivity and elitism. Study 3 ($N = 1024$) demonstrates that public self-consciousness has a stronger positive influence on refinement for women rather than men. In contrast, consumer need for uniqueness and status consumption exert respectively a stronger positive influence on exclusivity and elitism for men rather than women.

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1. Introduction

The worldwide personal luxury goods market has experienced strong and steady growth over the past two decades, from €77 billion in 1995 to €253 billion in 2015.¹ Interestingly, [Bain and Company \(2012\)](#) reports that the growth of men's personal consumption of luxury goods (+14%) now outperforms the growth of women's consumption (+8%). Thus, although women's luxury consumption is still higher (60% of the worldwide luxury market value), the traditional gender gap is now decreasing. This trend questions the origins and motives of gender differences in luxury consumption. Indeed, there is a large body of literature on the various effects of demographics on luxury consumption, such as social class (e.g. [Han, Nunes, & Drèze, 2010](#)) or age (e.g. [Schade, Hegner, Hortsmann & Brinkmann, 2016](#)), yet little is known about the effects of gender. Recently, [Meyers-Levy and Loken \(2015\)](#) point out that, in spite of the overwhelming public interest in gender differences in consumer behavior, much research is needed to grasp the impact of gender. This need becomes more apparent in the case of luxury consumption ([Stokburger-Sauer & Teichmann, 2013](#)). We focus on whether men and women differ or are similar in the values they associate with luxury brand consumption. *What are the meaningful gender differences in luxury values associated with luxury consumption? To what extent do luxury consumption drivers vary across gender? What are the reasons for this?*

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To shed light on such issues, we first present the social structural theory (SST) of gender ([Eagly & Wood, 1999](#)) and review the literature on luxury brand values. On this basis, we introduce a set of hypotheses about: (i) the influence of gender on interpersonal luxury values, i.e. elitism, exclusivity, and refinement, and (ii) the moderating effects of gender on three drivers of luxury consumption: conspicuous and status consumption, consumers' need for uniqueness, and personal self-consciousness. Next, we present three studies carried out on samples of Western luxury brand buyers. Study 1 identifies values that consumers associate with luxury consumption. Study 2 reveals the influence of gender on such values. Study 3 shows the moderating effects of gender on luxury value drivers. We then discuss theoretical and managerial implications.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Social structural theory of gender (SST)

[Ridgeway \(2011\)](#) reports the persistence of gender inequality in modern societies, despite societal changes leading to the movement of women into occupations perceived as male-typed. In 2012, the gender wage gap (i.e. the ratio between men's to women's average incomes) was 21% in the U.S. and 16% in the EU.² Given that paid labor is a major means to access resources, status, and power, such asymmetries exhibit men's enduring dominant position. Furthermore, gender inequality involves cultural beliefs and stereotypes that shape everyday life interactions and legitimate sex differences ([Ridgeway & Correll,](#)

² Data reported by the U.S. Institute for Women's Policy Research (2013) and Eurostat (2013).

2004). Gender provides an easily available category to classify people (Brewer & Lui, 1989), priming expectations and norms related to sex-typed attributes and roles (Deaux, 1985). Thus, West and Zimmerman (1987) state that gender is not an individual trait, but an accomplishment: people *do* gender by enacting gender beliefs, to claim their identity. In contrast, sex refers to biological differences.

Accordingly, SST (Eagly & Wood, 1999) views gender as socially elaborated through interactions that involve beliefs resulting from the asymmetric status of men and women in labor division. This socialization process leads to internalization of gender beliefs consistent with other people's expectations and social norms (Risman, 2004; Risman & Davis, 2013). Such beliefs associate agentic and instrumental traits and roles (e.g. dominant, self-assertive, independent) with men vs. communal and affect-related traits and roles (e.g. carrying, supportive, emotional) with women (Eagly, 1987). Gender beliefs bias the evaluation of oneself and others in a gender-consistent direction, thus favoring accommodation to stereotypes (Ridgeway & Corell, 2004). This is particularly noticeable in the ways each gender is regarded and is expected to be (Prentice & Carranza, 2002): individuals expect high-status occupations to require masculine agentic and instrumental traits (e.g. self-assertiveness). Therefore, SST posits that gender beliefs enable one to legitimate asymmetries in men's and women's status (Eagly & Wood, 1999).

From this perspective, SST offers a framework to connect differences in gender identity with social status. Indeed, individuals perceive more homogeneity in both female (vs. male) and low-status (vs. high-status) groups, and men and members of high status groups are less inclined to self-stereotyping for the benefit of self-differentiation (Lorenzi-Cioldi, 2006). Accordingly, men's and women's self-concepts differ (Cross & Madson, 1997): men tend to separate the representation of others from the self (independent self), while women tend to include others as part of the self (interdependent self). Women are thus more sensitive to the opinions of others (Deaux & Major, 1987), and rely on self-appearance to make a good impression on others (Buss, 1989; Wang & Waller, 2006; Workman & Lee, 2011). Consequently, gender beliefs guide the construction of self-identity in a way that is consistent with each gender's status. These findings are congruent with Bourdieu's (2001) principle of *masculine domination*, which points out the homology between gender beliefs and men's and women's status in the social structure. We then review the literature on luxury values and discuss how gender may influence such values.

2.2. Luxury values

In economics, luxury goods are regarded as expensive and rare goods with strong positive income elasticity of demand, in opposition to necessity goods: an increase in income causes a larger increase in the demand for luxury goods (e.g. Deaton & Muellbauer, 1980). Beyond price consideration, one may wonder what drives luxury consumption? Some reasons are the desire and pleasure that luxury goods elicit (Berry, 1994; Kemp, 1998). Prestige-seeking also plays a key role in luxury consumption, in which luxury brands are the extreme-end along a prestige continuum (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). Despite little consensus on the definition of *luxury*, academics agree that it is a subjective and multidimensional construct that covers a wide variety of consumer perceptions (Wiedmann, Hennigs, & Siebels, 2007). In the case of luxury brands, these perceptions encompass values associated with and motives for luxury brand consumption (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). On the one hand, values are beliefs that refer to desired attributes of luxury brands and serve as standards in guiding consumer behavior (Woodruff, 1997). On the other hand, motives are incentives that drive consumers toward desirable goals and related values (McClelland, 1988). From this perspective, luxury brand values and motives constitute two related, but distinct facets of the consumer-brand relationship: values are brand-oriented since they focus on luxury brand attributes, whereas motives are consumer-oriented since they concern drivers that lead consumers

to favor certain values. According to Vigneron and Johnson (1999), luxury perceptions integrate both interpersonal and personal values and related motives.

Interpersonal values involve benefits resulting from public display to significant others (Sheth, Newman, & Gross, 1991), notably the reference group (Bearden & Etzel, 1982). Interpersonal values encompass three dimensions: conspicuousness, social value (especially, conformity), and uniqueness (Amaldoss & Jain, 2008, 2005). Owing to high prices, luxury conveys elitist values, which are symbols of wealth (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999) that are likely to confer status to buyers (Goldsmith & Clark, 2012). Therefore, one can use luxury goods conspicuously, i.e., can ostentatiously displaying possessions to signal status (Veblen, 1899). In this sense, conspicuous consumption, which seeks to enhance one's self-concept (Dubois & Duquesne, 1993), takes two distinct forms. First, bandwagon appeal consists in purchasing the same goods as people one wants to be assimilated with. Second, snob appeal consists in buying goods to differentiate oneself from significant others (Leibenstein, 1950). Thus, conspicuous consumption concerns affiliation to an aspirational group for bandwagon followers vs. dissociation from the mainstream for snob consumers (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2014). Conformity resulting from consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence (Lascu & Zinkhan, 1999) drives bandwagon consumption (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012, 2014). In contrast, consumers' need for uniqueness (i.e. non-conformity to mainstream preferences) drives snob consumption (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2014), consistent with the principles of rarity (Phau & Prendergast, 2000) and exclusivity (Groth & McDaniel, 1993), which luxury brands can elicit.

Luxury brands also convey two personal values derived from private and self-directed benefits: hedonism related to emotional responses and perfectionism based on perceived quality. First, luxury consumption gives consumer more than functional utility, since it offers intrinsic pleasure and affective gratification resulting from the acquisition, possession, and use of luxury goods (Wiedmann et al., 2007). Thus, luxury brands have an inherent hedonic potential that goes beyond consumer satisfaction, since it involves a promise of pleasure and an ability to delight, which foster brand attractiveness and consumption re-experience (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2009). Second, high quality is regarded as a necessary attribute of luxury brands (Lipovetsky & Roux, 2003). As consumers tend to use price as a cue to infer quality (Rao & Monroe, 1989), expensive luxury brands (compared to ordinary brands) are considered signals of quality that can elicit reassurance about superior performance, authenticity, or tradition (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). In this sense, seeking high quality is a personal motive to attain perfection.

On this basis, De Barnier, Falcy, and Valette-Florence (2012) compare the internal structures of the three luxury value scales proposed by Kapferer (1998), Vigneron and Johnson (2004), and Dubois, Czellar, and Laurent (2005). Using a French sample, De Barnier et al. (2012) run exploratory factor analysis on each of these three scales to identify their specific dimensions (Table 1): elitism, creativity and renown for Kapferer's scale; elitism, uniqueness, refinement, quality, and power for Vigneron and Johnson's scale; and elitism, distinction, and hedonism for Dubois et al.'s scale. Elitism, which is defined as perceived expensiveness and limited dissemination of luxury brands, is a common dimension across the three scales. Semantic analysis suggests that uniqueness, distinction, and creativity all relate to exclusivity, since these dimensions refer to differentiation from mainstream brands or significant others (e.g. unique, rare, differentiation from others, respectively). Hedonism and refinement both concern two aspects of luxury: elegance (e.g. exquisite, good taste) and emotions (e.g. stunning, pleasure). Quality and renown encompass the idea of excellence (e.g. superior, crafted) and thus mainly refer to a brand's intrinsic value. Finally, power reflects brand performance in the marketplace (Na, Marshall, & Keller, 1999), which is consumer-based brand equity rather than values derived from luxury consumption. Interestingly, De Barnier et al. (2012) find that elitism, refinement, and exclusivity-related dimensions offer

Table 1
Internal structure of luxury value scales reported by De Barnier et al. (2012).

Kapferer (1998)		Vigneron and Johnson (2004)		Dubois et al. (2005)	
Dimension	Items	Dimension	Items	Dimension	Items
Elitism	A minority buys, exclusive, expensive, few people own	Elitism	For the wealthy, expensive, elitist	Elitism	Education needed, expensive, few people own, not mass-produced, scarcity
Creativity	Magic, creativity, forefront of fashion, sensuality, unique, crafted	Uniqueness	Exclusive, precious, unique, rare	Distinction	Dream, refined people, makes life beautiful, different, sensual
Renown	High quality, excellence, history, tradition, reputation	Quality	Luxurious, sophisticated, best quality, superior	Hedonism	Pleasure, aesthetic, good taste, pleasant, top quality
		Refinement	Exquisite, stunning, glamorous		
		Power	Leading, successful, powerful, rewarding		

better discrimination among luxury brands from the consumer perspective, compared to quality, renown, power, and hedonism. Thus, investigating the influence of gender on the aforementioned three dimensions would interest practitioners who want to know where to place the emphasis in their luxury brand.

We also pay special attention to these dimensions for a theoretical reason: the distinction between interpersonal vs. personal effects in luxury consumption (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). Interpersonal effects are outer-directed, since they involve the social influence of significant others on consumers' responses (i.e. opinions, perceptions, and behaviors). Conversely, personal effects are inner-directed, since they depend on personal issues (e.g., feelings, emotions and tastes) rather than the consumption of others. Elitism, refinement, and exclusivity can be viewed as based on interpersonal effects because they explicitly refer to significant others: people one wants to signal one's status to (elitism), to make good impression on (refinement), or to differentiate oneself from (exclusivity). In that sense, significant others are relevant targets or serve as a reference point with respect to these three luxury dimensions. In contrast, hedonism, quality, and power, can be viewed as based on personal effects because they relate to self-directed issues, respectively: emotion, perfectionism, and integration of the brand's symbolic meaning into the self-concept (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). In other words, the reference point moves from significant others to the self, since self-directed benefits (i.e. intrinsic pleasure and quality assurance) are concerned (Tsai, 2005). Such a distinction is consistent with Shukla and Purani's (2012) opposition between other-oriented luxury values, which consists in addressing signals to significant others, vs. self-oriented luxury values that relate to personal benefits derived from luxury possessions. This distinction has decisive implications for the possible influence of gender on luxury values. Gender is elaborated through interactions that involve consideration of, or conformity to, the expectations of others regarding sex-typed traits and roles enactment (Eagly & Wood, 1999). This means that referring to significant others plays a key role in the construction of gender. Therefore, gender may primarily influence luxury values that enable consumers to display gender to others, namely interpersonal (outer-directed) rather than personal (inner-directed) values. In contrast, we do not expect any significant influence of gender on personal luxury values that are inner-directed, and thus less likely to form part of gender display.

Based on the above research findings by De Barnier et al. (2012) and the gender literature on conceptual frameworks identifying influences from interpersonal values, this study focused on the elitist, exclusivity and refinement values of luxury.

2.3. Luxury values and gender: hypothesis development

Although the influence of gender on luxury values has to date received little attention (Stokburger-Sauer & Teichmann, 2013), some findings suggest that gender intervenes in luxury value segmentation. For instance, women are overrepresented in clusters that favor the hedonic value of luxury (Hennigs et al., 2012; Wiedmann, Hennigs, & Siebels, 2009). For clothing, Stokburger-Sauer and

Teichmann (2013) report that: (i) women hold both more positive attitudes toward luxury brand and higher purchase intention compared to men, and that (ii) women attach more importance to status, uniqueness, and hedonic value. Therefore, based on SST, we develop hypotheses (Fig. 1) about gender influence on the three interpersonal luxury values identified by De Barnier et al. (2012): elitism, exclusivity, and refinement.

2.3.1. The elitist value of luxury

According to SST, consumers may give more importance to luxury values that are consistent with beliefs concerning their own gender and its status within the social structure. Indeed, endorsing gender and status-consistent values provide consumers with a means to claim gender identity and to legitimate status asymmetry by incorporating attributes they are expected to hold (Bourdieu, 2001). Given that gender beliefs associate men with dominant and self-assertive traits and roles typical of high-status occupations (Eagly, 1987), we assume that men are more inclined than women to signal status by emphasizing elitism in luxury brand consumption.

H1a. Men give more importance to elitism in luxury consumption than women.

Vigneron and Johnson (1999) state that conspicuous consumption (CC), i.e. the public display of material goods to signal wealth and status (Veblen, 1899), drives elitist values, because the expensiveness and prestige of luxury possessions provide consumers with a means to impress significant others. In parallel, Eastman, Goldsmith, and Flynn (1999) advance that status consumption (SC) involves a dimension of CC to achieve self-enhancement resulting from social recognition. As O'Cass and McEwen (2004) point out, there is therefore a significant overlap in the ways CC and SC are defined. Thus, they propose viewing CC and SC as related but separate constructs. Both constructs are positively influenced by consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence. However, SC mainly consists in valuing status and purchasing goods that provide status, while CC concerns self-enhancement by signaling status to others through overt display (Han et al., 2010). Research based on this distinction shed light on the two constructs' relationships and outcomes. First, in consumerist societies, CC positively influences SC, which in turn bolsters brand status, i.e. a brand's perceived prestige level (O'Cass & Shiahtiri, 2014). Second, CC strengthens the willingness to pay a premium price for a brand, by increasing brand status and brand preference (O'Cass & Shiahtiri, 2013). These findings indicate that SC (CC) directly (indirectly) affects brand status assessment. Since SC involves status-seeking motives and CC status-displaying motives, they may drive the endorsement of elitism, which groups status-related and price-related values (Lee, Phau, & Roy, 2012). Thus, we assume that SC and CC positively influence elitism in the same way as for brand status assessment.

H1b. SC (CC) has a direct (indirect) positive influence on elitism in luxury consumption.

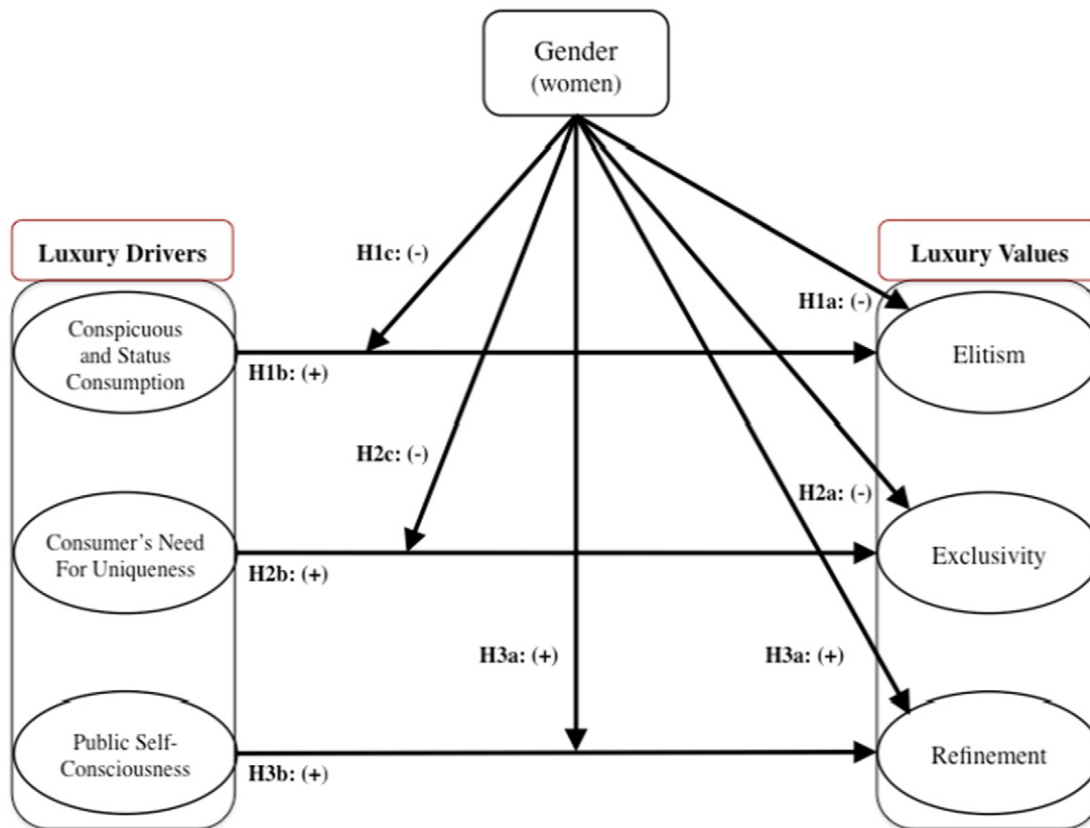


Fig. 1. Conceptual model.

Importantly, Han et al. (2010) report that motivation for status-signaling (i.e. consumer preferences for conspicuously branded products) depends on actual consumer status (wealthy vs. not wealthy) and need for status (high vs. low). For wealthy consumers, a high need for status fosters status-signaling to ensure reactive differentiation from non-wealthy groups. In parallel, non-wealthy consumers tend to mimic wealthy ones when the need for status is high, but do not engage in status-signaling when this need is low. Thus, wealthy groups are more concerned with status-signaling than non-wealthy groups, for which status-signaling involves especially counterfeit rather than genuine luxury products, for budgetary reasons. Such dynamics are consistent with Bourdieu's (1984) findings: wealthy groups serve as a reference for those who are not wealthy, and the former publicly display their higher status to differentiate themselves from the latter. In this sense, status affirmation is a key driver of SC in dominant groups. Thus, given men's higher position in the social structure and the consequent traits and roles assigned to men concerning self-assertiveness and dominance (Eagly, 1987), we expect the relationship between SC and elitism endorsement to be stronger for men than women.

H1c. The positive influence of SC on elitism is higher for men than for women.

2.3.2. The exclusive value of luxury

Gender beliefs view men as more independent than women (Eagly, 1987). Accordingly, men possess a more independent self-concept than women (Cross & Madson, 1997) and are also more inclined to differentiate themselves from significant others, as members of high-status groups do (Lorenzi-Cioldi, 2006). From the perspective of SST, such findings suggest that men have integrated into their self-concept the independence they are associated with, and thus rely on self-differentiation rather than assimilation to

display gender (Eagly & Wood, 1999). Interestingly, in consumption, an independent (vs. an interdependent) self-concept increases preferences for brand with a differentiation (vs. an assimilation) positioning (Aaker & Schmitt, 2001). Thus, we assume that men are more disposed to emphasize exclusivity in luxury brand consumption than women, because exclusivity relies on self-differentiation motives consistent with men's independent self-concept and their higher status.

H2a. Men give more importance to exclusivity in luxury consumption than women.

Vigneron and Johnson (2004) hold that consumers' need for uniqueness (CNFU) drives exclusivity in luxury consumption. CNFU is the pursuit of difference through goods possession and display to enhance the self (Tian, Bearden, & Hunter, 2001). It consists of three interrelated dimensions: (i) counter-conformity choices (less popular but socially acceptable preferences among products), (ii) unpopular counter-conformity (the use of products that deviate from the reference group norm), and (iii) avoidance of similarity (by ruling out commonly used products). CNFU is a compromise between two competing motives: assimilation to and differentiation from others (Ruvio, 2008), which seeks to avoid the negative emotions that extreme similarity and dissimilarity can arouse (Snyder & Fromkin, 1980). Therefore, CNFU and exclusivity can be regarded as two related but separate constructs, because CNFU encompasses assimilation and differentiation, whereas exclusivity concerns only the latter process. CNFU leads consumers to simultaneously express social identity and individuality. For instance, CNFU favors unpopular choices among alternatives to the reference group's norm, but does not affect avoidance of alternatives that fit other groups' norms (Chan, Berger, & Van Boven, 2012). In addition, when looking at luxury consumption, Kastanakis and Balabanis (2014) report that CNFU fosters snob consumption that relies on self-differentiation from mainstream consumers, but limits bandwagon consumption that relies on assimilation with the mainstream. Both

theoretical considerations and empirical findings suggest that CNFU is an antecedent of self-differentiation. Thus, we assume that CNFU favors exclusivity in luxury brand consumption.

H2b. CNFU has a positive influence on exclusivity in luxury consumption.

As discussed, SST posits that gender beliefs and status asymmetries lead men to elaborate an independent self-concept, whereas women elaborate an interdependent one (Wang & Griskevicius, 2014). CNFU relates positively to independent self-concept, but not to interdependent one (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012, 2014), since an independent self-concept involves higher uniqueness motivation (Cross & Madson, 1997). This finding has critical implications concerning the ways gender may affect the positive influence of CNFU on exclusivity. Men's independent self-concept may elicit higher uniqueness motives than women's interdependent one, fostering the positive influence of CNFU on exclusivity among men. For instance, advertising campaigns claiming uniqueness are more effective among male (and high-status) rather than female (and low-status) targets, because uniqueness fits men's self-concept better (for a review, see Iacoviello & Lorenzi-Cioldi, 2014). Accordingly, we assume that:

H2c. The positive influence of CNFU on exclusivity is higher for men than for women.

2.3.3. The refinement value of luxury

Refinement refers to two aspects: emotional benefits resulting from luxury consumption and to self-appearance concern (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). On the one hand, gender beliefs associate women with communal and emotional attributes (Eagly, 1987). Accordingly, women should be more inclined than men to display gender by endorsing emotion-related values (e.g. hedonism and pleasure), which are consistent with gender beliefs. On the other hand, women pay more attention to self-appearance than men, a cue typically used to evaluate women but not men, leading to a detrimental objectification of the former (Heflick, Goldenberg, Cooper, & Puvia, 2011). Given that women are more concerned with the two aspects of refinement than men, we assume that women would emphasize this value.

H3a. Women give more importance to refinement in luxury consumption than men.

We propose considering self-consciousness as a driver of refinement. Fenigstein, Scheier, and Buss (1975) define self-consciousness as a consistent tendency to direct attention inward or forward. Self-consciousness has three facets: (i) private self-consciousness (personal thoughts about the self), (ii) public self-consciousness (others' reactions to the self), and (iii) social anxiety (discomfort in the presence of others). Public self-consciousness (PSC) plays a key role in social behaviors, because individuals high in PSC tend to establish causal relationships between the self and others' reactions (Fenigstein et al., 1975; Scheier, 1980). Consequently, consumers high in PSC select and use products so as to impress others (e.g. Burnkrant & Page, 1982; Bushman, 1993). PSC is also related to self-appearance, which is part of the refinement dimension of luxury values. For instance, PSC has been found to be strongly and positively correlated with self-appearance concern (Netemeyer, Burton, & Lichtenstein, 1995) and several clothing-related measures, such as clothing interest, fashion opinion and conformity in dress style (Solomon & Schopler, 1982). Thus, we hypothesize that PSC drives the endorsement of refinement value.

H3b. PSC has a positive influence on refinement in luxury consumption.

Importantly, Gould and Barak (1988) report that PSC is positively related to femininity but not to masculinity, assessed by Bem's

(1974) sex role inventory. This finding indicates that PSC is connected with feminine traits and roles women can endorse to display gender, while this is not the case for masculine attributes. Therefore, PSC may strengthen women's but not men's endorsement of luxury values that are consistent with gender beliefs. Such values primarily relate to refinement for women, as discussed, particularly self-appearance concern. For instance, women are more inclined to manage self-appearance to fit a partner's expectations than men, owing to higher sensitivity to the others' opinions (Von Bayer, Sherk, & Zanna 1981). Thus, we hypothesize a stronger relationship between PSC and refinement for women.

H3c. The positive influence of PSC on refinement is higher for women than for men.

To test these hypotheses, we conduct three studies from samples of frequent luxury brand buyers in France, which were balanced in size concerning gender, social class, and age class. Balancing samples allows one to orthogonalize (i.e. to make uncorrelated) the variables of interest, and thus to estimate their specific effects regardless of the potential covariations among predictors (Draper & Smith, 1998). Therefore, such a procedure provides unbiased estimates of gender effect, which are independent from and thus could not be explained by differences in other variables. To avoid possible bias related to sex-typed orientation (masculine vs. feminine) of product category, and resulting gender differences in consumer involvement (Auty & Elliott, 1998), participants are questioned about luxury brands in general rather than a particular product category. Study 1 identifies values associated with luxury brand consumption. Study 2 explores the structure of such values and the influence of socio-demographics, especially gender. Study 3 tests the influence of three drivers of luxury values – conspicuous and status consumption, CNFU, and PSC, as detailed above – and the hypothesized moderating effects of gender.

3. Study 1: the content of luxury values

3.1. Sample, design, and measures

This study is based on a sample of 512 French respondents who purchased at least one luxury brand in each of the three following product categories during the past 12 months: perfumes, clothes, and leather goods. This choice seeks to select the most meaningful sample – actual frequent luxury buyers – thus ruling out limitations due to the frequent use of student samples (Peterson, 2001). For each product category, respondents first listed the brands they had purchased. We then cross-referenced with the Colbert Committee³ classification. Only buyers of referenced luxury brands in the three product categories participated. Based on this criterion, we used a non-probabilistic method to draw a sample balanced on eight age classes (16 to 22, 23 to 29, 30 to 36, 37 to 43, 44 to 50, 51 to 57, 58 to 64, and 65 and over), social classes (lower vs. upper class, established according to the French National Institute for Statistical and Economics Studies inventory, and gender. Each cell from this factorial design, 8 (age) × 2 (social class) × 2 (gender) includes 16 respondents. We collected the data in Paris (N = 256) and Marseilles (N = 256) via face-to-face surveys. Participants were approached in shopping centers to answer the question *Above all, what do you look for in luxury brands?* by completing (in five words or less) this sentence: *In my opinion, a luxury brand must...* This procedure is adapted from Keller (2009) and aims to identify consumer-based values associated with luxury brand consumption.

³ A French regulated organization that gathers the most reputable luxury brands (see www.comitecolbert.com).

3.2. Results and discussion

We obtained a total of 1942 words, an average of 3.79 words per respondent. We then grouped words with the same etymology, retaining 82 items cited by at least 2% of the respondents (Table 2). Three judges performed a thematic content analysis of this lexical corpus, based on semantic atlas mapping, which provides clustering of synonymic relationships among words (Ji, Lemaire, Choo, & Ploux, 2008). Krippendorff's alpha (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007) reveals a good intercoder reliability (≤ 0.81 ; 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.76 to 0.86). We solved discrepancies among judges with discussions and established 12 categories, representing 87.6% of the initial corpus. Table 2 indicates that six of these values (i.e. quality, beauty, pleasure, uniqueness, rarity, and expensiveness) are all listed by the three luxury scales proposed by Kapferer (1998), Vigneron and Johnson (2004), and Dubois et al. (2005) respectively. Further, two values (creativity and history) are key features of Kapferer's scale, but not of the two other scales. In contrast, elegance and status is only mentioned in the scales of Dubois et al. and Vigneron and Johnson. Prestige is not considered in Dubois et al.'s scale, which seeks to differentiate it from luxury. Interestingly, none of the previous scales include trust, while 20% of respondents cite this value. This finding is consistent with the key role of brand trust in luxury brand loyalty (Song, Hur, & Kim, 2012). Such pattern of results suggests that the twelve values we identify may offer a more integrative and exhaustive typology of values derived from luxury brand consumption than previous scales. (See Table 3.)

From a broader perspective, these twelve values partially match the four dimensions Wiedmann et al.'s (2007) conceptual framework of luxury perception is based on (Table 2). The values we identify overlap with the different aspects of the financial (i.e. expensiveness) and social (i.e. prestige and status) dimensions from Wiedmann et al.'s model. However, our values only cover some of the aspects of its functional (i.e. uniqueness and quality, but not usability) and personal (i.e. pleasure, but not materialism or self-identity value) dimensions. In addition,

Table 3
EFA of luxury values and descriptive statistics for Study 2.

	Communalities	Loadings			
		Factor 1 Refinement	Factor 2 Heritage	Factor 3 Elitism	Factor 4 Exclusivity
Elegance	0.72	0.86			
Beauty	0.50	0.71			
Pleasure	0.44	0.67			
Quality	0.61		0.78		
Trust	0.51		0.71		
History	0.45		0.66		
Status	0.60			0.77	0.31
Expensiveness	0.41			0.69	
Prestige	0.47			0.62	0.39
Uniqueness	0.69				0.88
Rarity	0.40			0.38	0.62
Creativity	0.38				0.61
Eigenvalues		3.42	1.86	1.49	1.27
Importance		4.21	4.07	3.38	3.82
Jöreskog's rho		0.79	0.76	0.74	0.75
AVE		0.56	0.51	0.49	0.51
Correlations	Factor 1	1.00	0.34*	0.20*	0.23*
	Factor 2		1.00	0.29*	0.30*
	Factor 3			1.00	0.44*
	Factor 4				1.00
Gender		0.27*	0.01	-0.31*	-0.21*
Social class		0.21*	0.05	0.22*	0.17*
Age		0.07	0.27*	0.02	-0.17*

Note: only loadings > 0.30 are reported.

several values that consumers generate and regard as key in their consumption of luxury brands (i.e. beauty, creativity, elegance, history, and trust), are not part of Wiedmann et al.'s model. Such discrepancies raise a question about the operationalization of luxury perceptions across the two studies. Our operationalization focuses on what consumers look for in luxury brands, that is the desired attributes which highlight brand-oriented motives. In contrast, as noted by Hennigs et al. (2013), Wiedmann et al.'s model is consumer-oriented rather

Table 2
Occurrence (%) of luxury values and previous scales.

Category	Words	Occurrence	Values from previous scales			
			Kapferer (1998)	Vigneron and Johnson (2004)	Dubois et al. (2005)	Wiedmann et al. (2007)
Quality	Fault-free, crafted, excellence, exceptional, exemplary, noble and precious materials, quality, perfect	67	Crafted, excellence, high quality	Luxurious, best quality, superior	Best quality	Quality
Beauty	Attractiveness, aestheticism, charm, beauty, harmony, seduction, sensual, splendid, sublime	60	Beauty, sensuality	Glamorous	Aesthetics, sensuality	–
Elegance	Distinction, elegance, exquisite, fine, refinement, smart, stylish, sophistication	51	–	Exquisite, sophisticated	Refined people, good taste	–
Prestige	Celebrities, esteem, prestige, reference, renown, reputation	47	Reputation	Leading, powerful, successful	–	Prestige
Pleasure	Contentment, desire, dream, joy, happiness, magic, pleasure	45	Magic	Rewarding, stunning	Dream, makes life beautiful, pleasure,	Hedonic value
Uniqueness	Different, distinguishable, exclusive, incomparable, inimitable, unique, without equal	37	Exclusive, unique	Precious, unique	Differentiation from other people	Uniqueness
Creativity	Avant-garde, creative, innovative, inventive, originality, trendy	31	Creativity, creative genius, fashion	–	–	–
History	History, experience, past, savoir-faire, tradition	26	History, tradition	–	–	–
Rarity	Rare, out of the ordinary, owned by few people, scarcity, uncommon, not mass-produce	23	Few people own	Rare	Few people own, scarcity, not mass-produced	–
Trust	Confidence, credibility, guarantee, honest, trust, reliable, sure value	20	–	–	–	–
Status	Accomplishment, fulfilment, standing, status, standard of living, success	18	–	For the wealthy	Education is needed	Conspicuousness
Expensiveness	Elitism, gentry, selective, unaffordable to most people	14	A minority can buy, expensive	Elitist, expensive	Expensive	Price

Table 4
Descriptive statistics for Study 3.

	Mean (S.D.)	Jöreskog's rho	AVE	Correlations (HTMT ratios) among latent constructs (* $p < 0.001$)									
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
1. Refinement	4.33 (0.74)	0.76	0.52	1.00									
2. Heritage	4.04 (0.75)	0.73	0.47	0.31*	1.00								
3. Exclusivity	3.41 (0.77)	0.77	0.53	0.23*	0.32*	1.00							
4. Elitism	2.72 (0.72)	0.75	0.50	0.17*	0.24*	0.40*	1.00						
5. PSC	1.44 (2.09)	0.88	0.70	0.43*	0.10	0.04	0.08	1.00					
6. CNFU	0.41 (2.20)	0.83	0.61	0.05	−0.08	0.37*	0.02	0.21*	1.00				
7. SC	0.31 (2.68)	0.83	0.71	0.01	−0.06	0.14*	0.51*	0.22*	0.26*	1.00			
8. CC	−0.10 (2.34)	0.85	0.74	0.03	−0.11*	0.04	0.35*	0.22*	0.14*	0.62*	1.00		

than brand-oriented, since it also includes motives related to luxury brand consumption, such as materialism or self-identity affirmation. Given that our operationalization is more restrictive, it is not surprising that our participants did not mention these antecedents. Rather, the respondents listed a wider range of luxury brand attributes, including some not integrated into Wiedmann et al.'s model. Finally, because our sample was made of actual luxury brand buyers, we expect our findings to be more representative of consumer-based values associated with luxury brand consumption than previous studies using convenience samples.

4. Study 2: structure and segmentation of luxury values

Study 2 aims to identify the structure of luxury brand values and the effects of three socio-demographic variables: gender, social class, and age class.

4.1. Sample, design, and measures

A total of 640 French respondents, who were approached in shopping centers, participated. Each cell resulting from the factorial design 2 (*gender*) × 2 (*social class*) × 8 (*age*) includes 20 respondents who had bought at least one luxury brand in each of the three following categories: perfumes, clothes and leather goods, during the past 12 months. We collected the data in Paris ($N = 320$) and Marseilles ($N = 320$) with via face-to-face surveys. Participants rated the importance of the twelve luxury values identified in Study 1 on a six-point scale (from 1 = *not important to me* to 6 = *essential to me*). In line with Rokeach's (1973) procedure, a short description accompanied each value so as to limit possible polysemy (Appendix A).

4.2. Results and discussion

4.2.1. Structure of luxury values

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin index is 0.76 and the Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant ($\chi^2(66) = 2067.23, p < 0.001$), indicating the appropriateness of factor analysis. Therefore, we ran an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to investigate the structure of luxury values. Following Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum, and Strahan (1999), we used maximum likelihood extraction after checking for distribution normality (skewness and kurtosis are lower than 1 for all variables). Since we expected factors to be correlated, we performed an oblique Promax rotation. We extracted four factors with eigenvalues > 1 (Table 3). All communalities

Table 5
Conceptual framework of luxury values and gender effects.

Interpersonal values			Personal values
Refinement	Elitism	Exclusivity	Heritage
Beauty	Expensiveness	Creativity	History
Elegance	Prestige	Rarity	Quality
Pleasure	Status	Uniqueness	Trust
Female-oriented	Male-oriented	Male-oriented	N.a.

> 0.40 (except for creativity, which was slightly lower than this threshold). Factor loadings are significant and > 0.6, and only three cross-loadings with second loadings < 0.4 are observed, showing the four-factor solution's adequacy. Factor 1 refers to refinement, since it groups values related to self-appearance and hedonism: elegance, beauty, and pleasure. Factor 2 concerns brand heritage in terms of history, quality, and trust. Values that load high on Factor 3 refer to elitism, with status, expensiveness, and prestige. Factor 4 groups values related to exclusivity: uniqueness, rarity and creativity. Jöreskog's (1971) rho > 0.7 and Fornell and Larcker's (1981) Average Variance Extracted (AVE) > (or close to) 0.5, indicating convergent validity. All absolute correlations among factors are lower than the AVE squared root, offering evidence of discriminant validity. This pattern reveals the four-factor model of luxury values' relevance.

This four-factor model shows strong convergences with De Barnier et al.'s (2012) findings. All the three previous luxury values scales state elitism. Similarly, exclusivity groups what these scales label uniqueness (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004), distinction (Dubois et al., 2005), and creativity (Kapferer, 1998), which all refer to the differentiation motive. Refinement, which is included in Vigneron and Johnson's scale, also encompasses values that refer to Dubois et al.'s hedonic dimension, suggesting that luxury buyers associate self-appearance concern with affective outcomes. Finally, heritage groups Vigneron and Johnson's quality and Kapferer's renown dimensions, which both reflect quest for authenticity (Beverland, 2006).

4.2.2. Importance and segmentation of luxury values

Bonferroni's post hoc comparisons reveal a clear hierarchy (Table 3) in the importance of luxury value dimensions. Refinement ($M = 4.21$) is the most important value from a consumer perspective, followed by heritage ($M = 4.07$), exclusivity ($M = 3.82$), and elitism ($M = 3.38$), all paired comparisons among aggregated means are significant ($p < 0.01$).

Since the sample is strictly balanced on gender, social class, and age class, correlations among these variables are null. We contrast-code gender (−1 for men, +1 for women) and social class (−1 for lower class, +1 for upper class), and use correlations to investigate the segmentation of luxury values (Table 3). Men give more importance to both elitism ($r = -0.31, p < 0.001$) and exclusivity ($r = -0.21, p < 0.001$), while women give more importance to refinement ($r = 0.27, p < 0.001$), supporting H1a, H2a, and H3a. Such findings are in line with the SST of gender, since consumers appear to endorse luxury values consistent with gender beliefs and roles. Men (viewed as dominant and independent) emphasize elitism and exclusivity, while women (viewed as emotional) emphasize refinement. Since refinement includes hedonic values, this last result confirms Stokburger-Sauer and Teichmann's (2013) findings: women associate more closely hedonism with luxury brand consumption.

In contrast, this study disagrees with the aforementioned authors in that we found that men give more importance to both exclusivity and elitism. These findings suggest that we should not assume that luxury is just a *female thing*. Stokburger-Sauer and Teichmann's (2013) and our research were conducted in different countries, Germany and

France, suggesting a possible cultural effect. For instance, Hennigs et al. (2012) report that German consumers give more importance to functional luxury values, while French consumers give more importance to financial luxury values. However, this cross-cultural effect seems unlikely to account for the gap between the two research's findings. This is also the case for possible differences in the content of luxury value dimensions. Indeed, in Stokburger-Sauer and Teichmann's study, the uniqueness and status dimensions refer to the pursuit of individuality, and to both independence and self-sufficiency respectively, which is consistent with our view, and thus which cannot account for the opposite results observed. Finally, discrepancies may also result from differences in sociodemographics and luxury consumption level. Stokburger-Sauer and Teichmann's samples comprised mostly young people in their study 1, or only students in their study 2. In their study 3, only 17.7% of the participants purchased any luxury brand. Thus, the use of students and convenience samples calls their findings' generalizability to actual luxury buyers into question. In addition, Stokburger-Sauer and Teichmann used clothing as a product category in their study 3. Since women are more involved in clothing than men (Auty & Elliott, 1998; Fairhurst, Good, & Gentry, 1989; O'Cass, 2000; 2004), gender differences in luxury values may result from gender differences in involvement. Thus, their findings may not extend to luxury consumption in general, but may be limited to product categories in which women are more involved than men. In contrast, our results concern luxury brand consumption in general, and demonstrate that men are more inclined to emphasize exclusivity and elitism than women.

Finally, elitism ($r = 0.22, p < 0.001$), refinement ($r = 0.21, p < 0.001$), and exclusivity ($r = 0.17, p < 0.001$) are more important for upper rather than lower class participants, suggesting that the higher the income, the higher the expectations toward luxury, as Lipovetsky and Roux (2003) note. Age favors endorsement of heritage ($r = 0.27, p < 0.001$), but limits endorsement of exclusivity ($r = -0.17, p < 0.001$), confirming the opposition among the older people's traditional vs. younger people's self-directed values, which Schwartz et al. (2001) has largely documented. This results pattern highlights the sociodemographic segmentation of luxury brand consumption.

5. Study 3: the moderating effects of gender on luxury value drivers

After identifying the content (Study 1) and structure (Study 2) of luxury values, Study 3 tests the influence of CSC, CNFU, and PSC on such values, and the moderating role of gender.

5.1. Sample, design, and measures

Study 3 involves 1024 French respondents. Each cell from the factorial design 2 (*gender*) \times 2 (*social class*) \times 8 (*age*) includes 32 luxury buyers, which were surveyed and selected in the same way as Study 1 and Study 2. We collected the data in Paris ($N = 512$) and Marseilles ($N = 512$) via face-to-face surveys. We used the same procedure as Study 2 to assess the importance of the twelve luxury values (Appendix A). The three drivers of luxury values were CSC, CNFU, and PSC (Appendix B). Four items from O'Cass and McEwen (2004) assessed conspicuous (2 items) and status (2 items) consumption. Three items from Tian et al. (2001) measured CNFU. Three items from Fenigstein et al. (1975) assessed PSC. We rated all items on 11-point scales (from $-5 =$ strongly disagree to $5 =$ strongly agree).

5.2. Results

5.2.1. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of luxury values

First, we performed CFA using maximum likelihood estimation (Jöreskog, 1969) on ratings related to luxury values. The four-factor model of luxury values ($\chi^2(48) = 86.25, p < 0.001$) fits the data well along Hu and Bentler's (1999) cut-off criteria: Root Mean Square Error

of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.03, Standardized Root Mean square Residual (SRMR) = 0.03, the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) = 0.98, and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.99. We then performed a second CFA that included the three hypothesized drivers of luxury values: CNFU, PSC, and CSC, with the latter as a two-factor model that separates SC and CC. This second model ($\chi^2(181) = 369.80, p < 0.001$) also achieves a good fit – RMSEA = 0.03, SRMR = 0.03, TLI = 0.97, and CFI = 0.98 – indicating that the measurement model is satisfactory. In addition, the Jöreskog's rho > 0.7 and the AVE $>$ (or close to) 0.5 shows each construct's convergent validity (Table 4). Importantly, absolute terms of correlation among constructs are lower than each construct's AVE squared root, providing evidence of discriminant validity. We also examined HeteroTrait-MonoTrait (HTMT) ratios to further explore each luxury value factor's discriminant validity concerning its postulated driver. Using Monte Carlo simulation, Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2015) have shown that, to date, the HTMT ratio is the most robust method to assess discriminant validity. HTMT estimates the ratio of correlations of indicators across vs. within constructs, and thus constitutes an approximate of correlations among constructs. As indicated in Table 4, these ratios are well below the 0.85 threshold for all construct pairs, confirming discriminant validity. These findings indicate that each luxury value and its driver are related but clearly separate constructs. Finally, CC and SC are also related but separate constructs, which is consistent with O'Cass and McEwen's (2004) proposition. Thus, our model considers CC as an antecedent of SC, as reported by O'Cass and Siahtiri (2014).

5.2.2. The moderating role of gender

We use the two-step residual centering approach (Little, Bovaird, & Widaman, 2006) to test interactions between gender and latent construct of SC, CNFU, and PSC. We first calculate product terms of contrast-coded gender by each indicator of the three latent constructs. Second, we regress each of the resulting product terms onto gender and indicators of the latent construct of interest. We use regression residuals to estimate interaction terms between gender and latent constructs. Since regression residuals are uncorrelated with gender and latent construct, this procedure remove collinearity, and orthogonalize each interaction term and first-order effect terms. Thus, it provides estimates that fully represent the unique variance of interaction effects. We also control for the influence of age and social class (contrast-coded) on luxury values.

Our conceptual model ($\chi^2(457) = 973.39, p < 0.001$) achieves a good fit: RMSEA = 0.03, SRMR = 0.05, TLI = 0.95, and CFI = 0.96. The examination of pathways (Fig. 2) confirms that men give more importance to elitism ($\odot = -0.30, p < 0.001$) and exclusivity ($\odot = -0.25, p < 0.001$), while women are more attached to refinement ($\odot = 0.27, p < 0.001$), supporting H1a, H2a, and H3a. Elitism ($\odot = 0.17, p < 0.001$), exclusivity ($\odot = 0.17, p < 0.001$), and refinement ($\odot = 0.20, p < 0.001$) are more important for upper than lower class respondents. Younger consumers are more attached to exclusivity than older ones ($\odot = -0.17, p < 0.001$), while the latter are more concerned with heritage ($\odot = 0.33, p < 0.001$). Thus, the segmentation of luxury values observed in Study 2 is replicated.

We can verify the positive influence of CC on elitism ($\odot = 0.42, p < 0.001$), CNFU on exclusivity ($\odot = 0.29, p < 0.001$), and PSC on refinement ($\odot = 0.35, p < 0.001$), supporting H1b, H2b, and H3b. Interestingly, CC positively influences SC ($\odot = 0.63, p < 0.001$). Thus, we use the bootstrap procedure (Hayes, 2009) to test the indirect effect of CC on elitism via SC. A bias-corrected 95% confidence interval for this indirect effect ranges from 0.21 to 0.33, with a point estimate of 0.27. Since the confidence interval does not include 0, this pattern provides evidence of an indirect effect of CC: CC strengthens SC, which – in turn – positively influences elitism, confirming that CC can be regarded as an antecedent of SC (O'Cass & Siahtiri, 2014).

Significant interactions between gender and SC ($\odot = -0.16, p < 0.001$), gender and CNFU ($\odot = -0.19, p < 0.001$), and gender

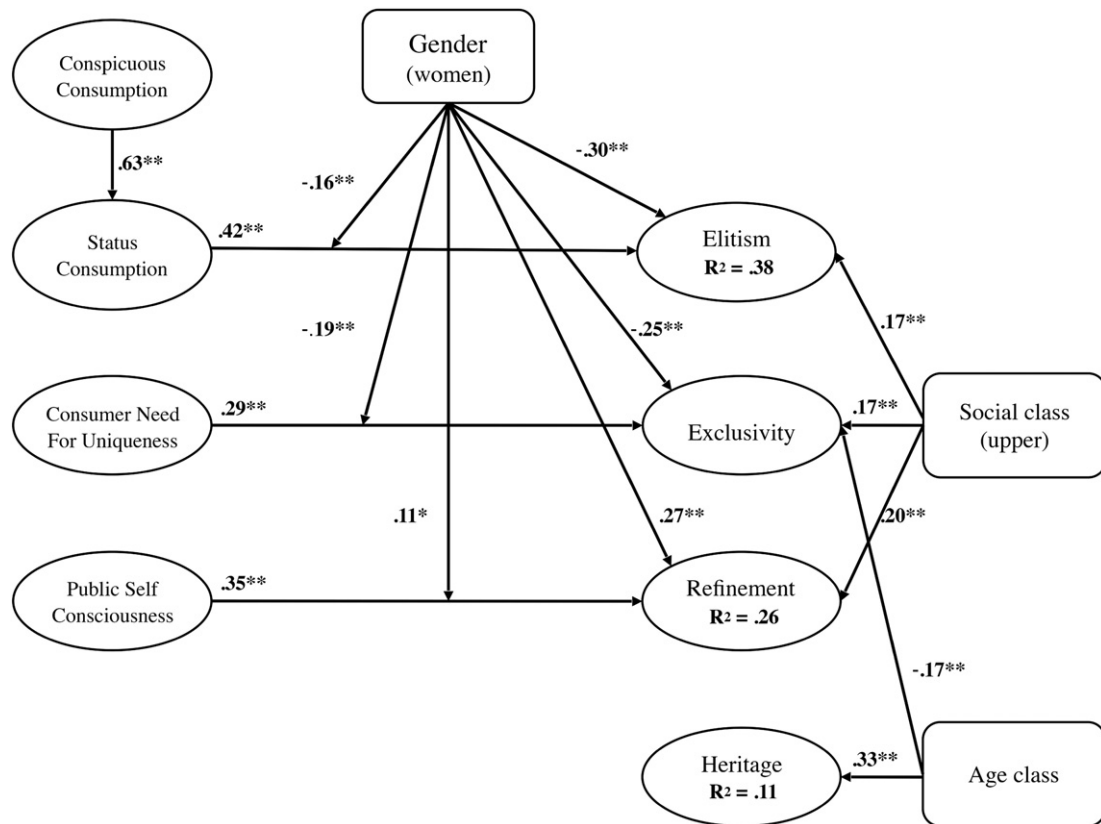


Fig. 2. SEM standardized pathways (* $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.001$).

and PSC ($\beta = 0.11$, $p < 0.01$) reveal the moderating role of gender. On the one hand, both the positive influence of SC on elitism and the positive influence of CNFU on exclusivity are higher for men than women, supporting H1c and H2c. On the other hand, PSC has a higher positive influence on refinement for women, supporting H3c.

Finally, the model provides satisfactory explanation for interindividual differences in the importance given to elitism ($R^2 = 0.38$), exclusivity ($R^2 = 0.28$), refinement ($R^2 = 0.29$), and to a lesser extent to heritage ($R^2 = 0.11$), insofar as we do not consider any driver of this value.

6. General discussion, implications, and limitations

6.1. Theoretical implications

Our studies show the influence of gender on luxury values of Western consumers and its moderating role. Study 1 identifies the values that frequent luxury buyers⁴ associate with luxury consumption, and provides an exhaustive and integrative pattern of luxury brand values. This pattern, which includes all the luxury values that previous scales consider, also adds trust. As a contribution to this research field, Study 2 reveals the appropriateness of a four-factor model of luxury values comprising, in order of importance: refinement, heritage, exclusivity, and elitism. This model accords with De Barnier et al.'s (2012) findings. Indeed, refinement blends elegance

and hedonic value resulting from brand experience. Heritage embraces brand quality and renown, while exclusivity and elitism refer to differentiation and status-signaling respectively (Table 5). As predicted, gender affects the three interpersonal luxury values – refinement, elitism, and exclusivity – but not heritage, which refers to personal values (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). According to the SST of gender, self-appearance concerned and emotional women emphasize refinement, whereas dominant and independent men give more importance to elitism and exclusivity. Thus, each gender appears to favor values consistent with gender beliefs and status.

Study 3 replicates and extends Study 2's results, since it shows that gender moderates the influence of luxury value drivers. This moderation consists of higher positive influence of PSC on refinement for women, and higher positive influence of CNFU and SC on exclusivity and elitism respectively for men. In sum, since women are more concerned with self-appearance, PSC (which reflects sensitivity to others' opinions), is a stronger driver of refinement for women. Conversely, CNFU (which relies on differentiation from significant others) provides independent men with a higher motive to endorse exclusivity. Finally, given that gender beliefs associate men with dominance resulting from higher status, SC (which consists of status signaling) is a stronger driver of elitism for men. As postulated, gender moderates the influence of these three drivers of luxury brand values in ways consistent with gender beliefs and status.

Altogether, these findings suggest that luxury is not just a *female thing*, since female and male consumers do not favor the same luxury values, and owing to gender differences in the influence of luxury value drivers. Each gender possesses a specific relationship to luxury brands in accordance to its position in the social structure and related beliefs and roles. Otherwise, men's luxury consumption would remain marginal, which is not the case. In addition, using frequent luxury brand buyers rather than convenience or students samples,

⁴ For instance, in Study 3, the average of reported luxury brand purchased over the past 12 months is 3.58 for perfumes, 4.35 for clothes, and 1.89 for leather goods, which suggests that participants can be regarded as frequent luxury buyers.

enables us to generate values that actually guide luxury brand consumption. By doing so, we provide support for hypotheses issued from SST, which views gender as a construct via interactions in which individuals display traits and roles to claim their own identity. Our main results indicate that values and drivers associated with luxury consumption may be regarded as the expression of gender attributes, resulting from the differing distribution of men and women into occupations. What each gender emphasizes in luxury brand consumption is consistent with the sex-typed division, which tends to place men in a dominant position and women in a subordinate one (Bourdieu, 2001). For instance, women are more concerned with self-appearance, which remains a criterion that others use to evaluate them, leading to detrimental objectification (Heflick et al., 2011). Such a structural homology between differences in gender status, gender beliefs and roles, and drivers of luxury values illustrates the ways in which consumption behavior contributes to reproduce the social structure, as Bourdieu (1984) and Holt (1998) have pointed out.

Alternative interpretations can be advanced in terms of evolutionary theory (Buss, 1999), which emphasizes the roles of evolved dispositions and adaptive mechanisms in thought, and their implications for consumer behavior (Griskevicius & Kenrick, 2013; Saad, 2013). Women's and men's respective focus on refinement vs. elitism and exclusivity can be viewed as an adaptive process in mate selection. This process may lead women to capture attention, and lead men to compete with their challengers by displaying attributes and material resources sought by women (Moore, Cassidy, Smith, & Perrett, 2006). However, as Wood and Eagly (2013) state, culture or biology alone cannot account for gender differences. Thus, an integrative multilevel model is still needed so as to articulate propositions issued from these two perspectives.

6.2. Managerial implications

Managerial implications primarily concern two complementary aspects of luxury brand consumption: (i) a specific segmentation of frequent buyers (based on luxury values and drivers that dominate across genders), and (ii) a means to adapt advertising claim to target. Our findings reveal a clear hierarchy among luxury values, according to which refinement appears as the most important one from a consumer perspective. Thus, it may be tempting to consider refinement as the most accurate value that a luxury brand should claim. However, given that the importance of luxury values depends on sociodemographic factors, especially gender, this may not hold true. Accordingly, it would be relevant to claim refinement when targeting women or upper class people, because both groups accord this value a higher importance. In addition, such a claim may benefit from the stronger positive influence of PSC on refinement for female consumers. In contrast, claiming refinement would probably be less effective for men or lower class people, since both groups are less sensitive to this value. Understanding these differences is important for the sake of greater communication effectiveness. In practice, the slogan *Elegance is an attitude* (used by Longines for men's and women's wristwatches) might not be as effective among men. Since this claim is based on refinement (which is female-oriented), this slogan may be more effective among women than among men in building brand appeal. In contrast, claiming elitism or exclusivity should be more appropriate for male consumers, who are more attached to such values and are more sensitive to the positive influence of SC and CNFU. For instance, the 2014 *Man of Today* campaign for the men's fragrance Bottled by Hugo Boss insists on the celebrity endorser Gerard Butler and his persona as a successful and independent man. The brand appeal portrays status and uniqueness, which in this case is adequate with the target (men).

The proposed model of luxury values and their respective drivers offers an operational framework that consists of a practical

segmentation, targeting, and positioning tool, and an effective method to design communication campaigns. Our conceptual model allows for a better targeting process and generates a more accurate assessment of the relevance of advertising claims, based on the fit between a claim's content and the target's luxury values.

6.3. Limitations and further research

Finally, our research has limitations. First, our explanations concerning the influence of gender on values associated with luxury brand consumption and their drivers are based on both gender beliefs and differences in male and female self-concepts. However, we do not measure adherence to gender beliefs, nor assess self-concept. While the literature documents both matters (Wood & Eagly, 2012), the inclusion of such measures may provide additional support for the interpretations we propose. Second, this research sampled French consumers. Since luxury values vary across cultures (e.g. Godey et al., 2013; Hennigs et al., 2012), future research should explore our findings' generalizability. For instance, Wong and Ahuvia (1998) argue that the prevalence of independent self-concept in Western societies leads consumers to emphasize the private rather than the public meaning of luxury consumption. The reverse pattern applies to Eastern societies, which are based on interdependent self-concept. Thus, Eastern consumers should be more concerned with interpersonal luxury values. Culture also shapes gender beliefs by associating men with the most culturally valued attributes. Men are viewed as more independent than women in individualistic Western societies, while men are viewed as more interdependent than women in collectivistic Eastern societies (Cuddy et al., 2015). These findings suggest that influence of gender on luxury consumption could take another direction in Eastern societies, since gender beliefs are partially reversed, compared to Western societies. Third, our studies focus on three interpersonal values, but do not consider any antecedent of brand heritage that consists of personal values. Thus, this topic should be explored further by considering potential drivers of brand heritage, notably bonding (affective links to brands) or sensitivity to brand credibility (see Wiedmann, Hennigs, Schmidt & Wüestefeld, 2011). Fourth, since it was our goal to identify drivers of luxury brand consumption, we have only selected frequent luxury brand buyers. A comparison with a non-buyer sample could therefore shed light on values that hinder luxury brand consumption. These limitations draw some interesting research developments to better capture and understand values derived from luxury brand consumption, their drivers, and the role of gender in such relationships.

Appendix A. Labels and phrasing used in the luxury values scale (free translation)

Label	Phrasing
Beauty	A luxury brand should embody beauty, aestheticism, and charm
Creativity	A luxury brand should be creative, innovative, and avant-garde
Elegance	A luxury brand should embody elegance, refinement, and sophistication
Expensiveness	A luxury brand should be expensive, elitist, and unaffordable to most people
History	A luxury brand should have a rich history, tradition, and savoir-faire
Pleasure	A luxury brand should elicit pleasure, desire, and fantasy
Prestige	A luxury brand should be prestigious, famous, and highly esteemed
Quality	A luxury brand should be of exemplary quality, perfect, and fault-free
Rarity	A luxury brand should be rare, uncommon, and owned by few people
Status	A luxury brand should express a certain status, standing, standard of living
Trust	A luxury brand should be trustworthy, reliable, credible
Uniqueness	A luxury brand should have a unique, exclusive, and distinctive style

Appendix B. Scales and items phrasings of luxury value drivers

Scale	Measured concept (items)
Conspicuous and status consumption (CSC): O'Cass and McEwen (2004)	- Conspicuous consumption (CC): <i>I love to be noticed by others.</i> <i>I like to show who I am.</i> - Status consumption (SC): <i>I prefer brands that are success symbols.</i> <i>I like brands that indicate achievement.</i>
Need for uniqueness (NFU): Tian et al. (2001)	- Creative choice counter-conformity: <i>Often, when buying merchandise, an important goal is to find something that communicates my uniqueness.</i> - Unpopular choice counter-conformity: <i>I often violate the understood rules of my social group regarding what to buy or own.</i> - Avoidance of similarity: <i>When products or brands I like become very popular, I lose interest in them.</i>
Public self-consciousness (PSC): Fenigstein et al. (1975)	<i>I usually worry about making a good impression.</i> <i>I am concerned about what other people think of me.</i> <i>I am usually aware of my appearance.</i>

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