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Unrequited Luxury Love

A story about how luxury met the internet

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Abstract

The luxury industry has for long been hesitant towards online channels. It has been argued that the accessibility and mass-distribution of the internet is not compatible with values of exclusivity and rarity that are said to be critical to luxury brands. Despite this, many luxury brands have recently started to embrace online channels and research done on luxury consumers have shown that they do not perceive a contradiction with luxury brands being online. This made us question what this shift implies for the meaning of luxury. To investigate this, a qualitative media analysis was conducted that examined how luxury has been represented in relation to the internet since the introduction of the internet until today. In total, 113 articles were analyzed over a period of 30 years. This revealed how luxury has gone from being defined by powerful luxury brands as an exclusive rarity for the elite, to an accessible service following the demand of the consumer. Our study holds relevance beyond the luxury market as it combines theories within the fields of storytelling and performativity, to demonstrate how market actors can shape present market meanings by telling stories about the future with the help of media and industry analysts.

Keywords: Luxury, representations, narratives, fictional expectation, promissory organizations.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The Corona-crisis has hit the world as one of the biggest crises in the 21th century. Restrictions to keep social distance have had a major impact on our everyday life as well as society at large. Lockdowns of cities has caused changes in how people shop, creating a surge in low-contact commerce (Murphy, Neart & Strong, 2020). The sudden blow of the crisis has forced many companies to manage their businesses with the help of new innovative ideas and technologies, not least the internet. The internet has proven to be the key to survival in these days as it used as a tool for selling and communicating. Still, there are markets where the internet for long has been, and still is, met with resistance. Let us talk about the luxury industry.

A professor within the field of luxury branding once told us that "LUXURY + WIFI = NONO!". Although this expression may not qualify for the most stylistically in this text, it captures the basic essence of what has long been the belief by most luxury scholars and practitioners ever since the dawn of e-retailing in the beginning of 2000. Namely, that luxury brands and the internet are incompatible. Many luxury brands have long been hesitant to entering the Internet (Okonkwo, 2009a) and it is today still seen as one of the most underdeveloped online sales channels (Statista, 2019). For example, Chanel ventured into ecommerce as late as in 2015 (Socha, 2015). To this day Chanel only sells fragrances, beauty, and eyewear online and the brand is openly skeptical about the merit of e-commerce (La Torre, 2019). The main barrier for luxury brands has been a concern for how the increased accessibility induced by the internet will affect the perception of a luxury brand's exclusivity (Berridge, 2018). This concern has been based on the assumption that luxury equals exclusivity and rarity, something that has long been taken for granted in the luxury industry (Kapferer 2012; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). The internet on the other hand, stands for accessibility, openness and transparency, qualities that are said to be the direct opposite of what luxury stands for (Sample, 2018). It is not surprising therefore that luxury brands have been hesitant to adopt technologies that intuitively goes against everything that their brands stand for, and risk ruin brands that have taken decades to build (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009).

Despite the reluctance towards the internet, the luxury goods market has been booming in recent years (Arienti, 2019). However, it is not sales from the physical stores that are estimated to grow - online sales is expected to stand for a far stronger growth rate of 15-20% (D'Arpizio, Levato, Prete, Del Fabbro, & de Montgolfier, 2019; Arienti, 2019). The personal luxury goods market had an estimated total value of €260 billion in 2018 and it also outperformed the other luxury segment (e.g. luxury cars or luxury hospitality) in terms of growth in sales (D'Arpizio et al., 2019). Accordingly, it does seem as if many luxury brands have started to embrace the internet. Furthermore, within the research field we see that the previously assumed contradiction between luxury and the internet, by some referred to as the *"internet dilemma"*, may actually not exist (Kluge & Fassnacht, 2015; Liu, Burns & Hou, 2013). The consumer perspective of purchasing luxury brands online has also been researched and it seems consumers are positive towards luxury brand's use of digital technologies and do not experience a degradation of the luxury brand value (Kim, 2019; Van Kerrebroeck, Willems, & Brengman, 2017; Beuckels & Hudders, 2016). Researchers have been surprised by these findings, but they have been accepted just as such. We find it surprising that no one yet has questioned what it means that two concepts that seem completely contradictory, now act together seamlessly. This makes us question our understanding of what luxury is and why we do not see this contradiction anymore. Taking a broader perspective, we believe that this enquiry may shed light on industries beyond the luxury sector. How does the assumptions and meanings that construct an industry change? Who has power in influencing this change process and how can this be done? By examining these questions, we believe that we can form a deeper understanding for how industries change, what role different actors play in this change process and how this relates to meanings, power, and agency.

1.2. Purpose

Based on the discussion above, we question what has happened within the luxury industry to make the two previously contradictory concepts of luxury and the internet work together. As most of the previous research on online luxury has been conducted from a consumer perspective, we have identified a research gap covering how other actors within the luxury industry understand luxury in relation to the internet. We question the current understanding of what luxury is and ask whether there has been a change in its meaning since the introduction of the internet. This would have implications for the premises under which luxury brands operate. However, meanings are not ready-made “out there”, rather they are continuously (re)constructed and negotiated (Weick 1995). One way of communicating and negotiating meanings are through representations. The Oxford Dictionary (2020) defines representations *as “The description or portrayal of someone or something in a particular way or as being of a certain nature.”* Depending on how something is described or portrayed, different meanings will be ascribed to it (framing effects would be an example of this). Scholars have also argued for the importance of representations when it comes to constructing meanings (Rosa, Porac, Runser-Spanjol, & Saxon, 1999; Rinallo & Golfetto 2006; Kjellberg & Helgesson 2006). We therefore see that how luxury is represented in relation to the internet, should have implications for its meaning. Because of this we argue for the relevance of studying how luxury has been represented since the introduction of the internet, in order to understand how the meaning of luxury has changed from that point of time, until today. Further, we acknowledge that representations are performed by actors and we therefore need to consider not only how luxury is represented, but also by whom. Luxury brands including the world’s largest luxury conglomerates such as LVMH, Richemont and Kering are obvious actors to consider (Hanbury 2019). We also see how the largest online luxury retailers such as Net-a-porter and Farfetched would make sense to include (Danziger 2018). Further, we believe that market actors whose purpose is to represent phenomena should be included, such as the media and different types of market analysts, as they are likely to have been involved in the processes of representing luxury and the internet. In summary, this study aims to explore how luxury has been represented over the course of the internet’s introduction and trajection until the present day, and what this implies for the meaning of luxury. The research question for this study is:

How has luxury been represented by different actors since the introduction of the internet, and how has these representations contributed to the shaping of the meaning of luxury?

The luxury industry can first be broadly divided into luxury services and luxury goods. We chose to exclude services and focus on luxury goods. Within the luxury goods industry, we delimitate the scope to personal luxury goods including mainly apparel, accessories, cosmetics and jewellery (Statista, 2019). This means that we do not include luxury automobiles, yachts and properties.

The thesis is structured as follows. First, we will present a literature review consisting of the current research on the concept of luxury and how luxury relates to the internet. Then we will formulate our theoretical framework consisting of theories within storytelling and performativity. After this, we will present and argue for our chosen method and methodological approach. Following this is our empirical findings where our data and analysis is combined to present how the concept of luxury has changed over the last 30 years. We will end with a discussion of how our findings contribute to the luxury literature and the theory within storytelling and performativity, as well as some concluding remarks.

2. Literature review

The literature review starts with a section about how luxury is to be defined. Then we will look at what this implies for how to manage and market luxury brands. Lastly, we will look at the current research regarding the compatibility of luxury and the internet.

2.1. Defining luxury

Luxury goods have been around at least since the Antiquity and was long used by the upper class of Society as a mean to signal their wealth and status (Chandon, Laurent, & Valette-Florence, 2016; Kapferer & Bastien, 2009; Seo & Buchanan-Oliver, 2014). The value of a luxury good was argued to lay in its exclusivity and difficulty to obtain, as it was reserved only for the elite and served as a powerful status marker and social class divider (Chandon et al., 2016;Kapferer & Bastien, 2009; Mason, 1984; Veblen, 1899). However, as the world became increasingly democratic and strict social classes gradually faded, the role of luxury goods changed (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). As anyone was allowed to buy and own a luxury item, characteristics such as high quality, aesthetic value, and high prices came to denote luxury goods. The goods were produced as handcrafted items by small family-owned businesses (Okonkwo, 2009b). The idea of luxury *brands*, as opposed to luxury *products*, is a relatively new concept and it emerged as multinational conglomerates such as LVMH, Gucci Group and Richemont formed during the late 1990's and early 2000 (Seo & Buchanan-Oliver, 2014). These houses discovered that luxury firms who invested heavily in brand-building seems to outperform those who did not (Okonkwo, 2009b).). The luxury brands Louis Vuitton, Gucci, Hermès, Rolex, and Christian Dior are today considered to be the biggest players within the personal luxury goods segment in terms of sales (D'Arpizio et al., 2019).

Despite the long history of luxury goods, there are still no agreed upon definition of the concept. In a comprehensive bibliometric study conducted by Aliyev, Urkmez and Wagner (2019), an overview of the most influential definitions of luxury is presented that aims to overcome the confusion of luxury's definition. The authors compile articles from the last 20 years and distinguishes the most agreed upon definitions. See revised *Table 1* as presented by Aliyev et al. (2019) where we have included a selection of the definitions.

Table 1. Definitions of Luxury (adapted from Alivey et al. 2019)

Author	Definition
Kapferer (1997, p. 253)	Luxury defines beauty; it is art applied to functional items. Like light, luxury is enlightening. Luxury items provide extra pleasure and flatter all senses at once. Luxury is the advantage of the ruling classes
Phau and Prendergast (2000, p. 123)	Luxury brands evoke exclusivity, have a well-known brand identity, enjoy high brand awareness and perceived quality, and retain sales levels and customer loyalty.
Dubois et al. (2001)	Luxury is based on six facets: excellent quality, very high price, scarcity and uniqueness, aesthetics and polysensuality, ancestral heritage and personal history, and superfluousness
Chevalier & Mazzalovo (2008, p. viii)	Luxury is one that is selective and exclusive, and which has an additional creative and emotional value for the consumer.
Fionda and Moore (2009, p. 349)	Luxury is defined in terms of their excellent quality, high transaction value, distinctiveness, exclusivity and craftsmanship.
Hung et al. (2011, p. 458)	A luxury brand is defined as a branded product that is carefully crafted, unique, and conspicuous

The most influential article within luxury research, based on number of citations, according to Aliyev et al. (2019) is the one by Vigneron and Johnson (2004). In this article, Vigneron and Johnson (2004) developed a construct to measure perceived luxury and argued that a brands' luxuriousness depends on non-personal perceptions such as conspicuousness, uniqueness and quality, and personal perceptions such as hedonism and extended self.

Lastly, some authors take a social perspective on the definition of luxury goods (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009; Berthon, Pitt, Parent & Berthon, 2009; Chandon et al., 2016). For example, Kapferer and Bastien (2009) argues that luxury items are a cultural phenomenon that function as democratic social markers that recreate social stratification. They argue that what distinguishes luxury items from premium products is that they have an artistic dimension that goes beyond functionality and reason (Chailan, 2017). One learns how to appreciate luxury products, in the same way one learns how to appreciate art, which further exemplifies the exclusiveness and importance of acquired taste (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009).

Looking at the characteristics of the compiled articles from the study by Aliyev et al. (2019) as well as the properties and characteristics that distinguishes luxury product from non-luxury products (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004; Kapferer & Bastien, 2009), we note that a majority of the articles discuss exclusivity either implicitly or explicitly. The Merriam-Webster (2020) and Cambridge Dictionary (2020) define exclusivity as something that is "*Snobbishly aloof*", "*restricted in distribution*", "*expensive and only for people who are rich or of a high social class*", "*limited to only one person or group of people*", "*stylish or fashionable*", and "*having the power to exclude*". As the concept of exclusivity is used in most articles within the area of luxury, we see that exclusivity is a red thread in most definitions despite the varying definitions of the concept. Even though anyone is allowed to buy luxury, not everyone is able to appreciate it and not everyone can afford it. This could be translated to that not everyone should have it, stressing the criticality of accessibility. How might the introduction of the internet, often described as a democratic tool, have influenced the concept of luxury where rarity and exclusivity seem to lay at its core?

2.2. Managing the luxury brand

Although there is no agreed upon definition of luxury, our discussion regarding the definition of luxury emphasizes several qualities that distinguish luxury goods from non-luxury goods. This in turn has implications for luxury goods' brand strategies. Many scholars have discussed how managing luxury brands differs from managing non-luxury brands (e.g. Aliyev et al., 2019; Kapferer & Bastien, 2009; Kapferer, 2012; Atwal & Williams, 2009; Dion & Arnould, 2011; Dubois & Duquesne, 1993; Fionda & Moore, 2009; Magnoni & Roux, 2012; Dubois & Paternault, 1995; Berthon et al., 2009) and below we will present the general ideas.

Kapferer and Bastien (2009) argues for how luxury brands follow marketing rules that are counterintuitive to marketing regular goods, therefore naming them the "anti-laws" of marketing (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). For example, the authors argue that when marketing regular goods, the customer is at the heart of the business and brands should listen to the customer and aim to offer them products that corresponds as closely as possible to the consumer's wishes. However, for luxury brands the creator of the brand is in the center (Arnould & Dion, 2011). Kapferer and Bastien (2009) argues that this means that a luxury brand should always stay true to itself and not listen too much to the customer and even resist customer demands that goes against what the brand stands for. They also argue for how the luxury brand should dominate - but still respect - its client as the basis for luxury brands lies on recreating social stratification. If luxury brands make themselves equal to the customer, they will lose their aura of authority and worship.

Arnould and Dion (2011) emphasized how luxury retail strategies differs from non-luxury retail strategies in that they are based on the charismatic persona of the designer, rather than on the brand or product attributes. They demonstrated how the designer is constructed as an artistic genius who creates an ideology of adoration around the brand. The designers' talents are seen as magical in a sense that they are so out of this world exceptional that they ought to be worshiped. This also means that the customer is given a much more reactive role compared to in a regular brand-customer relationship, as they follow and worship the creative genius that is the designer. Luxury marketing therefore they argue, is marketing of adoration, where:

"... brands try to impose their offerings on the market not by responding to customer demand, but by developing an aesthetic ideology that can be diffused to the consumer. The aim is that the bewitched consumer becomes a willing adorer." (pp.514)

The issue of rarity as also been widely discussed within luxury research where rarity is argued to be a key dimension of a luxury brand and product (e.g. Dubois & Paternault, 1995; Phau & Prendergast, 2000; Chailan, 2017; Kapferer & Bastien 2009). Kapferer (2012) has also argued for the criticality of rarity when it comes to luxury goods. However, he makes a distinction between objective rarity and virtual rarity. Objective rarity means restricting production, however this is an issue as this strategy is impossible to combine with growth. The solution, Kapferer argues, is to adopt a strategy of virtual rarity, meaning to create an image of rarity, but without limiting production or the number of goods sold, also discussed by Catry (2003). This can be translated into restricting distribution, turn luxury into artwork and the designer into an artist, and communicating beyond the target group. The art dimension of luxury goods has also been discussed by Chailan (2017).

2.3. Luxury and the internet dilemma

Finally, we believe it is important to understand the meaning of the internet to be able to understand its implications for the luxury goods industry. We also need to know the research that has been done in regard to digitalization of the luxury market.

To begin with, the internet was invented as a communication tool for the U.S Defense to communicate between computers through a single network (Andrews, 2013; Roser, Ritchie, & Ortiz-Ospina, 2020). After the invention of the World Wide Web it developed into a tool for collecting, sharing, and storing information (Andrews, 2013) as well as interacting with anyone regardless of geographical restrictions (Leiner et al., 2009). Today, it has become known as the "information superhighway" (Andrews, 2013) and because of its widespread use and mass-communicative purpose, the meaning of internet is highly linked to the mass-reach as an interactive communication tool and democratization in terms of striving to be available to anyone at any time (Sample, 2018).

The role of the internet in the luxury industry has received attention by scholars and practitioners (Beuckels & Hudders, 2016; Liu et al., 2013; Kim & Ko, 2011; Fazeli, Shukla & Perks, 2020; Pentina, Guilloux & Micu, 2018; Kim 2019; Castillan et al., 2017; Yu, Hudders & Cauberghe, 2018; Arrigo, 2018). When online shopping was a relatively new phenomena, researchers discussed the internet dilemma for luxury brands (Baker, Ashill, Amer & Diab, 2018; Kluge & Fassnacht, 2015; Okonkwo, 2009a). The internet dilemma was a concern for how the increased accessibility of selling online would affect the perceived exclusivity of luxury brands. On one hand, increased accessibility goes against one of the core principles of luxury brands, namely exclusivity. On the other hand, selling and communicating online would give luxury brand the opportunity to reach new customer segments that otherwise would not have been able to visit a physical store.

Against this backdrop, scholar set out to examine the potential benefits and disadvantages of the internet for luxury brands. The main concerns were (1) that an online presence may erode brand desirability. This led to a stream of research investigating luxury brands online from a consumer perspective, with an aim of quantitatively measure how certain factors online influences certain responses, perceptions and behaviors within the consumer (Beuckels & Hudders, 2016; Liu et al., 2013; Kluge & Fassnacht, 2015; Kim, Choi & Lee, 2015; Kim, 2019; Van Kerrebroeck et al., 2016 etc.). The findings were quite unanimous: consumers did not seem to perceive any contradictions with luxury brands selling or being online, and the increased accessibility of online sales did not seem to erode consumer perceptions of rarity or brand desirability.

In parallel to the increasing interest in consumers' perception of luxury brands online, researcher also started to look at how luxury firms operate online, as well as to give recommendations for how they should operate online, e.g. depending on what sort of product they sell (Baker et al., 2018; Okonkwo, 2009a).

It thus seemed that the internet dilemma was solved. Luxury brands are setting out digital strategies and increase their online presence, and consumers seem to fully embrace it. However, why the internet dilemma - that for so long caused agony and uncertainty amongst both practitioners and scholars - disappeared have yet not been investigated by anyone. How did the shift in the compatibility of luxury and the internet occur, and what does it imply for the assumptions underlying the concept of luxury?

3. Theoretical framework

As we have demonstrated in our literature review, the luxury industry has undergone changes in how the internet is viewed and used. We see evidence that suggests that there has been a shift in what luxury is, although we cannot see exactly how this has occurred or what the change has entailed. Therefore, to answer our research question we first need a theory that takes a temporal approach to market construction, that focus on the changing nature of market meanings, and , that look at how different actors can contribute to the shaping of markets. Also, novel technologies such as the internet are generally surrounded by predictions of their future potential, expectations and hype, to an extent much greater than that of already existing technologies (Pollock & Williams 2016). Geiger and Gross (2017) have demonstrated how hype surrounding new technologies also contribute to shaping the market and flows of investments. They also criticize the conventional models of innovation diffusion to not account for the fact that new markets have recently been shown to be actively constructed in processes including various stakeholders, rather than neatly follow a diffusion or product-life cycle curve. Given the novelty of the internet, we would assume that it has been surrounded by expectations and projections since it was introduced on a large scale. Further, like Geiger and Gross (2017), we argue that these expectations should not be seen as neutral guesses but may hold power to shape and influence the market and actors they concern. This approach to markets goes under the broad theory of performativity (Callon 2007) and that will be the theoretical foundation to this thesis. For the remainder of this section, we will give an overview of the theory, go into depths into the domains that we believe are most relevant for our work, and, present our conceptual model.

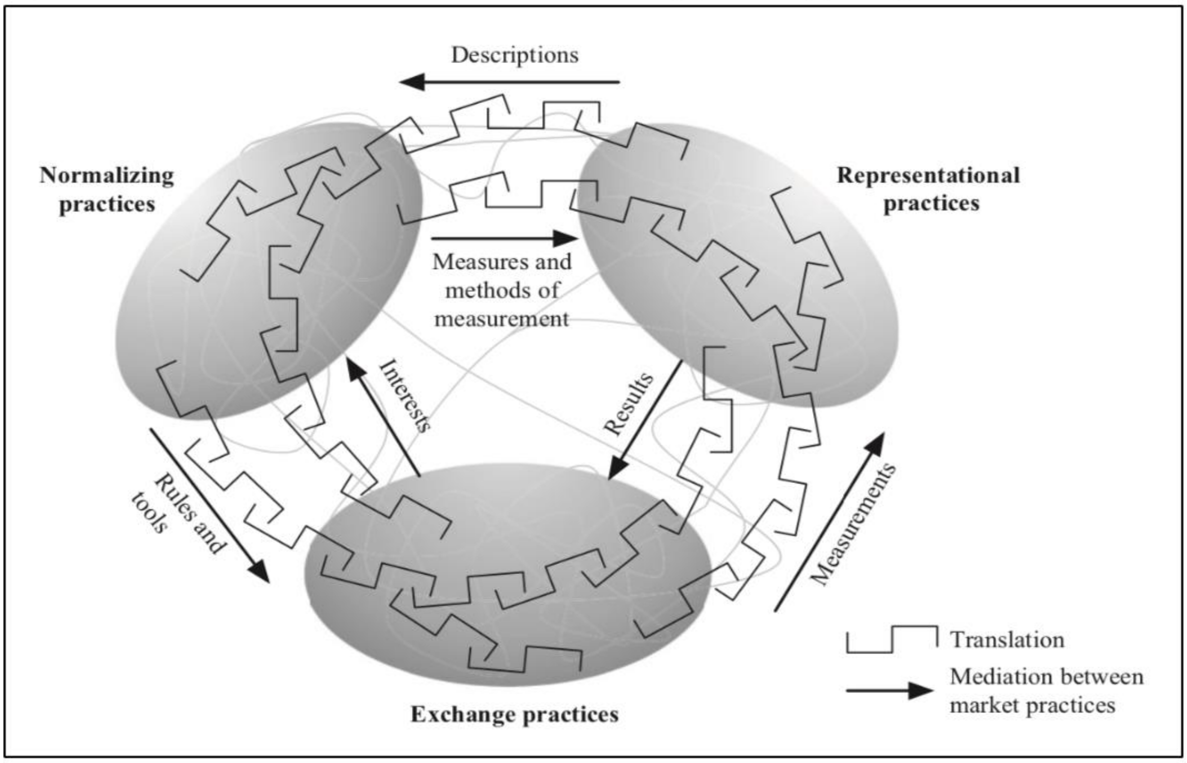
3.1. Introduction to performativity

Performativity theory is a relatively recent turn in economic Sociology and was first proposed by Callon as a way to understand how economic theory influences the shaping of the economy (Callon, 2007). This means that theorizing about economy cannot be done in isolation of the economy and that the theory aiming to describe economic reality, will influence what economic reality is produced. The Callonian approach has since then been broadened to include not only how economic theory shape the production of markets, but also how other types of practices shape markets (MacKenzie, 2006; Esposito, 2013; Kjellberg & Helgesson 2006).

Performativity theory is usually described as an extension of actor-network-theory (Callon, 1999; Latour, 1987). The actor-network theory (ANT) argues that reality only consists of networks consisting of non-human and human actors, by Latour (1987) named actants. Actor-network-theory argues that both human and non-human actors can partake in action and affect how events unfold. Actants are interconnected in socio-technical networks that are continuously re-structured, organized and shaped through ongoing market practices (Latour, 1987). The performativity theory further argues that both human actors and material entities have performative power in markets and on what reality is produced (Callon, 2007; Cochoy, Pascale & Araujo, 2016; Geiger, Kjellberg & Spencer, 2012). Markets are therefore continuously changing and shaped by the activities and interactions that takes place in the marketplace (Cochoy et al., 2016).

A theory that sees markets as continuously re-structured by the practices that takes place in the market, suggests that scholars should look at what market actors do. Therefore, it is important to have a thorough understanding of what type of practices exist that contribute to the ongoing re-construction of markets. Kjellberg and Helgesson (2006) have proposed three types of market practices that shape markets (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. The heuristic model of markets as constituted by practice (Kjellberg and Helgesson, 2006).



These are *exchange practices* that include the concrete activities that are involved when a good or service is being exchanged, *normalizing practices* that include all activities aimed at setting normative standards, objectives or regulations for a market, and lastly *representational practices* that include all activities that aim to represent markets. These practices are connected through chains of translations, a process that describes how something spreads, first proposed by Latour (1986). Kjellberg and Helgesson (2006) define translations as *"a basic social process by which something …. spreads across time and space"* (Kjellberg & Helgesson, 2006 pp.843). Crucial to this theory is that an item, idea, human actors etc. has no inherent force in itself that makes it spread, instead the "force" lies within all other actors and material entities that helps or inhibit the spreading of it.

3.2. Why study representational practices?

Although markets consist of several different types of practices, many scholars have argued for the importance of representative practices when it comes to shaping and performing markets (e.g. Rosa et al. 1999; Rinallo & Golfetto 2006; Kjellberg & Helgesson 2006; Esposito, 2013). Intuitively this makes sense. Esposito (2013) argued for how representations reduce uncertainties in markets as they help market actors to build shared understandings of what the market is, and to form shared expectations of what the market will become. As such, they help in coordinating activities, make decision, and take action. As the introduction of the internet can be assumed to have increased the level of uncertainty within the luxury industry, we would think that looking at practices that aim to reduce and manage uncertainty would be particularly important for our cause. Therefore, this study will focus solely on representational practices and leave legitimating and exchange practices out of scope. Representational practices include expectations and as we have already discussed, expectations and projections play an important role when it comes to novel technologies, such as the internet.

When talking of representations, one also need to consider that firms and other market actors would want to represent themselves and the market in ways that are beneficial for themselves and their goals (Beckert, 2013; Esposito, 2013). This suggests that when talking about representational practices, one need to consider not only what is represented and how it is represented, but also by which actor and to what aim. Moving on therefore, we will start to look more closely at in what ways actors may represent markets. Followingly, we will discuss the actors we believe are most relevant in representing the luxury market.

3.3. How do actors represent markets?

3.3.1. Narratives and stories

Representational practices often aim at creating shared understandings of markets and to define what the market is (Kjellberg & Helgesson, 2006). This implies that representational practices are essential for constructing shared meanings. Many researchers today argue that storytelling and narratives play a crucial part in constructing meaning and representing past, present, and future events (e.g. Näslund & Pemer, 2011; Boje, 1995; Rhodes, 2001; Rosa et al., 1999). Because stories are such a powerful way of constructing meanings and representing events, we believe they should be included in our analysis. The traditional view of a story is a plot with a beginning, a middle and an end (e.g. Boje, 1995). However, most researchers agree that a story may be constructed in other, less structured ways (Näslund & Pemer, 2011). For example, Boje (1995) defines a story as *"an oral or written performance involving two or more people interpreting past or anticipated experience"* (pp.1000). He argues that storytelling is a construction process, involving both the storyteller and the listener, as they together construct a narrative. Näslund and Pemer (2011) argue that stories play a crucial role in organizational sensemaking as stories stabilize meaning and construct simple chains of cause and effect. However, they also emphasize that stories are never "finished" as they are constantly re-created and re-defined. Most research on storytelling has highlighted its relation with sensemaking and seen it as a way to interpret and make sense of past events (Weick 1995; Boje, 2011). After all, stories are often used to describe events that has already occurred. However, Boje (2011) argues that narratives, besides from interpreting past events, may also be used to describe future events and interpret ongoing events. He proposes a *Triadic Model of Storytelling (Figure 2)*, consisting of *narratives, living stories* and *antenarratives*.

Figure 2. The Triadic Model of Storytelling (Boje, 2011).

Narratives, he argues, is the dominant view on stories where sense is made retrospectively and the story has the structure of a beginning, middle and end. Living stories are constructed in the present about events that are currently ongoing, and therefore they often lack beginnings and are never-ending. Lastly, antenarratives are stories about the future and he defines them as "*a before narrative that serves as a hypothesis of the trajectory of unfolding events that avoids the pitfalls of premature narrative closure"* (pp. 1). Like living stories, they are continuously unfolding, and sometimes bridged to living stories and narratives. Although Boje does not use the term, he suggests that antenarratives have a performative effect as he argues that they can shape what future will unfold. Moving on we turn to Beckert (2013) who has investigated the role of a certain type of antenarratives, named *fictional expectations*, in an economic setting in how stories about the future may have performative effects on markets.

3.3.2. Fictional expectations

Expectations are a type of representational practice that aim to reduce uncertainty about the market, as they describe what the market will become (Esposito, 2012). Beckert (2013) argues that in order not to be paralyzed by uncertainty, economic actors must form expectations about the future, e.g. regarding consumer preferences, behaviour and technological developments, and make decisions based on those expectations. Although these expectations are nothing more but guesses, actors commit to them as if they were true and base present decisions on these expectations. In this sense, they reduce the perceived uncertainty. Beckert calls these mental representations of the future for *fictional expectations*. Fictional expectations are similar to Boje's antenarratives, however we interpret antenarrative as more open as they are framed as *possible* outcomes, while fictional expectations are guesses actors commit to and treat is if they *will* happen. Beckert's most important point is that actions in the present that are committed to a certain future state, also make that future more likely to happen as it will affect investments, business confidence and actions directed towards that particular state. In this sense, fictional expectations have a *performative effect*.

3.4. What actors are involved in representational practices?

3.4.1. The firm

The point Beckert makes of that fictional expectations are performative suggests that fictional expectations are open to manipulation by powerful market actors (Beckert, 2013). Like Esposito (2013), Beckert highlight the role of market actors in the shaping of expectations, although he suggests that markets actors may willingly manipulate expectations according to their own agenda. His main focus is on how the traditional firm may manipulate the representation of markets to their own benefit. Also, Esposito (2012) puts most emphasis on how firms represent themselves, each other, and markets. Clearly, firms play an important and active role in representing markets and themselves, both according to Beckert and to Esposito. Also, Rinallo and Golfetto (2006) have demonstrated this by investigating the construction process of fashion trends during the Première Vision trade fair.

3.4.2. Promissory organizations

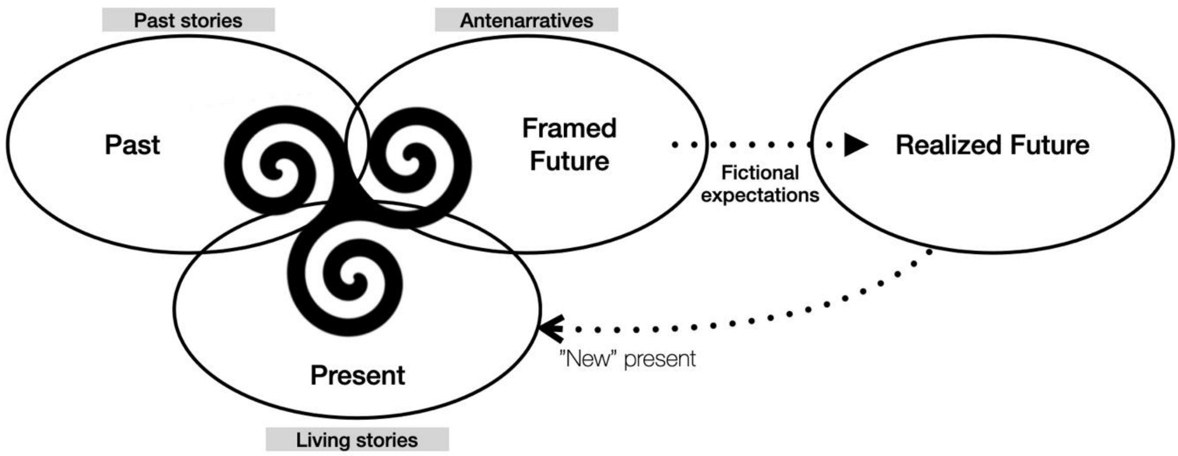
However, other actors than firms also shape expectations and represent markets. Pollock and Williams (2016) examine the role of industry analysts in shaping and mobilizing expectations about new technologies. Industry analysts are conceptualized as “promissory organizations” that produce future-oriented knowledge that does not only aim to represent the current marketplace, but also contribute to shaping it. Promissory organizations are intermediaries that mobilize promises about the potential of new technologies and shape expectations. According to the authors, previous research has demonstrated that their work is performative as it does not only describe a potential future, but also help bringing that future into being. Pollock and Williams (2016) examine to what extent promissory organizations’ work is performative and in what different ways expectations shape technologies. We see that industry analysts work as “promissory organizations” and seem to hold power in representing markets. In doing so, they also shape markets and therefore we argue that they should be an important actor to consider in our analysis.

3.4.3. The media

Although all scholars discussed above have mentioned that actors other than the firm may contribute to the shaping of markets, we cannot help but notice that none of them give much - or any - room to the media. We find this quite surprising, especially since representations need to be spread, or translated, in order to have a performative effect. Obviously, firms are able to spread representations on their own, but considering media’s fundamental role in spreading information and shaping opinions (Macnamara, 2005), we believe that also media is an important actor to take into account when studying representations. Many scholars have argued that mass media shape public opinions, but also that it can be used as an indicator of public opinion (Humphrey, 2010; Deephouse, 2000; McQuail, 1985). Macnamara (2005) argues that mass media is the most powerful communication tool since both media actors and other actors can use it to influence its readers (e.g. firms using it for marketing), which induces a performative aspect. Others have also argued that media plays an active role in constructing reality in how they frame and dramatize events by telling stories rather than simply informing (Rindova et al., 2006).

To summarize, we believe that in order to understand how the meaning of luxury in the luxury industry has changed, we need a theory that describes the changing nature of markets and how new meanings are ascribed to markets. We believe that the performativity approach would be a suitable tool for this aim and we have argued for the importance of representational practices in constructing meaning and shaping markets. Therefore, these are the ones we will focus on in this study. We have also demonstrated that narratives are one type of powerful representational practice and that these can be aimed at representing past events, ongoing events, and future events. How the future is represented is especially important in times of change and uncertainty, therefore we chose to include the theory of fictional expectations in our framework. Lastly, we emphasize that different actors may represent markets in different ways, and we distinguished between the firm, the media, and promissory organizations as especially important actors that represent markets. In *Model 1*, we present our conceptual model that demonstrate the relationship between Boje's Triadic Model of Storytelling and Beckert's fictional expectations. As there is no comprehensive theory on how this section's presented actors relate to the theory of fictional expectations or Boje's narratives, we have no model for the actors at this point.

Model 1. Conceptual Model based on Boje (2011) and Beckert (2013).



4. Method

4.1. Methodological approach

As we wish to explore the concept of luxury and how its meaning has changed since the introduction of the internet, we first argue that meaning is a subjectively ascribed dimension to objects and phenomena that is constructed through continuous processes (Latour, 2003). By construction, we refer to the social processes that construct meaning, rather than the social phenomena that has been constructed (Latour, 2003). For our purpose then, we see the need to study processes, rather than "static" objects. Reality is continuously changing and reproduced as the outcome of interactions and practices. (Kjellberg & Helgesson, 2006; Latour, 1999). What reality is, depends on what reality is enacted and how objects are associated with different meanings. We believe that both socialization and materialization play a role in forming reality as both social processes and material objects will influence what reality is produced (Geiger et al. 2012; Kjellberg & Helgesson, 2006; Law & Urry, 2004; Callon, 1998). Through social processes, meaning is ascribed, and associations are made between human actors, material entities, culture, science etc. There is no "master maker" constructing the world, rather agency is always shared and never independent (Latour, 2003). Process of construction will always include actors over which the constructor has no control. What is interesting to study is these construction processes and their (temporary) outcomes. Our ontological position could therefore best be described as relativist as we believe reality is not absolute, but relative to the context in which is it enacted.

As reality is constructed and knowledge is a part of reality, it naturally comes to say that also knowledge is constructed, rather than existing as an objective truth waiting to be discovered. However, we do not agree with the social constructivist view that knowledge is constructed in a sense that it is relative and not true (Latour, 1999; Latour, 2003). Knowledge is constructed, but that does not make it less real. Instead, construction refers to the process of which knowledge is produced in a sense that it is made comprehensible, put in relation to previous knowledge and traceable back to its original source in the empirical world. Theories are not ready-made and "out there" waiting to be discovered. We agree with Latour (2003) who argues that science is not about finding an objective truth, nor is it the study of different social interpretations of the same social reality. Rather, science is a process that includes construction, discovery, invention, and convention (Latour, 1999). The point of science is not to resemble reality, but to assemble associations between words and the world. Kjellberg and Helgesson (2006) formulates this as *"knowledge is an empirical phenomenon related to establishing durable, or at least retraceable, associations that mediate between matter and form"* (pp.841). The more durable and retraceable these associations are made, the "more true" the knowledge becomes as it becomes more embedded in the network of existing knowledge. Therefore, to answer our research question, we do not seek to find an objective truth of what luxury is, however neither do we intend to understand its subjective meaning to social actors. Instead we are interested in understanding the process within which luxury has been re-constructed and enacted in a particular context. We thus believe that knowledge is constructed, tested and relative to its context, but still real, and we therefore take a pragmatic realist epistemological position (Salinas, 2016).

4.2. Research approach

This study aims to understand how the meaning of luxury has changed since the introduction of the internet. To answer this, we have chosen to conduct a qualitative research study. A qualitative study serves better for exploratory purposes when the aim is to understand processes and meanings (Altheide & Schneider, 2013). It is also useful to explain phenomena that numbers alone are not able to reveal. Since we would like to explore the collective meaning of luxury, mass media was chosen as our data source. Research about media effects have shown that mass media possesses considerable power to affect general opinions, perceptions, and behaviour (Macnamara, 2005). Editorial content influences its readers which in turn affects, for example, share prices, brand image or reputation within in an industry. In addition, mass media does not only affect readers, it also "*…reflect opinion and perceptions through reporting what other people, companies and organizations are saying and doing*" (Macnamara, 2005). Therefore, by studying articles produced by mass media, we argue that we will be able to examine a more general meaning of luxury and how the actors through mass media have tried to influence the perception of the compatibility of luxury and the internet. We believe that checking other sources of information (e.g. annual reports and reports produced by acting firms or industry experts) would not serve a better purpose for this study, since these sources are not considered to reveal the collective meaning of luxury that we are looking for, in comparison to mass media (Macnamara, 2005).

Qualitative media analysis is a rather new type of study, which has gained much attention from researchers since digital technologies made it possible to store and access documents (White & Marsch, 2005). One advantage of media analysis is that it makes it possible to conduct a study over several years in a much shorter period of time. Another advantage is that it allows us to get an overview of the process of how the meaning of luxury have developed throughout the chosen time period. This means that we, in contrast to for example interviews, get stories told as they were at the time, and not constructed in retrospect (Kjellberg & Olson, 2017). Finally, a media analysis includes several actors in an industry, compared to interviews that are often focused on certain groups of actors. As we are interested in the collective meaning of luxury this further motivates our chosen method.

An abductive approach, also known as systematic combining, was used for this qualitative media analysis. The abductive approach constantly moves between an empirical world and the model world and is useful for studies that aim to develop new theories (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). Since this study is of a more explorative character, we believe that systematic combining was the most suitable approach for answering the research question.

The research process for this media analysis was carried out followingly. First a protocol for data collection was constructed based on the research gap identified in the literature review. The protocol was revised several times during the process of collecting data, as suggested by Altheide and Schneider (2013). 113 articles were collected from the database Factiva. As the data was collected, a theoretical framework was constructed simultaneously. The findings were then summarized through an iterative process in combination with the evolving theoretical framework. A more detailed description of our research method is outlined in the sections below.

4.3. Protocol design

Inspired by Altheide and Schneider (2013), a protocol was constructed to establish a structured frame for data collection and analysis. The structure and content of the document protocol is of high importance for a qualitative media analysis (Altheide & Schneider, 2013), and could be comparable to the interview guide for semi-structured interviews.

First a sample of 20 articles, spread evenly from 1990-2019, were collected in order to get a first idea of relevant themes. The identified themes were compiled in an excel-document, creating a first draft for our protocol including themes such as *what challenges/opportunities are mentioned in relation to digitalization* and *how the compatibility of luxury and digitalization is frame*d. The protocol can be found in *Appendix A*. We coded the first 20 articles together to ensure that we would interpret them in a similar manner. This is the preferred method for qualitative document analysis as the activity of collectively analyze parts of the sample ensures that the data collection does not depend on the single researcher, but on the collective understanding (Altheide, 2013). This ensures the trustworthiness of the data.

When the first stage of data collection and analysis was done, we could use the constructed protocol to continue to individually analyze another 20 articles each to a total of 40. By following Altheide and Schneider's (2013) suggested steps of a qualitative document analysis, we then paused the collection to make a second revision of the protocol. This is to ensure that the protocol includes the relevant themes and make possible the inclusion of new themes (Altheide & Schneider, 2013). By doing the suggested revision, three new themes were added. Finally, the last 53 articles were collected, interpreted, and analyzed. A complete list of all 113 articles used in the study can be found in *Appendix B*.

4.4. Data collection

The database Factiva was used for collecting the data. The database offers more than 30 000 sources from 118 countries and includes articles from the most well-known newspapers and magazines (Factiva, 2010). Factiva was chosen as a database because of its comprehensive archive of news articles and press releases, and because it is commonly used among researchers (Kjellberg & Olson 2017; Humphreys, 2010). Also, it offers tools for filtering and sorting, which facilitates finding relevant material. One of its main advantages, compared to competing media research platforms, is that its archive does not only include documents that are from English-speaking countries; one can find documents from almost all countries around the world (Factiva, 2010). As some researchers have highlighted (e.g. Dredger & Weimer, 2015), the reliability of using electronic databases such as Factiva for research purposes can be discussed, mainly considering what search results will appear, since the output is highly dependent on how the system is constructed and how the user is using it. However, by thoroughly looking into the various settings of Factiva, we have anticipated this issue and can assume our output from Factiva to be a reliable source of data. In addition, by only examining mass media articles from Factiva (or articles by mass media in general), there is a risk of overseeing actor groups that are important in the industry, but not represented in media. However, since the very nature of our question regards the collective meaning in a market, we believe that actor groups not represented will neither represent the collective meaning nor be within the scope of this particular study.

The articles collected from Factiva was delimited to the years 1990-1993, 1996-1997, 1998-1999, 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015, and 2019. The reason for not having five-year time spans during 1990-2000 was because it was not possible to find enough material by taking a sample every fifth year. We included the years 1990-1993 to get a firm understanding of how luxury was talked about before the introduction of the internet. We started to collect data at 1990 and stopped in 1993 when no new data emerged. The timespan 1996-1997 was chosen because many luxury e-retailers were founded during this time and this was also the first period in media when the internet was discussed in relation to the luxury market. Finally, during the years 1998-2000 many important events occurred, such as the dotcom bubble, and the media discussion underwent important changes as will be evident in our empirical section. The following years were more stable as changes within the industry happened more gradually, therefore samples from every fifth years were deemed to be sufficient.

For each year, we used two sets of search terms; one to capture the luxury market and one to capture the internet. The search terms were “luxury”, “luxury goods”, and “luxury brands” in combination with “internet”, “online”, “digital”, and “web”. We altered the combination of these words using one from each set and tried all possible combinations for all years. The aim was to find relevant articles that addressed the themes included in our protocol. For each search, the results were filtered to look at industries within the area of personal luxury goods. Different types of newspapers, press releases, and industry news were included, since this would help us identify a general view of luxury and internet. If we would only look at, for example, industry reports, we would only get the view presented by luxury market experts which therefore would not be sufficient to represent the general opinion that we are aiming for. Finally, the search results were ranked to display the most relevant articles first and repeated results were excluded. Factiva bases relevance on how many times the search terms are repeated in the text. An article was chosen if the content covered a minimum of one theme from our protocol, otherwise it was rejected because it would not provide us with sufficient information to properly answer our research question.

A total number of 113 articles were collected, with an approximately even distribution for each year. The amount of data was deemed to be sufficient when we had reached a point of theoretical saturation, defined as when no new information or codes emerge from the data (Given, 2016). For a qualitative media analysis, scholars argue that around 12 articles should be enough for the material to be reliable (Ando, Cousins, & Young, 2014; Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). However, the saturation point always depends on the researchers' intentions for the study (Guest et al., 2006), and we found our sample to be saturated when each year or timespan contained between 12 and 17 articles. For an overview of the data, see *Appendix C* describing the data.

4.5. Quality of study

4.5.1. Assessing the 'goodness' of qualitative research

Criteria for evaluating qualitative research has been widely discussed over the past 40 years (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Moisander and Valtonen (2006) discuss the difficulty of evaluating qualitative research since the trustworthiness criteria are constructed based on the positivistic paradigm. Guba and Lincoln (1994) also argued that there is no good solution to evaluating qualitative research. Despite this, the trustworthiness criteria have often been used in qualitative research (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006; Greene, 2000). The trustworthiness criteria should be carefully used though, due to its similarities to the conventional positivistic quality criteria and as it is not completely constructed to serve our ontological epistemological stance in this research study (Greene, 2000). We have taken notion of these issues when evaluating the present study so that the criteria developed by Guba and Lincoln fit the ontological and epistemological stance of ours.

4.5.2. The trustworthiness criteria

4.5.2.1. Transferability

Transferability is defined as the level of which the results can be transferred to other contexts with other data sources (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Bitsch (2005) exemplifies two strategies for securing transferability: thick description and purposeful sampling. Thick description refers to the act of documenting all processes in the study that would enable for others to replicate the study in other settings with similar conditions (Bitsch, 2005). This has been done by offering a thorough description of our method, and how the research was carried out. We can also guarantee transferability by our use of purposeful sampling, which Patton (1990, pp.169) refers to carefully selecting *"information-rich cases for study in depth"*. As presented in the section 4.4. *Data collection*, our strategy for collecting the data included predetermined criteria to be met, as well as time samples where we only picked specific time periods. It should be stressed, however, that the aim is not to be able to generalize the findings to several sites in qualitative research. Hence, the transferability should only concern case-to-case transfer in this study, which means that by providing thick description, other who wish to transfer our findings for their own use are able to judge the transferability themselves.

4.5.2.2. Credibility

Confidence in the truth of the research findings is often described in terms of credibility (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Treharne & Riggs, 2015). In this study credibility has been ensured by persistent observation and negative case analysis. The collection of data was taking place from late February to early May and in tandem with the construction of our theoretical framework. This allowed us to collect and analyze data both in the beginning and the end of the study. This extensive period of collecting data therefore helped us to conduct "*an in-depth study to gain detail*" (Bitsch, 2005 p.83), described as persistent observation. As we have also considered data that were not there, e.g. actor groups not represented in media the practice of negative case analysis has been used which helped improve the rigor of the study (Bitsch, 2005).

4.5.2.3. Dependability

Dependability regards the replicability of the study (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006). For qualitative research this means being transparent, and therefore we have made sure that the research process has been logical, traceable, and well-documented (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Treharne & Riggs, 2015). Activities that has been taken for achieving dependability are the following: audit trails, peer review, stepwise replication, and also a code-recode strategy applied to a smaller sample of the collected data. This have all been accounted for and presented above in the previous sections of the method.

4.5.2.4. Confirmability

Confirmability refers to that the researcher's findings are derived from the data, and not imagination (Treharne & Riggs, 2015), which ensures that the study is not "manipulated" or based on ulterior motives that defer from the expressed purpose of the research (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Tobin & Begley, 2004). This means that the researcher needs to clearly demonstrate how the work has been done. When all three of the above-mentioned trustworthiness criteria are well supported, confirmability can be said to be established (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). In this thesis, we therefore argue that the study fulfills the criteria of confirmability. Transferability, credibility, confirmability, and dependability are all considered to follow procedures required to assess the study as confirmable and it should therefore be acknowledged to be trustworthy and of value.

5. Empirical findings

This section provides a synthesis of our empirical data and analysis, using the theoretical framework presented in section 3. By demonstrating how media has represented the luxury goods sector from shortly before the introduction of the internet until 2019, we will guide the reader through a process during which we demonstrate how the meaning of luxury has changed.

5.1. 1990-1993 – Exclusivity is everything

In the early 1990's the main living story in media is about luxury brands and licensing, while the internet is not mentioned at all. All articles analyzed during the timespan 1990-1993 discuss luxury and the issue of licensing and restricting distribution. Luxury brands are given much space in media while other actors are absent, apart from occasional comments by promissory organizations to support the story told by luxury brands. Exclusivity is said to lay at the heart of the luxury brand.

The historical narrative during this time describes how during the 80's, several luxury brands increased the number of licensing agreement and also became more liberal in terms of who was allowed to sell their products. This led to an increase of the number of retail spaces and an inclusion of distribution partners that did not fit the luxury brands' image. This distribution strategy is said to have increased the accessibility of luxury brand's products. Both journalists and luxury brands problematize this in all analyzed articles as the increased accessibility and partnerships with the "wrong" kind of retailer were said to have led to a degradation of the brand value and a loss of exclusivity. In the quote below Chanel and Hermès are said to be amongst the few who have managed the recession well because they managed to keep their exclusivity by restricting accessibility.

"At the same time, it is fatal for a fashion house to lose its aura of exclusivity. This means that distribution and licensing must be tightly controlled. Hermes and Chanel, which have both bucked the recession, are almost alone among the Paris houses in never licensing or franchising. Other companies are not as lucky." (Rawsthorn, 1991)

Also, Louis Vuitton state how a luxury brand should restrict distribution by limiting the number of stores to maintain its exclusivity:

"Another aspect of Vuitton's original strategy, he said, is control of distribution. 'We will open 10 to 15 stores a year worldwide,' said Carcelle [president of Louis Vuitton Malletier]. 'The is a reasonable goal for the next few years, but one we should not exceed. Otherwise, we will not be able to keep the idea of exclusivity.'" (Newman, 1991)

Several luxury brands are said to have decided to decrease the number of licensing agreements in order to save their brands and retain their exclusivity. This is framed as something positive by journalists in all articles, and also what needs to be done in order to save the struggling brands. Dior was mentioned as an example where the brand image was being recovered by limiting distribution in terms of licensing. Mr. Arnoult (LVMH) was described as saving Dior from its way towards bankruptcy as he took action to recover the brand's exclusivity.

"For the past two years Dior has been weeding out its weaker licenses - the number of licenses has fallen from 280 at the end of 1989 to 160 today - to strike a balance between making as much money as possible from its name without jeopardizing its 'exclusivity'." (Rawsthorn & Dawkins, 1991)

Here, both journalists and luxury brands seem to agree on the importance of maintaining the exclusivity dimension of a luxury brand and that this is done by controlling distribution and limiting accessibility. We see clear evidence that there exists an agreement of what luxury is all about - namely exclusivity and rarity, as was also demonstrated in the literature review. This shared understanding of luxury also generates shared narratives about what has happened in the luxury industry, and a shared living narrative, as the stories told about the present revolve around the same issues and frame them in similar manners.

What is noteworthy in the early 1990's is also that the journalists give a lot of space to the luxury brands. They interview them directly and seem to agree with their views. Promissory organizations are interviewed in few articles and are only quoted to support the narrative told by the luxury brand. The consumers are not present at all. We interpret the absence of consumers' voice as a sign of their role as a follower in the brand-consumer relationship. This view is also aligned with the unequal luxury brand-consumer relationship discussed in the literature review where we described how luxury brands should dominate their clients. Instead, the luxury brands speak for the consumer and say what the consumer want. The journalists seem to accept this without questioning it or shed a different perspective on it, and we interpret this as a sign of the general respect for the special expertise that the luxury brands have about their products, their brands and their customers. For example, the design director at Gucci speaks for the consumers and what they like. In speaking for the consumers, the brands also implicitly state what luxury should be about, and in the quote below we see how that is quality, craftsmanship and exclusivity.

"People are much more selective about what they buy [...] They are no longer fooled by shoddy products with fancy initials. They want quality and craftsmanship." (Rawsthorn, 1991)

What we also see in the quote is that luxury firms express "how it is" without having to provide any evidence or support for their claims, another indication of their power. It is enough for the luxury brands to say what the consumers like, they do not need to support this with any sales data, statistics, surveys etc. We also see how what the consumers are said to like, have strong implications for what luxury is all about. This brings us to our last point which is the absence of promissory organization. The lack of them we interpret as another sign of the shared understanding of the luxury industry and the luxury firm’s power in telling a story about the history, as well as constructing the living story about the present.

5.2. 1996-1997 - Luxury enters the digital world

In 1996 to 1997, luxury and the internet are for the first time mentioned together in media. The main living story concern how the access to pictures of luxury goods online facilitate counterfeit production. There is no extensive discussion regarding luxury ecommerce and when it is mentioned it is argued to be of little relevance for luxury brands. Luxury brands are given all media space except for occasional comments by promissory organizations that are used to support the views of luxury brands.

The first sign of luxury brands entering the digital world is in 1996 when one of the most influential brands, Yves Saint Laurent (YSL), broadcasts their fashion show on the internet. This brings up the first mentioning of the internet and concept of luxury goods together. Journalists are clear to express that YSL’s decision to broadcast their fashion show online go against many powerful actors and other brands within the luxury industry. For example, Paris high fashion organizing body, the Chambre Syndicale, had earlier the same year decided to ban the use of all photographs of luxury brand’s collections online, in order to battle the production of counterfeit goods. The issue of counterfeits is mentioned in all articles that describes YSL’s move to broadcast their fashion show. Their decision is described as a bold move that may harm the exclusivity dimension that are assumed to be so crucial for a luxury brand as demonstrated in the quote below.

“No, the shiver that runs up the collective spine of the assembled cognoscenti is not due to any irrepressible desire to invest. It is the frisson of raw exclusivity, the knowledge that what is on show ... will only ever be seen by a select few. Imagine what happens, then, when one of the long-serving players in the haute couture game decides to break rank and take his ‘high sewing’ to the masses.” (Todd, 1996)

Thus, we still see that exclusivity is assumed to lay at the heart of luxury brands. As in 1990-1993, luxury brands and journalists are the ones who speak, demonstrating their perceived authority in the matter. YSL are interviewed about their decision to broadcast their fashion show, and other luxury firms are asked what they think of this. Neither consumers nor promissory organizations are given any room in the media regarding this issue. Again, we interpret this as a sign of the still prevalent certainty regarding the future, as well as the present, of the luxury industry.

During this time, the internet is problematized mainly because how the easy access to photographs of luxury firm’s products will facilitate production of counterfeit goods. This issue is brought up in a majority of all articles Also this emphasizes how luxury is something to which access needs to be restricted, a view that both journalists and the luxury firms seem to share.

"*When Jean Paul Gaultier, Christian Lacroix and other Parisian fashion designers accessed the Internet last month, they didn't like what they saw. There, available around the world, were complete sets of photographs from their shows – a cyberspace paradise for other designers to produce cheap knockoffs."* (The Commercial Appeal Memphis, 1996)

Also, although the notion of online shopping is brought up in all articles, luxury brands express that they do not think it will be very important. The reason is that internet does not fit the luxury image, and that the luxury brands "know" that the consumer wants to shop in a physical store where the environment is much more exclusive than online. Once again, we see how the luxury brands take, and are allowed to have, the right to speak for and "dominate" the consumers, as demonstrated in the quotes below.

"However, I [president/ceo Robert M. Cankes, Christian Dior Perfumes] still believe the customer wants to shop in a store where she will receive personal attention and the opportunity to explore the range of products in a pleasant shopping environment." (Drug & Cosmetic Industry, 1996)

Chanel also states that internet and luxury is incompatible without having to state why:

"At Chanel Paris, director of communication Marie-Louise de Clermont-Tonnerre insists: "This mail order aspect of the Internet has nothing to do with the prestigious image of haute couture."" (Todd, 1996)

Again, we see how luxury brand and analysts that oppose luxury and internet together do not need to support their claims with any evidence. It is enough that they state how something is and their expertise is trusted by the media. Promissory organizations and consumers are still quite absent, and luxury brands are thus able to tell the living story of what luxury is today, but also hint on what fictional expectation they have committed to in regard to the internet, namely that the internet will never be very important for luxury brands. The unanimity in narratives and living stories also points at the strength and durability of the current assumptions and meanings within the luxury industry.

5.3. 1998-1999 - Different stories emerge

In 1998 to 1999, the spreading and adoption of the internet has led to a discussion of ecommerce, and several e-retailers have opened and gained traction, amongst them eBay and Amazon. The internet has therefore now started a discussion in media also in relation to the luxury industry and how luxury brands should approach it. Compared to the previous hegemony, we now start to see a diversity of stories and voices as new stories emerge regarding the potential of doing luxury online. Many issues are discussed in relation to luxury online, namely the issue of counterfeits, how the internet will affect branding, and whether consumers will dare to buy expensive items online. We also see positive stories about the potential of the internet for luxury brands, both in terms of ecommerce and online marketing. At this point we see no clear fictional expectations of where the future is heading, instead we see different more vaguely suggested antenarratives, depending on what living story that is told.

The luxury brands are still present in the articles, however, they are given less space in favor of the journalist or analysts talking for them. Luxury brands are described to be hesitant towards the internet as they are said to think that the internet does not fit a luxury image, as demonstrated in the quote below:

“Most designer labels maintain that an Internet shop site doesn't correspond to a luxury image. Chanel was a luxury fashion pathfinder when it launched its site over a year ago. Offering updates on its cosmetics and fragrances and the history of the house, its site is, however, little more than an introduction to the house. Chanel's intentions for it remain undisclosed.“ (Voight, 1999)

Luxury brands are also given more space in articles that concern counterfeits and how the internet is a danger, compared to the space that is given in articles regarding luxury ecommerce:

“The threat of cyberfakes "looms large on our radar screen because of its potential power to disrupt everything we try and do to establish a luxury business," says Simon Critchell, president and chief executive officer of Cartier Inc.” (Quick & Bensinge, 1999)

We see that the story luxury brands are said to tell is one about the internet as either a danger, or as a phenomenon irrelevant to them because of its misfit with a luxury image. This suggest that there is still a prevalent idea of exclusivity and rarity as critical to luxury, and the battle against counterfeits and the reluctance towards the mass-distribution platform internet can be explained by this. Very few luxury brands are directly quoted when it comes to the internet as irrelevant to them, and instead journalists write their truth. In their absence, more space is given to the new luxury e-retailers, analysts, and consumers.

The new luxury e-retailers, such as ashford.com, millionaire.com, and LuxuryFinder, were launched around 1997-1999. They are given much attention in media and are discussed in more than half of all analyzed articles. These e-retailers focused on selling luxury goods online without any physical stores. They started to tell a new living story not based on an idea of what luxury stands for (exclusivity and rarity), but based on what the consumer wants and who the consumer is. They argue that luxury consumers are already, or will want to shop, online and therefore luxury brands need to be there. Also, luxury e-retailers base their statements about online luxury on user demographics, generated by promissory organizations. The luxury e-retailers do not concern themselves with issues around exclusivity or accessibility. First, it may sound intuitive that a firm goes wherever they think the consumers want them to be, but as we discussed in the literature review it is not obvious that luxury brands listen to the consumer and especially not when the consumers demand something that the luxury brands think might be harmful for their brand identity.

Now, we also see how promissory organizations such as market research firms, consultancy firms and other experts are consulted by the media. Sometimes they are used to provide support for the new e-retailers and sometimes they are used as support against them. We interpret this as an increase in the sense of uncertainty regarding the future of luxury and internet. The luxury brands seem to no longer be trusted enough to be given all the room to talk. Instead, journalists seek out new experts in the form of promissory organizations. Some of them support the story told by luxury e-retailers while other discredit the new story of what luxury is all about.

What we see here is that the introduction of the internet seems to have weakened some of the previous taken for granted “truths” within the luxury industry. By telling a new story of luxury that is not based on exclusivity or rarity, luxury e-retailers have started to suggest a different idea of luxury that is compatible with the internet. This has led to increased uncertainty within the luxury industry. Compared to the previous hegemony, we now have several different stories around luxury and the internet. We also see how media use the promissory organizations’ projections and opinions to credit or discredit certain stories.

5.4. 2000 - The battle of two stories

In 2000, we observe how the diversity of stories from the 1999 seem to converge into two opposing living narratives. These two stories are based on different assumptions of what luxury and the internet represents, and they are connected to two opposing fictional expectations. One side describes luxury and the internet as incompatible as internet represents mass-distribution while luxury represent exclusivity. This view was held in almost half of the articles. The opposing story framed luxury and the internet as compatible, the reason being that the average internet user is wealthy, and therefore luxury brands should go where their consumers are. This view was held in almost half of the articles. The remaining articles had a more nuanced frame and brought up both sides of doing luxury online.

The first living story is based on the traditional view of luxury, namely exclusivity and rarity. This story also states that the internet represents mass-distribution, accessibility and cheap commodities, qualities that does not fit the luxury image. Going online would mean cheapen the brand and therefore luxury brands should not do ecommerce. This view is mainly communicated by promissory organizations and journalists, however, luxury brands are stated to adhere to this view, although they are quite absent from the discussion. Below we see an example of how some promissory organizations see the internet and luxury as incompatible as they represent different things.

“"Yet industry analysts have serious concerns about luxury brands muddying their crocodile-skin shoes in the field of online retail. E-commerce, they say, is a bit below them. Andrew Gowen, luxury goods analyst with Lehman Brothers says: 'I'm sceptical about luxury brands going on to the internet. [...] Moreover, luxury goods are all about exclusive distribution, while the internet is a mass distribution medium.'” (Curtis, 2000)

In the following quote we see how the CEO of luxury conglomerate PPR is portrayed to very knowledgeable when it comes to luxury brands and it is suggested that he knows what he talks about when he says that luxury and the internet is incompatible.

“Pinault Printemps Redoute, […] knows a thing or two about both luxury goods and selling from afar. Serge Weinberg, PPR's chief executive, says there is a fundamental contradiction between selling online which, by definition, is available to anyone, and exclusivity, which is the lifeblood of luxury brands. ... "Luxury is about scarcity and elitism and if a product is more widely available over the internet I think it detracts from the appeal."” (Killgren, 2000)

Although this living story is supported by some promissory organization, what is noteworthy is that they are all based on taken for granted knowledge of what luxury is, and no “hard facts”, number or statistics are used to support this perspective. We see that *“exclusivity which is the lifeblood of luxury brands”* (Killgren, 2000), *“luxury is all about scarcity and elitism”* (Killgren, 2000), and *“luxury goods are all about exclusive distribution” (Curtis, 2000).* All these are statements framed as facts that are so obvious they need no proof or evidence.

This living story of what luxury is all about and represents, is connected to a certain fictional expectation of where online luxury will be in the future, namely that ecommerce and the internet will not be very important, the physical store and the whole shopping experience will always be the most important point of sale.

Thus, we have one living story about luxury and the internet, stating that exclusivity is key to luxury, that internet and luxury are incompatible as they represent different things and that ecommerce will not be important for luxury brands in the future. The opposing living story is in sharp contrast to this view, which will be presented below.

The opposing living story does not concern itself with what luxury is or what it stands for. Instead its main focus is on the consumer. This story is told by all the new luxury online retailers. It is also supported by several promissory organizations, such as industry analysts, ecommerce consultants and providers. Consumers that shop online are also interviewed here. This story is based on hard facts and seem to emerge from a study made by Forrester Research that showed that the average internet user is a high-income earner. This story says that as the luxury consumer is online, luxury brands should also go online.

“Forrester Research has stated: ‘The demographic is wonderful. There are online shopping households whose income is US$60,000-plus (#40,000). The consumers you want to sell to are online already.’” (Davis, 2000)

This view is also connected to a fictional expectation where online luxury will grow to become a substantial share of the total luxury market. This story is quantified in projections made by promissory organizations, as exemplified below, and stated as facts rather than the actual guesses that they are:

“’The revenue opportunities that are available for luxury brands via eCommerce are enormous. Today, the luxury goods market is worth somewhere between US$60 and $100 billion, and it is growing by 7-8% per year. Morgan Stanley Dean Witter estimates that by 2004, online sales could represent 5 - 10% of the total luxury market, which equates to US$8-13 billion annually. If luxury brands ignore the Internet they could be in danger of affecting future competitiveness,’ he concludes.” (Mustoe & Linaker, 2000)

What stands out here is this story’s consistency in using “facts”, research claims, future projections, statistics, and numbers. Also, we see how the consumer is put at center and the underlying assumption is that the luxury brands should go where the consumers are. This is in sharp contrast to the previous notion of luxury brands being the leader and the consumer the follower. The issues of exclusivity and rarity are also not mentioned here. What we also notice is how this living story of luxury is tightly connected to a fictional expectation of where the luxury industry will be in the future in terms of ecommerce. This fictional expectation is also clearly communicated using “facts” and number, giving it a rational and credible image.

5.5. 2005 - Luxury is trapped in the role of followers

In 2005, we can still observe two opposing stories, connected to two fictional expectations, as was the case in 2000. As then, one narrative is based on the traditional view of luxury and the other is based on the view that luxury brands should follow the consumers. However, although journalists communicate both narratives in 2005, it seems that they do no longer believe as much in the one speaking of luxury as incompatible with the internet. Luxury brands are given much less space in media, in favor of promissory organizations and e-retailers. Consumers are also discussed extensively by referring to consumer research.

Most luxury brands are still framed as being hesitant and rather negative towards the internet. In interviews regarding ecommerce, luxury brands give examples of challenges in going online and focus on the risks of doing so. Examples of such challenges are the lack of tactile elements and the disability to offer high standard customer service. Luxury brand still do not use any “hard” facts, such as numbers or similar, but do still rely on “softer” facts based on their own expertise. This is seen in the quote below.

"many consumers still want to touch and feel the goods before buying" (Horyn, 2005)

This quote above highlight how luxury brands think that they know what the consumers want and expect from them, namely a tactile shopping experience in an offline store.

"You can't give customers a glass of champagne online, but you have to come as close to that as possible" (Dudley, 2005)

The quote above demonstrates how luxury bands assume that consumers want to be treated as exclusive customers in the store and that that is a critical element of luxury. They also highlight the enduring hesitance of developing online channels, and the perception that luxury goods are not compatible with the online world. However, compared to in 1998-1999 and 2000 where many journalists seemed to agree with this view, now luxury brands are starting to be framed by several journalists as digital laggards who are slow in adopting new technologies, as opposed to the previous framing of them as experts in their own field who know how to manage their brands better than anyone else. Also, this framing suggests how online luxury will, and has to, happen. Further, this points at a fictional expectation where luxury and online channels will have to work together:

"Luxury brands have tended to ignore the Web, fearing a loss of exclusivity. But with big spenders being big surfers, ecommerce is a must-have, reports Dominic Dudley [journalist]" (Dudley, 2005)

"We [an online retailer] tried hard to convince the luxury brands to come on board but they have a huge fear of the internet" (Doulton, 2005)

Further, in 2005 we see for the first time how luxury brands are by media described to be *"trapped in the role of followers, not leaders"* (Dudley, 2005). What this meant is that consumers have begun to put pressure on the luxury brands and how they should develop their business and market offer, instead of luxury brands leading the way. This signals a major change in the relationship between luxury brands and consumers, and consequently how consumers seem to have "gained power" over luxury brands. The promissory organization Bain mentions this shift.

"'In the past, the golden rule for success in the luxury business was to be elegant, consistent and effective: Don't ask consumers what they want; tell them what they should have.' But today, [...] You must know your customers, deeply understand their high-end value proposition" (Xiao, 2005)

In 2005, not only do we see evidence that journalist discredit the view of luxury and internet as incompatible, we also see that journalists give most space to the second narrative that talk of luxury and internet as compatible. The main living story told by journalists is that e-retailers and promissory organizations do not perceive a contradiction between exclusivity and online distribution. Rather we see how the internet is said to combine accessibility with exclusivity, two concepts that previously were said to be contradictory:

"Far from being mass-market, it's very exclusive. "If you open 100 stores in London, you're not exclusive anymore," he says [luxury e-retailer]. "The Internet combines exclusivity - the fact that there are very few stores - with accessibility all around the world. The two things together make a very good brand."" (Howell, 2005)

Also, the presence of luxury e-retailers is said to push the luxury brands even harder to go online, since they have made consumers less hesitant towards luxury ecommerce. There are several living stories framing internet and online shopping positively, which contradicts the first narrative. The success of Net-a-Porter, one of the most successful e-retailers at the time, is also used in many articles as proof that luxury and ecommerce are compatible.

As in 2000, promissory organizations and e-retailers provide evidence for the internet story in the form of quantifications. These facts support the living story, making it appear more credible, and support a fictional expectation where online luxury will be an important part of luxury brands' business. At this point in time, luxury ecommerce contributed to a fraction of the total share of luxury goods sold. However, media frame this phenomenon as it is just a matter of time before luxury ecommerce is at least as important as the offline store, resulting in a strong fictional expectation where much luxury sales occur online.

In 2005 then, we see evidence that the internet-friendly story of online luxury has gained advantage over the opposing narrative. Although luxury ecommerce is still a fraction of luxury sales at this time - and in that sense far from proven - the fictional expectation told in media is suggesting that it is only a matter of time before this will change. However, media still report on luxury brands hesitant view towards online luxury, signaling the uncertainty that still revolves around the concept. We also see that the consumer has started to get a more central role in the consumer-luxury brand relationship.

5.6. 2010 - Jumping on the digital bandwagon

In 2010 we see how the narrative believing in online luxury that in 2005 had started to gain acceptance now has become the clearly dominating one. Few are at this date skeptical to the internet, but luxury brands are still framed by journalists to be hesitant to the phenomena and they are continually described as digital laggards. However, at this time luxury brands are "finally" starting to see that they have to move online according to promissory organizations and luxury e-retailers. They are said to be forced to do so because of financial pressure resulting from the financial crisis in 2008, and from consumer pressure.

Luxury brands are described to be forced to go online, mostly as a result of both increased consumer pressure and financial pressure. Because of the financial crisis, many luxury brands are said to be under high pressure and a living story is constructed of how luxury brands are forced to look for new ways to sell their products, including online sales, as mentioned by a journalist:

"Luxury laggards buff up online presence; A recession, and battles with department stores, prompt a change of heart" (Clifford, 2010)

''These [luxury] brands are finally taking the plunge to establish an online retail presence [...]. The recession forced these manufacturers to realize they needed to look for revenue wherever they could.'' (Clifford, 2010)

The words "force" and "luxury laggards" hint of the prevailing image of traditional luxury brands being reluctant towards the internet. This living story also supports the fictional expectation that luxury will go fully online as now even the "luxury laggards" are realizing the inevitability of the internet. In 2005, we could see how this shift was said to be driven mainly by online retailers, and there was uncertainty whether it would indeed work. Now however, we start to see how also the traditional luxury brands "reluctantly" are moving online, or very soon will have to do so.

Apart from the financial crisis, increasing pressure from the consumer is said to lay behind luxury brands' slow move into the online space. Consumers are referred by all actor groups as the main driver for luxury brands to go online. We see this as further evidence for how the power balance between consumers and luxury brands have shifted. Even since the 1999 it has been argued that consumers want luxury brands to go online and up until now, most luxury brands had declined to do so. Rather than luxury brands being pushed by the consumers alone, we see how all actors are using the consumer as support to strengthen their case and enroll actors into their particular narrative. Not going online, and thus not listening to what the consumer wants, is framed as an elitist approach to luxury that needs to change. Also, this we see as evidence that the very meaning of luxury has started to change. Luxury used to be about elitism, inaccessibility and exclusivity, ideals that in the democratic era of the internet does not seem to appeal to the general public anymore. The "old" approach to luxury is described with mocking contempt in the quote below:

"'Luxury sees itself as cooler than everyone else,' says Ms Mulpuru [analyst]. 'They're the prom queen, the cool kids. God forbid they'd be seen at the table with the computer nerds or the misfits, which is how they perceived the web for a long time.'" (Gelles, 2010)

And here luxury firms are described as a dictator scared of how the democracy enabled by the internet will ruin their brands:

"'The luxury goods sector has been slow to embrace cyberspace, wary that the democratisation brought by the web will weaken their brands' elitist allure'. [said by analyst]" (Sanderson & Hille, 2010)

Counterfeits and second-hand sales are also a concern for the luxury brands, which are said to be a result of a refusal to sell luxury goods online, as this pushed consumers to look for alternatives. Now it is suggested that the inaccessibility of not selling luxury goods online might have damaged the brand, compared to the early idea of inaccessibility being fundamental to creating the aura of exclusivity revolving luxury brands. Today accessibility is framed a something positive that luxury brands should strive for, and being inaccessible is what may be harmful to the brand image. We see this as another cue for how the previously elitist ideal of luxury has started to give way for an accessible idea of luxury.

"In the digital arena, it is harder to retain that control [of who is selling the brand]. Not only do a multitude of sites offer second-hand or discounted goods, but counterfeits are just a click away. Brands need to consider whether using inaccessibility to maintain an air of exclusivity will drive potential customers to the secondary sale market - or, worse, to fakes." (Clark, 2010)

We thus see cues that suggest that the concept of luxury has started to change. Accessibility is framed as something positive. However, although media and promissory organizations seem to adhere to this view, most luxury brands still believe that exclusivity is key in the luxury market. Now they are struggling to see how they can apply it in an online context and how to make their view of exclusivity work with online accessibility, as demonstrated in the quote below.

"Restricting access might seem to contradict the power of digital platforms to maximise reach, but it can be important to ensure the best use of digital marketing investment' [luxury brand Sunseeker]" (New Media Age, 2010)

As before, promissory organizations and e-retailers are not worried about the brand image or what dangers the internet might bring to the luxury brands. None of them mention the notion of exclusivity, and accessibility is, as demonstrated, framed as something positive. The luxury concept itself is not brought up explicitly by these promissory organizations or luxury e-retailers. While most luxury brands are presented by media to be uncertain whether or not digitalization has any merit, promissory organizations are in strong opposition to this view. Even though online sales in the luxury goods sector only represents a small fraction of the total sales, one promissory organization states that it is estimated to grow 35% the following years. They provide actors with a clear fictional expectation of where the online luxury industry is heading. This fictional expectation is communicated as projections, quantified, and presented as facts of what will happen.

"The numbers also speak for themselves. While online sales are still only a fraction of the luxury -goods market, they are growing fast. Bain & Company estimates that online sales represented around €3.5bn of the €153bn market, and it is thought that the market will grow by around 35% annually." (BW Confidential, 2010)

The clear belief in online luxury, partly expressed in a fictional expectation of the expected growth and the impossibility of resisting what the consumer demands, seem to have "pushed" luxury brands to start looking into online channels. However, it seems they try to do it in a way that adheres to the traditional idea of luxury being about exclusivity and in 2010 many have still not started to use online channels extensively, rather they talk about what they soon will do. However, we see signs that there has started to be a change in the meaning of luxury, as the old ideals of exclusivity and elitism is framed as a conservative approach to luxury that does not work in the accessible era of the internet. We interpret this as that the fictional expectation supporting online luxury that have been present since the late 90's at this stage had started to have some performative effect on the meaning of luxury.

5.7. 2015 - Luxury brands engage with consumers like never before

Moving on to 2015, the uncertainty of what internet can do for the luxury industry is gone and all actors seem to agree luxury brands needs to be online. The discussion has moved beyond how digital channels can be used for distribution and communication - they can also provide other opportunities such as collecting data about the customers or act as an effective cross-selling tool as well. It is now evident that the internet-friendly narrative has been adopted even by luxury brands, and the second narrative is completely gone. This in turn have implications for the meaning of luxury.

In 2015, no one seems to believe that the internet is a threat to luxury brands. Rather, it is described as a critical element in the luxury business and avoiding the internet may hurt the brand. Compared to 2010 when the discussion revolved around how luxury brands would soon have to go online, it is now described how several luxury brands have taken a step into ecommerce and most are now selling at least cheaper accessories online. This is framed as a step in the right direction that everyone has been waiting for.

"That one of France's most powerful and emblematic fashion houses [Chanel] is finally moving toward online sales telegraphs how vital the channel is becoming in a slow-growth period for the luxury sector, and amidst rapid adoption of mobile commerce." (Socha, 2015)

It seems the fictional expectation communicated in both 2005 and 2010 about how luxury brands will have to go online have slowly started to materialize. The living story in 2015 is mainly about how luxury brands are "finally" going into ecommerce. The fictional expectation of 2010 has turned into reality, represented in that it is now the living narrative of 2015. Some luxury brands still express a cautious attitude towards the internet though, mostly regarding what role ecommerce should have in the luxury industry. However, no longer is it explicitly mentioned that the internet may harm the brand image and the problem is more about *how* to deal with internet, rather than *if*. Also, this demonstrates how internet is slowly becoming a taken-for-granted part of the luxury business model that cannot be ignored. Many luxury brands state how the online shop is a complement to the offline store, rather than a threat to the luxury brand image, and more importantly, that it is a service that the customer demands. In the quotes below we see how luxury brands try to make sense of ecommerce and make it fit into their view of what luxury is all about, framing it as a complementary service.

"“Of course, the boutique remains the first place where clients experience the brand, but if they prefer to buy online, we want to be able to offer them this service, as well. Ecommerce is a complement to the in-store experience,” he said [Manager at Fendi]" (Socha, 2015)

“We [Chanel] consider digital a way to be able to better understand, service and deal with our customers. It's more about the way to build the relationship with our customer.” (Socha, 2015)

For the first time since the introduction of luxury e-retailers, we see clearly how also the traditional luxury brands have started to talk about online luxury as a service. We interpret this as also them have started to seriously put the consumer at the center of their business. What has been the story of luxury e-retailers ever since 1999, has now gained traction amongst the luxury brands as well. The opposing story about loss of exclusivity and how accessibility might erode brand image is in 2015 described by journalists and promissory organization as a myth that luxury brands finally have started to let go of. In this sense, it seems no one believes in the idea of luxury being about exclusivity and inaccessibility anymore. The living story of the internet-friendly narrative seems to have become the retrospective narrative, telling the truth of how luxury have gone from being elitist to democratic. The quote below describes this shift, framing it as a democratic revolution of the luxury industry:

“Luxury as a segment has been a reluctant acceptor of the digital medium in general.
Its touch-me -not and dominant, almost dictatorial attitude, which borders on 'you-accept-what-we-design', has always been wary of being seen as for the 'masses'. Many iconic brands have feared the vulnerability, openness, high visibility and easy accessibility that the digital world is all about. But things have started changing over the last two or three years, and we are now witnessing a trend wherein top luxury brands are engaging with consumers online like never before.” (India Today, 2015)

This quote also demonstrates how the internet represented democracy and openness, ideals that are idealized in media and society in general. This stands in sharp contrast to the picture painted of a “dictatorial” elitism that luxury used to stand for. Digitalization is said to have led to a democratic revolution of the luxury industry. This democratization of luxury also suggests how the relationship between the consumer and the luxury brands have equalized. No longer can luxury brands dominate the customer, and the consumer seem to have gone from the reactive role described in the literature (Arnould & Dion, 2011), to an active role that luxury brands need to follow and adapt to.

Moreover, despite that most articles during 2015 is about luxury brands “finally” going online, few luxury brands are directly interviewed. This stands in sharp contrast with how the media landscape looked in the early 90’s where luxury brands were almost the only ones to speak. Now they are given very little direct media space, even though most news are about them. We believe that also this signals how luxury brands still are seen to lack expertise to speak for themselves and the luxury industry regarding digitalization. Luxury brands consistently based their narrative on their own expertise and taken for granted knowledge of what luxury is, but in 2015 no one believes in that story anymore. However, the other narrative managed to enroll and convince many actors. As the luxury brands have not been a part of this narrative until very recently, they are not treated as the authoritative actors that they used to. Instead promissory organizations are present in most articles and are given much space in media. They produce and communicate fictional expectations and tell living stories about the luxury consumer. They continue to produce fictional expectations of how the luxury industry will be even further digitized in the future, as exemplified below:

"He [Luca Solca] adds that by 2020 luxury brands will know almost all their clients by name and that digital — either directly or by influencing customers — will represent 50 percent of sales. In pure ecommerce terms, sales will be two to three times current levels” (Sanderson, 2015)

In this quote we also see how they continue to use quantified projections and state these guesses as pure facts even more confidently than before. Ecommerce sales *“will be”* two to three times current levels, luxury brands *“will know”* all their clients by name. Nothing in this sentence suggests that there is any uncertainty regarding this. As now even the luxury brands go online, promissory organizations have started to see how their early fictional expectations have realized and can therefore speak even more confidently about the future when they produce new fictional expectations. They also continue to produce living stories of the current day consumer as “increasingly digitally savvy”, a story that fits neatly with the fictional expectation they communicate, and thus also build cognitive bridges to the future of how the present will turn into the future they communicate.

"Our research shows that today's luxury consumer is increasingly digitally savvy, time-sensitive, exacting, and experience driven" (Manilla Bulletin, 2015)

When journalists discuss the old view on luxury and how internet is a threat to exclusivity, luxury brands are framed to be slow, almost being blamed for worrying about the brand too much. Journalists state that luxury brands have been afraid of losing their exclusivity by going online, but it seems no one believes in this story anymore. Instead we now see how caring about the exclusivity dimension, that in early years was framed as critical to luxury branding, now is framed as a problem that inhibits digital adoption. In this sense, the consumer-centric living narrative of what luxury is, is no longer a living narrative, but an historical narrative telling the truth of what luxury is, and has always been, all about. Luxury has been democratized thanks to the internet and the consumer is now the one in charge. Even the luxury brands speak of ecommerce as a service, highlighting how they now put the consumer in center. We see this as an indication of how the second narrative has not only become a dominant story, but it has started to have a performative effect on the very meaning of luxury.

5.8. 2019 - The vanishing breed: offline luxury shoppers

In 2019 we see clearly how the meaning of luxury has changed and the consumer seem to have gained even more power over the luxury brands. The internet is seen as an obvious part of the luxury business model and the few luxury brands that has not gone online are framed as conservative and foolish.

In 2019, we see how luxury brands are not only said to accept the internet, they are also described to be positive towards it when interviewed. Their previous focus on challenges and threats have now been replaced by speaking of the opportunities offered by the internet. Also, in 2015 and 2010 the main focus was on the big luxury conglomerates and houses such as LVMH, Chanel, Richemont and Hermès. As these brands are said to have embraced online channels, journalist in 2019 give more space to even more traditional hard luxury segments specializing jewellery and watches, as these have been slower in entering the digital space. As before, they are framed as digital laggards who are risking their future survival by not going online.

"Luxury watches and e-commerce: this still does not fit together for the two industry kings Patek Philippe and Rolex [...] Rolex, for its part, answered a question on the subject of e-commerce succinctly - and yet meaningfully: "We have no comment to make. No comment." But one thing is clear: If you ignore e-commerce, you will leave a sales channel with a lot of potential unused." (Hölder, 2019)

"Conversely, companies that ignore this new omnichannel approach are taking a considerable risk" (Zaczkiewicz, Bacigalupo, & Zarrini, 2019)

In both these quotes we see how the luxury brand who do not embrace e-retailing are framed as conservative and almost foolish; they *"still"* do not see the obvious potential of ecommerce, and Rolex is portrayed as a stubborn child refusing to even talk about it. We see then how online channels are seen as such an obvious part of the luxury industry today, journalists are almost astonished some brands still do not see the merit of it. This story also hints that the brand who to this day do not use ecommerce are not only stubborn, but they are (wrongly) holding on to the "old" idea of luxury as being exclusive and elitist. It is exemplified in the quote below in how luxury watch brands believe they are so exclusive and unique they simply cannot be sold online:

"...the [luxury watch] industry is stubbornly of the opinion that expensive luxury watches cannot be sold online". (Hölder, 2019)

This further supports our earlier discussion of how the meaning of luxury has changed and "democratized". The meaning of luxury is not discussed in terms of exclusivity anymore, by any actor group. Even media recognizes this shift in mentioning of how the concept of luxury is not as it was.

"Neiman CEO Marcus Geoffroy van Raemdonck said that in the past the luxury goods market was focused on the product; now it does so in the services it offers." (D'Innocenzio, 2019)

In 2015 we saw how selling luxury goods online was a service, but now it is suggested that the whole luxury market is about service. It seems as if the practices of selling online has led to a shift in how the whole luxury industry thinks about the consumer and what luxury is. This change demonstrates the ever-growing important role of the consumer and the new practice of following the demand of the consumer. The idea of luxury as being accessible, democratic and consumer-centric that we already could see in 2015, is even more endorsed in the debate in 2019 and we can thus confidently conclude that the internet-friendly narrative has had a performative effect and shaped a new reality of what luxury is. The old idea of luxury is described as a myth that few luxury brands still believe in.

"The fear of image loss through e-commerce is an antiquated attitude: "It is up to us [luxury watch brand IWC] to define how high-quality online feels. The industry can't ignore changes in user behavior forever. " (Hölder, 2019)

In 2019, it is even suggested that the consumer is so important that not following him/her can make you go out of business.

"'If you're not keeping up with what your customers want, and changing trends in the market, then you're going to go out of business — whatever kind of retailer you are [luxury retailer].'" (Gray, 2019)

This living story of what luxury now is all about is further endorsed with fictional expectations of what luxury will be tomorrow, thus stabilizing the living narrative of luxury. The future and the past are "woven" together as bridges are created for how the present will be transformed into the future. In the quote below this is exemplified in how the expected growth itself has led to an increase in luxury ecommerce, resulting in actual growth, further driven by the tech-savvy consumer who demands the option to shop luxury online:

"As the market anticipates online sales of luxury goods to reach 25 percent of total sales by 2025, it may not be surprising that the online presence of industry leaders has surged in the last few years. In fact, given changing consumer demands, the move onto the Internet may be inevitable." (Zaczkiewicz et al., 2019)

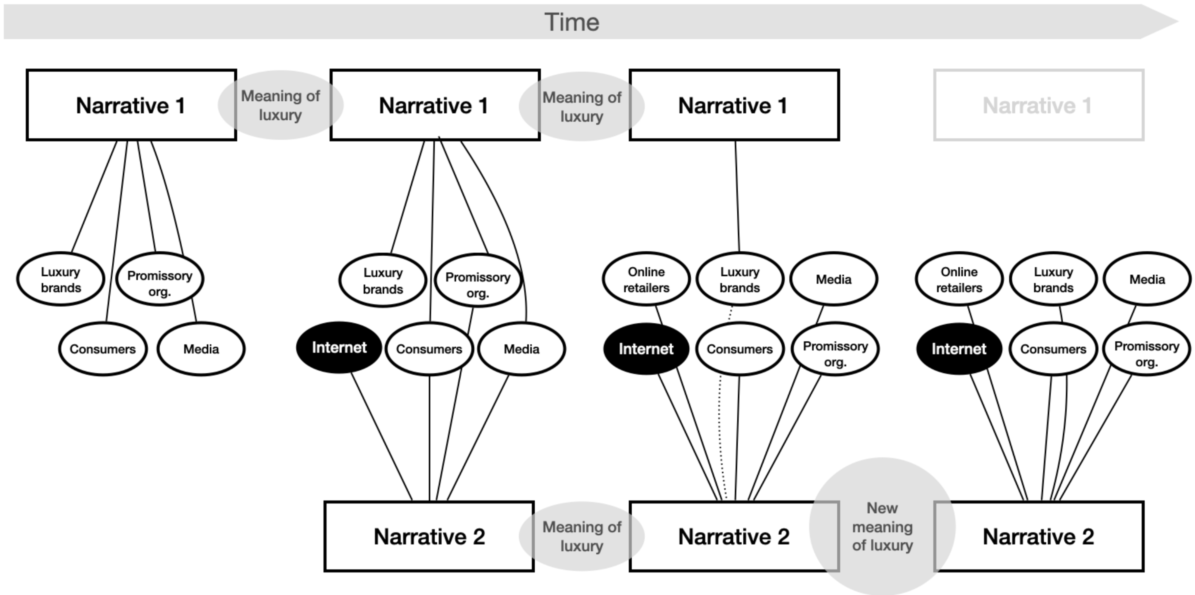
Promissory organization McKinsey even states that soon the luxury shopper who only uses offline channels will be completely gone, portraying him/her as an antiquated soon-to-be extinct human dinosaur:

"A recent report by McKinsey highlights:[...] The luxury shopper who begins and ends the customer journey offline is a vanishing breed." (Zaczkiewicz et al., 2019)

We thus see how retrospective narratives, living narratives and fictional expectations are integrated in one whole "meta-narrative" where all these different stories fit together. What unites them is their shared belief in the concept of luxury of being democratic, accessible and consumer-centric. The retrospective narrative tells how the internet has democratized the luxury industry by providing the opportunity of making luxury more accessible and made the consumer demanding the option to shop online. The living narrative tells how luxury brands have finally gone online, both because of the consumer pressure, but also because of the future expectation of growth. This in turn, means that the present concept of luxury became even further democratized, but also that the associations supporting the new concept of luxury have grown even stronger as it is now supported by retrospective, living and antenarratives. Both promissory organizations and media play important roles as they interact in this process. Promissory organizations provide media with living stories and fictional expectations. When representing this, media frames these narratives and tie it to retrospective narratives in a meta narrative when all parts fit together.

The internet-friendly narrative, that has since the 90's told a living story of the consumer in center, has not only been translated across actants and been accepted as truth, but has also had an performative effect has it has changed how the whole luxury industry sees the consumer and what luxury is all about. As the internet was translated into the luxury industry, old meanings of what luxury was about was questioned and new stories were told by actants within the luxury industry and mediated by the media. Today, no one longer speak of exclusivity or rarity, no one let luxury brands exclusively define what luxury is all about or say what the consumer should want. What we do see is that luxury is all about providing the very best service, which intrinsically mean putting the consumer first. This has had implication not only for how luxury is represented by different actors, but also on the exchange practices between luxury brands and the consumers as a growing part of it occurs online, according to consumer demands. However, it is important to note that it was not the internet-friendly narrative alone that was pushed onto luxury brands and "finally" accepted and adopted. In our case we have shown how many different actants and different representational practices have all contributed to the spreading and translation of online luxury, resulting in the unintentional change in the very meaning of luxury. This change occurred as a process involving; how luxury was represented in the internet-friendly narrative, the translation of the internet by consumers and luxury online retailers, the exchange practices of e-retailers and consumers, and, the living stories and antenarratives communicated by promissory organizations and by media framed as fictional expectations. All of these processes have together had a performative effect on the meaning of luxury, as well as on the exchange practices of luxury brands. Our *Figure 3* visualizes the process of the two battling narratives and what actors contributed to the spreading and translation of them.

Figure 3. The process of the battle between two opposing narratives.



6. Discussion

6.1. Empirical contribution

We started our quest with the research question:

How has luxury been represented by different actors since the introduction of the internet, and how has these representations contributed to the shaping of the meaning of luxury?

By studying how the media, luxury brands and promissory organizations have told different stories about luxury and the internet, we were able to find an answer to our research question. As scholars such as Chevalier and Mazzalovo (2008), Fionda and Moore (2009), Phau and Prendergast (2000), Aliyev et al. (2019), Kapferer and Bastien (2009) and Vigneron and Johnson (2004) have discussed, we could see how luxury brands before the internet - and long after the introduction of the internet - held on to an idea of luxury as being about exclusivity and rarity. This meant limiting accessibility and controlling distribution, but in this definition laid also an idea that luxury brands should dominate the consumer. They were the ones who had exclusive power not only in defining luxury itself, but also in deciding what the consumer should want and how the consumer should think about luxury goods and trends. Just as e.g. Dion and Arnould (2011) and Kapferer and Bastien (2009) stated, luxury brands lead and the consumers followed. However, by studying how the luxury industry had to relate itself to the internet, we could see how the meaning of luxury slowly started to change. In the final years of our study, we could see how luxury was said to be about service and putting the consumer first. The idea of exclusivity and rarity was not mentioned anymore, and accessibility was described as something positive as this meant providing good service. We could also see how the relationship between the luxury brand and consumer had changed. Now luxury brands have to follow the consumer, completely contradictory to how it was before the internet. Luxury today is democratic and consumer-centric. Luxury differs from non-luxury in the service it provides and the experiences it creates for its customers, partly discussed by Atwal and Williams (2009).

The change in the meaning of luxury has several implications. Kapferer and Bastien (2009) have argued for the anti-laws of marketing, all based on an assumption that luxury differs from non-luxury goods in how the customer-brand relationship works. Dion and Arnould (2011) had a similar view on luxury, arguing for how the customer have a much more reactive role when it comes to luxury goods. However, our study has shown how, over the course of the internet's translation, this no longer hold true. It is not strange therefore that studies that investigated consumers' perceptions of luxury brand's online presence did not find any evidence supporting that being online meant eroding brand desirability or perception of rarity (Beuckels & Judders, 2016; Burns & Hou, 2013; Kluge & Fassnacht, 2015; Kim & Choi, 2015; Kim & Jung-Hwan, 2019; Van Kerrebroeck et al., 2017). As exclusivity and limiting accessibility is no longer what uttermost defines luxury goods, there is point in investigating how selling online might affect these characteristics of luxury brands. From a consumer perspective, accessibility means providing good service, and rarity - here meaning limiting accessibility - would be interpreted as providing bad service. And as we have shown, luxury today is all about following the consumer and providing the very best service, and therefore selling online would not erode brand desirability. The issue of rarity today is quite irrelevant, at least when talking about accessibility.

Further, this makes us ask in what ways managing luxury brands differ from managing non-luxury brands. When the notion of exclusivity and rarity is gone, much of what was believed to lay at the foundation of how luxury goods differ from non-luxury goods is gone as well (Aliyev et al., 2019; Kapferer & Bastien, 2009; Kapferer, 2012; Atwal & Williams, 2009; Dion & Arnould, 2011; Dubois & Duquesne, 1993; Fionda & Moore, 2009; Magnoni & Roux, 2012; Dubois & Paternault, 1995; Berthon et al., 2009). This suggest that there might be a convergence regarding how to manage luxury and non-luxury brands and that the difference between these practices might not be substantial, as suggested also by Atwal and Williams (2011).

In the literature we also saw how several scholars have argued for the importance of the charismatic designer when it comes to luxury brands (Dion & Arnould, 2011; Kapferer & Bastien, 2009; Kapferer, 2012; Chailan, 2017). When combining this insight with our findings, we could argue for that the growing importance of the designer could be one way for luxury brands to try and equalize the relationship with the consumer and try to "regain power". As luxury has become increasingly focused on what the consumer wants, creating an idealized culture around the designer would be one way for luxury brands to try and dominate the consumers again. This may also be the main difference between how luxury and non-luxury brands are managed and the idolizing culture around the designer might become even more important in the future.

We also discussed how Baker et al. (2018) had investigated how luxury brands use online channels and they gave suggestions for how luxury brands should think about the internet based on the characteristics of the products they were selling. However, our study would suggest that this approach to luxury might be misguided. Based on our findings, luxury brands should be careful in taking a product-focused perspective in how they communicate, sell and do marketing. Instead, they should take a consumer-centric service perspective. To worry about issues of rarity and exclusivity might only lead to providing worse service for the consumers and by doing so, erode brand value.

6.2. Theoretical contribution

Our study also holds relevance beyond the luxury sector. By combining theories within the fields of storytelling and performativity, we believe that our study has shed light on some of the factors that are critical for the success of a fictional expectation, as requested by Beckert (2013). They will be presented below.

First of all, the narrative that won was based on normative ideals of democracy, openness and accessibility, while the other narrative was based on normative ideals of exclusivity and elitism. The values of the winning narrative can then be seen to be much more aligned with normative values that western Society believes in. Thus, one success factor for a winning fictional expectation is its fit with the cultural frame. This hypothesis suggested by Beckert (2013) has thus been empirically confirmed in our study.

A second success factor that we found was the narratives ability to enroll promissory organizations (Pollock & Williams, 2016). This is turn, seemed to depend on what the antenarrative's plot implied for potential business opportunities. For the internet-friendly narrative, promissory organizations were able to calculate and make projections. For the other narrative, the future was projected to be similar to the present and therefore projections and calculations were not necessary. Those projections that included "hard facts" and numbers were framed to be rational and truthfully, while projections based on internal taken-for-granted knowledge of an industry where framed to be more subjective, especially since that taken for granted knowledge did not correspond well with the cultural frame of democracy, openness and equality. In this sense, the internet-friendly narrative was able to create more credible fictional expectations as it could make use of "objective" numbers. The more credible fictional expectation also meant that more actors would aim to take advantage of the potential future business opportunities, and in doing so enter the luxury online market and through that contribute to the materializing of that fictional expectation.

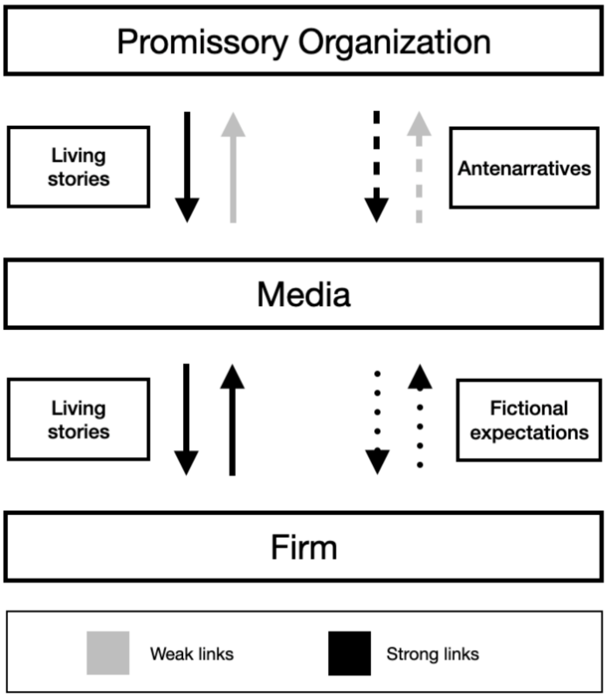
A third success factor for what fictional expectation that was adopted was how well the fictional expectation fit with the dominant living story (Näslund & Pemer, 2011). Our study then also demonstrated the relationship between living stories, antenarratives and fictional expectations (Boje, 2011; Beckert, 2013). The dominant living story will have a direct impact on what antenarratives seems more likely, and thus which antenarrative will become a fictional expectation that actors commit to. What fictional expectation that will "succeed", is then highly connected to what the dominating living narrative is. To turn an antenarrative into a fictional expectation, actors need to create living stories that are aligned with that particular fictional expectation. Living stories are therefore highly relevant in connecting the present with the future. In our case, we demonstrated how promissory organizations also contribute in this process as they construct living stories about the consumer by doing consumer research. This research was used to construct the image of a tech-savy consumer who became a symbol that represented the force that pushed luxury brands to go online. Already in 1990's when luxury ecommerce was practically non-existent, this consumer was used as an argument for why the luxury industry needed to be online.

We would also like to emphasize the role of media when representing markets, an actor that to our knowledge has not been given much attention in the field of performativity. In our study we could see how media not only worked as a neutral platform where other actors could share their voices. Media was an intermediary that played an active part in constructing reality (Rindova et al., 2006) as they favored certain narratives over others, and gave more media space to some actors. Media partly constructed and spread the story of the elitist luxury laggards and opposed them with the new luxury online retailers, taking the side of the consumer and driving the democratic revolution of the luxury industry. While other scholars have demonstrated media's role in shaping public opinion and constructing reality (Humphrey, 2010; Deephouse, 2000; Rindova et al., 2006), we demonstrated how media is a powerful actor not only in constructing meanings, but also in constructing, and enrolling actors to, fictional expectations.

We have also demonstrated how promissory organizations are used in times of uncertainty to support different narratives by using stories presented as research, numbers, and facts to reduce the perceived uncertainty. Pollock and Williams (2016) had demonstrated how the work of industry analysts are performative, however they had not made the distinction between the level of perceived uncertainty surrounding the future. What we saw in our study was that in times of certainty, such as before the introduction of the internet, promissory organizations were relatively absent from the discussions in the media and the viewpoints of luxury brands were accepted as truths. When uncertainty arised, media started to enroll promissory organizations as they gave them the role of "future experts" or predictors. Promissory organizations can thus be seen as intermediaries that can be used in times of uncertainty to reduce the perceived uncertainty by producing fictional expectations and living stories presented as facts.

We have aimed to capture the relationship between how firms, media and promissory organizations communicate fictional expectations, antenarratives and living stories in our *Model 2*.

Model 2. How different stories are communicated and represented between Promissory organizations, Media and Firms.



7. Conclusion

7.1. Summary

This study has demonstrated how representational practices have affected the luxury industry during the introduction of the internet. The shaping of the meaning of luxury has by storytelling been constructed through the emergence and adoption of a second, opposing narrative. This opposing narrative arose as the internet entered the industry, which was first met by resistance expressed by the dominant actor - the luxury brands. The continued development of two opposing narratives altered the distribution of power between the actors, by the process of actors allying themselves with other actants. In the end of 2019, we were able to demonstrate that the meaning of luxury was no longer the same. The previously important values of exclusivity and rarity seemed to have disappeared, replaced by consumer-centric values. The Internet Dilemma had lost its heydays.

Within the academic fields of storytelling and performativity, we have therefore been able to bridge existing theories, providing valuable knowledge for future academic research. We found success factors which helped an opposing narrative win the battle of stories. Through these, with the help of the performativity theory, we could propose an explanation on how the meaning of luxury have changed and the meaning of luxury today. Moreover, the role of media, which seems to have been suppressed in the literature within our study's field, have been stressed its importance. Together with presence of promissory organizations, we have demonstrated the impact that these actants have had on the luxury good market and by representational practices shape the meaning of luxury and therefore what the market is.

To summarize, the present thesis denotes the significance of studying market practices, it also demonstrates how media analysis serves as a valuable tool for doing so, but also the value of the method itself. Our findings contribute to the existing knowledge on how the construction of markets is constantly in change, which by performativity and storytelling have been demonstrated. Accordingly, our findings translate into implications for practitioners, as well as substantiate the need for future knowledge on these areas, which both will be discussed in the following sections.

7.2. Managerial implications

Based on the findings from our study, we can clearly see that there are several managerial implications that a wide range of actors need to consider. First and foremost, the entrance of internet led to a development of the constructed meaning of luxury which has resulted in a new interpretation of the values of luxury. The concept of luxury has gone from being steered by traditional and elitist values towards a concept belonging to consumer-centric values. This implies that managers at luxury brands have to reconsider its brand positioning and marketing activities since these might no longer possess the image of being luxurious.

Because of the shift away from the focus on rarity and exclusivity, we have suggested the need to question the relevance anti-laws of marketing that has for long been used within the industry. Marketers should not solely rely on these laws and must therefore find new strategies that are applicable to the specific features of the luxury industry.

What stories should be told then? As exemplified by the present study, the successful story was the narrative closer to normative values that are believed in by the society at large. Also, the fictional expectations' fit with the dominant living story needs to be assessed. This implies that marketers need to be careful when telling stories and make sure that these are aligned with the "cultural frame" in order to be successful in creating many and strong associations with different actants.

7.3. Limitations

Of course, there are some limitations to the study. First of all, only representational practices are studied, leaving exchange practices and normative practices beyond the study's scope. Studying the market by also making, for example, observations could have provided us with richer data, deepening our comprehension of all market practices.

Furthermore, we have only been using articles produced by mass media, relying on the motivation that it best served the purpose of the study in order to answer our research question. There are naturally several other types of data produced by mass media such as photographs and video presented in newspapers, television, or radio. By complementing with these alternative data types, our data might would have been richer for example in terms of new themes or finding nuances of the stories told.

Finally, we also believe that one potential limitation may be derived from not complementing the articles with other types of data, namely, that some actor group is excluded. Since journalist "chooses" whose story to tell with influence from others, actors who are not perceived to be of interest, but still are of great importance in the market, might not be represented in media. Therefore, observations, interviews or other sources of data would make sure that all relevant actors are represented.

7.4. Future Research

As this study is one of the few ones exploring the concept of luxury in relation to the ongoing digitalization in the world, we believe that there are several areas that needs to be addressed in order to fill gaps in research.

To begin with, the present study only touches briefly upon today's meaning of luxury, more research is needed to reveal the meaning of the concept in more detail beyond excellent service and the experience of a luxury good. We suggest that interviewing key actors in the consumption of a luxury good, such as luxury brands as well as consumers, would be of great value in further exploring the meaning of the concept.

As luxury brands have lost their power in favor for the consumer, we now see that luxury has moved away from the original values of rarity and exclusivity the last five years. The short-term effects of it have been explored, effects such as increased brand image and improved customer experience. However, the longer-term effects on the concept of luxury and the industry are still undetected. We advise that these long-term effects should be an area for future research to be conducted.

In addition, we asked ourselves previously whether or not the designer at a luxury brand will receive an even more important role in luxury brand management, as the designer would potentially offer a way to regain the power in the industry. Exploring this phenomenon should be considered, since the changes of roles might further develop the meaning of luxury by moving the power relationship closer to the luxury brands and not the consumers.

Finally, we proposed that the anti-laws of marketing might not seem to apply to the same extent as previously, and that the gap between luxury brand management and “traditional” brand management is narrowed. This proposal needs to be determined in order for luxury brands to understand whether they can keep on relying on these practices or not. Moreover, research on the anti-laws relevance for the luxury industry might reveal other distinguishing characteristics of luxury branding in comparison to traditional branding that still is uncovered.

We began this quest with a promise to tell you a story of how luxury met the internet and now our story has come to its end. After almost 30 years of cold rejections, it seems luxury has started to finally open up its heart to the internet. And through this process luxury has changed, at least for now. We are eager to see what next future will be told about luxury, and what future will unfold.

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Appendix

Appendix A

Protocol							Positive, Negative, Neutral				
Specific publication title	Medium name	Medium Description (from Factiva)	Medium category	Date	Length (# words)	Author	How digitalization is framed	What challenges are mentioned in relation to digitalization	What opportunities are mentioned in relation to digitalization	What drives internet adoption? (according to whom?)	What hinders internet adoption? (according to whom?)

					Positive, Negative, Neutral		Comptaible, incompatible		
How the internet should be used by luxury brands?	What groups' interests are described?	Who's views/persp ectives is asked?	Who's views/ perspectives is NOT asked?	Who's view seems to be most important/ have greater influence?	How future is described/ framed	Definition luxury	Luxury and digitalization together	Miscellaneous	Summary

Appendix B

Year	Number of articles	Top 3 most occuring newspaper	Example of publication title
1990-1993	17	Financial Times Women's Wear Daily BRW	*World Stock Markets: Shopping for pleasure on the Paris bourse - Champagne prospects may be flat, but luxuries still appeal* *Designer fashion starts to falter: Demographics, changing tastes and recession have hit sales of luxury goods*
1996-1997	12	Women's Wear Daily Forbes Reuters News	*Internet a ground for knockoffs* *EFI PANEL: DISTRIBUTION WILL BE KEY FOR LUXURY GOODS* *Windows shopping: Online buying still attracts mostly the curious, and has yet to spark a bonanza of cyber commerce.*
1998-1999	14	Women's Wear Daily International Herald Tribune The Wall Street Journal	*Sensing Is Believing: When Luxury Goes Interactive* *The Internet has become designer labels' worst enemy. Rebecca Quick and Ken Bensinger report on the dark side of online shopping: $25 billion worth of `cyberfakes'*
2000	15	Women's Wear Daily M2 Presswire Marketing week	*Too Good for the Web? Luxury goods are often thought of as beyond the Web's reach; Perhaps not* *In the vacuum left behind by most luxury firms' reluctance to click onto e-commerce, independent web.*
2005	16	Financial Times New Media Age The New York Times	*Internet selling all about using the proper channels* *Yoox sees its fashions click - GENERAL RETAILERS.* *Fashion Is Two Clicks Behind*
2010	15	Financial Times International Herald Tribune The Sunday Times	*Luxury brands and the internet* *Luxury laggards buff up online presence; A recession, and battles with department stores, prompt a change of heart* *Bain & Company Projects 10% Surge in Worldwide Luxury Goods Sales in 2010, Erasing Recessionary Declines*
2015	12	Financial Times Investors Chronicle The Wall Street Journal Online	*Investors Chronicle - magazine and web content: Luxury retailing: Has haute couture lost its allure?* *New consumer demands challenge exclusivity of luxury brands* *Is Rupert Right? Johann Rupert, Compagnie Financiére Richemont's head skeptic, said it's very hard to say "e-commerce" and "luxury" in the same breath.*
2019	12	Financial Times Women's Wear Daily Newsweek	*What makes it luxury?: Reshaping the luxury goods landscape* *Think Tank: Luxury E-commerce and the Path to Profitability*

Appendix C

Year	Medium name	Author	Publication title
1990	Financial Times	William Dawkins	*World Stock Markets: Shopping for pleasure on the Paris bourse - Champagne prospects may be flat, but luxuries still appeal*
1990	Women's wear daily	N/A	*Prestige labels: the party's over. (sales of luxury designer fashions, furs and jewelry are dropping) (includes related article on best selling luxury goods)*
1990	Financial Times	Alice Rawsthorn	*A new breed on the catwalk: Alice Rawsthorn assesses the increasing competition in luxury goods*
1990	Financial Times	Alice Rawsthorn	*Management: Dior strives to put its house in order - The French couturier is striving to regain its once pre-eminent position. Alice Rawsthorn explains how / International luxury goods*
1991	Women's Wear Daily	Jill Newman	*LVMH sticks with the basics. (management theory at Louis Vuitton Moet Hennessey still the same, despite executive changes)*
1991	Women's wear daily	Jill Newman	*Cartier's Critchell: luxury in hard times. (Simon Critchell; Cartier Inc., jeweler)*
1991	Financial Times	Alice Rawsthorn and William Dawkins	*Dior hopes its new look will captivate the Bourse: A flotation of fashion*
1991	Financial Times	Alice Rawsthorn	*Designer fashion introuble*
1991	Financial Times	Alice Rawsthorn	*France (20): Austerity a la mode - Luxury goods trade faces a period of discomfort*
1991	Financial Times	Alice Rawsthorn	*Designer fashion starts to falter: Demographics, changing tastes and recession have hit sales of luxury goods*
1992	Financial Times	Alice Rawsthorn	*International Company News: Famous face of fashion wears well in tough times - The house of Yves St Laurent*
1992	Financial Times	Stephen Bailey	*The FT Goes Shopping (6): Luxury - a dated concept in the 90s - Meretricious displays of wealth are completely passe now, says Stephen Bayley in his philosophical view of what the rich buy*
1992	Marketing week	Helen Jones	*The Luxury Gap - Marketing Week examines the luxury goods market*
1993	International Herald Tribune	Avril Connard	*Cartier: Snobbery With Mass Appeal Firm Polishes Prestige Image at Its Own Trade Fair*
1993	Financial Times	Alice Rawsthorn	*MANAGEMENT (MARKETING AND ADVERTISING) - A LITTLE LUXURY GOES A LONGER WAY.*
1993	Financial Times	Avril Groom	*Fashion - Paris is still the key*
1993	BRW	Nancy Rotenier	*HOW DOES ONE WRAP A $20,000 ALLIGATOR-SKIN GOLF BAG?*
1996	Agence France-Presse	N/A	*Yves Saint-Laurent goes virtual*
1996	The Commercial Appeal Memphis	N/A	*Internet a ground for knockoffs*
1996	Reuters News	Lee Yanowitch	*Paris couture houses burst on to worldwide web*
1996	Drug & Cosmetic Industry	DCI?	*Any Questions? DCI Interviews president/ceo Robert M. Cankes, Christian Dior Perfumes, Inc., Executive interview w/ CEO Robert M. Cankes*
1996	Women's Wear Daily	N/A	*DOLCE & GABBANA BITE THE BIG APPLE*
1996	The Australian	STEPHEN TODD	*A new breed of catwalk*
1996	Women's Wear Daily	Melissa Drier	*EFI PANEL: DISTRIBUTION WILL BE KEY FOR LUXURY GOODS*
1996	Women's Wear Daily	William Middleton	*AND NOW, COUTURE*
1996	Women's Wear Daily	N/A	*DESIGNING DIOR - WHO'S NEXT?*
1997	Retail Jeweller	Jill Bousoulengas	*Top watch brands want higher retail standards.*
1997	Forbes	Thomas Easton	*Web Solver Let your modem do the walking Will the Internet revolutionize shopping? Look, it already has.*
1997	The Hamilton Spectator	Greg Hardesty	*Windows shopping: Online buying still attracts mostly the curious, and has yet to spark a bonanza of cyber commerce.*
1998	Newswire	Jan Howells	*Ivana Trump sets up shop on the Net*
1998	New york Post	Mary Huhn	*WEB IS HOTBED FOR COUNTERFEIT GOODS*
1998	Business Wire	N/A	*Founder of Robb Report Launches Internet Portal Targeted to the Affluent; E-Commerce and Auction Website Established as Millionaire.Com*
1998	International Herald Tribune	Suzy Menkes	*Sensing Is Believing: When Luxury Goes Interactive*
1998	Financial times	Avril Groom	*HOW TO SPEND IT - The couture client is elbowed aside - Fashion.*
1999	The Wall Street Journal Europé	Stephanie Gruner	*Technology Journal: Harrods to Offer Luxury Goods Online*
1999	The Toronto Star	Rachel Beck	*High-end retailers flock to Web*
1999	Women's Wear Daily	James Fallon	*ONLINE LUXURY GETS ADVICE FROM AD EXEC*
1999	International Herald Tribune	Rebecca Voight	*Can Luxury Sell Itself On-Line? Design Houses Begin to Take Their First Steps in Cyberspace*
1999	PR Newswire	N/A	*LuxuryFinder.com, the First Comprehensive, High-End Luxury Consumer Web Site, to be Launched by James A. Finkelstein*
1999	Knight-Ridder Tribune Business News	Joelle Tessler	*Web Retailers Aim to Lure Well-Off Buyers with Array of Luxury Goods*
1999	Women's Wear Daily	Sharon Edelson	*GROWING UPSCALE - LUXURY LOGS ON*
1999	The Wall Street Journal	Rebecca Quick and Ken Bensinge	*The Internet has become designer labels' worst enemy. Rebecca Quick and Ken Bensinger report on the dark side of online shopping: $25 billion worth of `cyberfakes'*
1999	Women's Wear Daily	Sarah Raper	*EVOLUTION OF A CLASSIC: LAGERFELD SEES A NEED FOR CHANGES AT CHANEL*
2000	Marketing week	N/A	*Prestige brands' poor show.*
2000	Women's Wear Daily	Samantha Conti	*SELLING OUT IN ORDER TO SURVIVE*
2000	Reuters News	Kevin Drawbaugh	*Euro luxury merchants tip-toe into e-tail.*
2000	Business Line (The Hindu)	N/A	*In the vacuum left behind by most luxury firms' reluctance to click onto e-commerce, independent web.*
2000	M2 Presswire	Simon Mustoe and Ema Linaker	*High end consumers gain confidence in cyber shopping*
2000	M2 Presswire	Simon Mustoe and Ema Linaker	*High end consumers gain confidence in cyber shopping*
2000	Crain's New York Business	Catherine Curan	*Shopping in the laptop of luxury : Tony e-tail sites hope to capture big spenders on-line; can they all succeed?*
2000	Women's Wear Daily	Nina Farell	*UPSCALE APPAREL CROWD - CYBERSPACE MISSION NOT IMPOSSIBLE*
2000	PR Newswire	N/A	*New Study Finds Half of All Internet Users Are Luxury Goods Buyers*
2000	The Asian Wall Street Journal	Evan Ramstad	*Too Good for the Web? Luxury goods are often thought of as beyond the Web's reach; Perhaps not*
2000	Financial Times	Lucy Killgren	*INSIDE TRACK - Establishing a new line in designer goods - LUXURY GOODS E-TAILERS*
2000	Retail Week	Glynn Davis	*Luxury finds its niche on the Net*
2000	Women's Wear Daily	Janet Ozzard (contributions from James Fallon)	*OLD WORLD NEW WORLD - IN THE POST-TECH WORLD, TWO DIVERGENT IDEAS OF LUXURY ARE POISED - TO DO BATTLE FOR THE CONSUMER.*
2000	Marketing	James Curtis	*Not taking luxury for granted*
2000	Revolutions	Adam Katz-Stone	*Luxury goods*
2005	Financial Times	Sophy Buckley	*Yoox sees its fashions click - GENERAL RETAILERS.*
2005	MediaWeek	Mike Shields	*Fashion Moves Forward*
2005	Brandweek	VNU eMedia	*Out of the Box: Busy, Wealthy And Wired*
2005	Financial Times	Simon de Burton	*Internet selling all about using the proper channels*
2005	The Toronto Star	Ruth La Ferla	*Elite shoppers act early; If you want that model's DSquared jacket, you had better get a move on Hippest of hip shoppers see what's on the runways and order immediately*
2005	Business Wire	Pamela Danziger	*This Holiday Season Luxury Shoppers Will Take the Lead in Internet Shopping; New Survey by Unity Marketing Finds That Half of Luxury Consumers Bought a Gift Online*
2005	Financial Times	Maria Doulton	*A window on the world - THE RETAILER'S VIEW: Maria Doulton explains why things are changing behind the shop counter.*
2005	New Media Age	Nic Howell	*PROFILE - FEDERICO MARCHETTI: Dressed to impress*
2005	The wall street journal europe	Jeanette Borzo	*Seeking Solutions: Designer clothing finds the right fit online*

2005	The Wall Street Journall	Jeanette Borzo	*Technology (A Special Report): E-Commerce --- Looking Good: Designer clothing is starting to find its fit online*
2005	The New York Times	Cathy Horyn	*Fashion Is Two Clicks Behind*
2005	The New York Times	Cathy Horyn	*Point, Click and Strut*
2005	New Media Age	Dominic Dudley	*LUXURY BRANDS: Wealth of opportunity*
2005	Financial Times	Adam Jones and Elizabeth Rigby	*A good fit? Designers and mass-market chains try to stitch their fortunes together CONSUMER INDUSTRIES: Collaborations between clothing multinationals and the stars of high fashion carry reputational dangers for each side but this 'genre-bending' can boost the finances and brands of both, Adam Jones and Elizabeth Rigby write*
2005	Marketing	Simon Brooke	*Luxury brands: Spoiled goods*
2005	Financial Times	Susan Xiao	*What are the critical success factors for luxury goods companies looking to expand in China?*
2010	International Herald Tribune	James Kanter	*E.U. allows luxury firms to exclude online sellers*
2010	Agence France Presse	N/A	*Luxury firms step out cautiously into virtual world*
2010	Financial Times	Rachel Sanderson and Kathrin Hille	*Armani set to launch Chinese online site*
2010	Financial Times	Elizabeth Rigby	*Internet: Seamless service from clicks and bricks*
2010	Financial Times	David Gelles	*E-commerce: Innovation brings a touch of class to online shopping*
2010	Philippine Daily Inquirer	Ingrid Chua-Go	*The convenience of online luxury shopping*
2010	Financial Times	Maria Doulton	*E-strategy: Jewellers slow to embrace online presence*
2010	Economist Intelligence Unit - Executive Briefing	N/A	*Selling luxury goods online: The chic learn to click*
2010	Investment weekly news	N/A	*Bain & Company; Bain & Company Projects 10% Surge in Worldwide Luxury Goods Sales in 2010, Erasing Recessionary Declines*
2010	International Herald Tribune	Stephanie Clifford	*Luxury laggards buff up online presence; A recession, and battles with department stores, prompt a change of heart*
2010	Marketing, a Haymarket publication	Nicola Clark	*The new luxury market*
2010	BW Confidential	N/A	*A new vision for the luxury market?*
2010	BW Confidential	Noon Media SARL	*Luxury brands and the internet*
2010	The Sunday Times	N/A	*They said her big idea would never work. But the founder of Net-a-Porter has just sold her stake in the online store for £50m*
2010	New Media Age	N/A	*VERTICAL FOCUS LUXURY BRANDS: Leisure craft*
2015	The Wall Street Journal Online	Loretta Chao	*Luxury Brands Dip Toes in E-Commerce Waters; Louis Vuitton, Chanel and other sellers of luxury goods are improving their online offerings in response to customer demand. Online sales make up 6% of the total for luxury goods, triple the share in 2009, according to McKinsey & Co.*
2015	People's Daily Online	N/A	*Digital investment pays off for British luxury brands as e- commerce spurs growth*
2015	Cape TImes	N/A	*Analysis: Online merger pushes luxury brands towards internet*
2015	Manila Bulletin	N/A	*New consumer demands challenge exclusivity of luxury brands*
2015	India Today	N/A	*Opulence goes digital*
2015	Reuters	Catherine Evans	*REFILE-ANALYSIS-Online store merger prods luxury goods makers towards Internet*
2015	Financial Times	Rachel Sanderson	*Tech leaders shake up luxury industry*
2015	The Sunday Business Post	N/A	*Lapse of luxury? Not yet*
2015	Financial Times	Adam Thompson	*Shift to digital gains cachet for luxury groups; LVMH's poaching of Apple music executive comes as the sector learns the value of building a strong online presence*
2015	Women's Wear Daily	Miles Socha	*Luxury's Digital Migration; Even digitally reticent high-end brands such as Chanel are starting to sell online.*
2015	Women's Wear Daily	Rachel Strugatz and Joelle Diderich	*Is Rupert Right? Johann Rupert, Compagnie Financiére Richemont's head skeptic, said it's very hard to say "e-commerce" and "luxury" in the same breath.*
2015	Investors Chronicle	Julia Bradshaw	*Investors Chronicle - magazine and web content: Luxury retailing: Has haute couture lost its allure?*
2019	CE Noticias Financieras	Anne D'Innocenzio	*Expensive stores reinvent themselves: Now they offer experiences*
2019	Financial Times	Rachel Sanderson	*Amazon's puffa jacket success sends shivers through luxury sector*
2019	The Financial Mail	Tim Cohen	*RICHEMONT - A morecommon touch*
2019	Financial Times	Sarah Shannon	*Personal touches elevate luxury digital shopping experience*
2019	Handelszeitung translated into English	Henning Hölder	*New customers, old recipes*
2019	Die Welt translated into English	Felix Eick	*Generation Y and Z in luxury intoxication*
2019	Financial Times	Alistair Gray	*Shine dims for jewellery retailers as shift to ecommerce bites*
2019	The Wall Street Journal Online	Jacob Gallagher	*Would You Buy a Luxury Watch Online?*
2019	Financial Times	Flora Macdonald Johnston, Harriet Agnew and Rachel Sanderson	*Lessons in luxury*
2019	Women's Wear Daily	Arthur Zaczkiewicz, Tracy Bacigalupo and Elnaz Zarrini (Morrison & Foerster)	*Think Tank: Luxury E-commerce and the Path to Profitability*
2019	Business times Singapore	Chuang Peck Ming	*What makes it luxury?: Reshaping the luxury goods landscape*
2019	Newsweek	Milosz Węglewski	*BERNARD ARNAULT - LUXURY DICTATOR*