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# Consumers' propensity to resist: A contribution to the study of the Disposition to oppose market influence attempts

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## Abstract

The purpose of this article is to propose a dispositional approach to consumers' propensity to resist (CPR) that could predict critical behaviors in the marketplace. A literature review and a qualitative study are used to delineate the construct and its two dimensions – self-affirmation and self-protection. A measurement scale is then developed using four samples, two of which are representative. This data collection from 1721 individuals enables us to construct a final model that validates the relationships between the two dimensions of the CPR scale, its psychological antecedents and its effects on various consumption behaviors and critical orientations toward the market.

## Keywords

consumer resistance, personality trait, propensity to resist, scale development

## Introduction

Some 20 years ago the work of Peñaloza and Price (1993) inaugurated the study of consumer resistance and initiated the analysis of the forms of opposition through which people, alone or in groups, manifest their rejection of market structures and the influence processes at work in the marketplace. In an extensive analysis of the concept, Roux (2007a) showed that such work had focused on the manifestations of resistance, revealing the variety

of contexts and motives that give rise to them. She further pointed out that consumers have a 'stable individual tendency' to resist, liable to result in non-uniform reactions to the forms of perceived pressure (Roux, 2007a: 68). Yet this psychological characteristic remains understudied in the field of marketing. Consequently our study aims to conceptualize and measure 'consumers' propensity to resist' (CPR), and to show it can predict certain

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psychological states and oppositional market behaviors. CPR variously has theoretical, conceptual and managerial utility. At a theoretical level, it provides a parsimonious measurement tool able to throw light on oppositional behaviors, currently little taken into account, that target firms – through boycotts, resistance to advertising, refusing to share personal information – and/or more broadly the market – through alternative forms of consumption or deconsumption. At a conceptual level, CPR is a unique broad spectrum explanatory construct, fundamentally different from other similar variables, in particular skepticism and reactance. Finally, at a managerial level, it provides businesses with a segmentation tool allowing them to adapt their communication, sales and customer relationship management actions to different customer profiles.

In the first part we identify the contributions from different approaches to resistance phenomena and sketch the various ways in which CPR can be theoretically conceptualized. In the second part we detail the results of a qualitative study – two focus groups and 22 individual semi-structured interviews – to clarify the nature and dimensionality of the construct, together with its antecedents (individual and situational) and effects. The third part presents the results of two quantitative studies that enabled us respectively to (1) develop, (2) validate and (3) ‘replicate’ a tool to measure CPR on two influence devices – advertising and selling – and then (4) to test a structural model including some of its determinants and effects. The capacity of this tool to predict certain critical orientations toward the market and the theoretical and managerial implications stemming from them are discussed in the conclusion of the article.

### **From resistance to CPR: A proposal for a theoretical framework**

Resistance is a polysemic term that can designate both a reaction whereby someone engages in ‘a rejoinder, neutralization or opposition’ and the ‘characteristics of someone who puts up with worries and adversity without weakening’ (Roux, 2005: 5). However, research carried out over the past 20

years on this topic has focused more on exploring resistance behavior than identifying the psychological profile pertaining to the second sense of the term. To clarify the theoretical foundations needed to conceptualize CPR, we look at existing hypotheses on the manifestations and antecedents of consumer resistance. We extend this analysis with a review of research conducted in other disciplines – management and education sciences – which outlines ways of theoretically characterizing and defining CPR.

### ***Behaviors, triggers and objects of resistance***

Dominated by a desire to understand new phenomena, sometimes barely visible, audible or recognizable, work has mainly focused on comprehensive and interpretative approaches to resistance behaviors (Roux, 2005). Such studies lie within a sociological perspective where resisting involves reacting to power exercised on an individual or group in a relational framework (Braud, 1985; Dahl, 1957; Foucault, 1982; Weber, 1971[1922]). In marketing, such power takes the form, not so much of pressure or coercion, but of influence (Bourgeois and Nizet, 1995), which can be discursive, making marketing a kind of ‘sophistry’ (Laufer and Paradeise, 1982) or practice in the form of ‘a way of acting on the actions’ of others (Foucault, 1982: 1056). Resistance then becomes, for consumers, a matter of combatting the influences exercised on them through the advertising campaigns, commercial offers and sales techniques that firms use to attract them. Thus advertising (Cottet et al., 2012; Kirmani and Zhu, 2007; Rumbo, 2002), the media (Duke, 2002; Handelman, 1999), brands (Romani et al., 2012; Sandikci and Ekici, 2009), the tactics of contact personnel (Kirmani and Campbell, 2004; Roux, 2008), the layout of stores (Dulsrud and Jacobsen, 2009) and the use of atmospheric variables (Lunardo et al., 2012) have been studied in terms of their manipulative character, cognitive dissonance and the negative emotions they provoke.

Over and above techniques taken in isolation, marketing itself may be seen more broadly as an influence system. The image barometers published for nearly 50 years by Barksdale and

Darden (1972), as well as by Gaski and Etzel (1986), show longitudinally (through a series of indicators on products, price, advertising, stores and sales) that consumers perceive it as manipulative and more oriented towards the firm's interest than that of its customers. Responsible for the use of these techniques and devices, companies are also, in fact, the object of resistance. The work of Thompson and Arsel (2004) and of Thompson et al. (2006) reveals that the types of protest against some multinationals stem from their hegemony in the market and the contradiction between this hegemony and the image of proximity and authenticity they seek to convey.

Going beyond specific targets, a second, systemic, level of resistance is directed more forcefully at market ideology and the influence it exerts in all aspects of daily life (Roux, 2005). Some consumers thus seem to aspire to lifestyles that escape the codes and rituals imposed by markets (Duke, 2002; Close and Zinkhan, 2009). Such everyday behavior targets consumption and is expressed in a 'reflexive' or 'creative' way (Holt, 2002) by actions involving reasoned choices, readjustment in relation to market actors and/or withdrawal from the market (Dobré, 2002).

In general, the studies we have cited are concerned with active and intentional forms of resistance, illustrating the duality of manifestations of dissatisfaction analyzed by Hirschman (1970). The first, involving 'voice', are most often audible, collective and occasional, such as boycotts (Friedman, 1999; Herrmann, 1993), adusting (Rumbo, 2002) and negative word-of-mouth (Peretti, 2003). The second, involving 'exit', are less visible and identifiable by firms. They lead consumers to ideological defections targeting consumption and brands (Cherrier, 2009; Iyer and Muncy, 2009; Sandikci and Ekici, 2009). They can be expressed by frequenting alternative channels – Community Supported Agriculture (Robert-Demontrond, 2011), secondhand markets (Roux and Guiot, 2008), collaborative exchange systems (Belk, 2010; Botsman and Rogers, 2010) – or by a more comprehensive disengagement from consumption through voluntary simplicity (Cherrier and Murray, 2007; Dobscha and Ozanne, 2001; Zavestoski, 2002) or degrowth (Sugier, 2012).

As well as active responses through which consumers resist or circumvent the modalities they seek to influence, studies on persuasion illustrate more passive types of reaction than those just referred to. Here resistance is not so much the result of an individual's conscious and deliberate commitment to action, than a certain inertia in their attitudes toward messages that try to alter these attitudes. By experimentally manipulating the content, rhetoric or execution of messages, these studies reveal the psychological mechanisms that can act on the reinforcement of attitude. Inoculation theory, for example, shows that it is possible to increase a person's resistance to counter-attitudinal arguments by exposing them to a refutation rather than a confirmation of what they think. This process is intended to make the individual perceive the vulnerability of their beliefs and lead them to develop cognitive defenses to inoculate them against subsequent persuasive attacks (Compton and Pfau, 2004; McGuire and Papageorgis, 1962). Research also reveals the role of metacognition in resistance, i.e. the way people think about the things they oppose and about the reasons for their opposition (Petty and Briñol, 2008; Tormala and Petty, 2004). Friestad and Wright (1994) have pointed out that decoding persuasive techniques can make the person more sensitive to how they seek to influence him, and focus more on these techniques rather than on the message content. All these studies on active or passive manifestations of resistance invite us to explore the psychological characteristics underlying them.

### *Psychological determinants of resistance behaviors*

Some psychological dimensions, in particular reactance, have been put forward as possible explanations for resistance behaviors. Other variables related to doubt – skepticism, defensive suspicion, cynicism, distrust and alienation – have also been invoked. Conversely, self-confidence, as well as forms of reflexivity such as the market metacognition, have also been considered as determinants of resistance. Finally, seeking a possible further distinction among those who resist, some authors have tested the explanatory power of the need to be

**Table 1a.** Antecedents of resistance behaviors identified in the literature and used as determinants of CPR following the qualitative study (in bold).

Variables	Definition and authors
<b>Psychological reactance</b>	Motivational arousal liable to occur when a freedom is eliminated or threatened (Brehm and Brehm, 1981).
<b>Skepticism towards advertising</b>	Tend to doubt or not to be convinced of the truth of advertising claims (Boyer et al., 2006).
Cynicism	Tendency to condemn advertising and to be consistently wary of advertisers' hidden motivations (Boyer et al., 2006).
Distrust	Situational dimension of skepticism, in which doubt largely focuses on certain features of the message/offer, rather than the message/offer in its entirety (Oudou and de Pechpeyrou, 2012).
Defensive suspicion	Defensive orientation on the part of consumers who have been the victim of misleading advertising, resulting in negative opinions about all forms of advertising and marketing in general (Darke and Ritchie, 2007).
Alienation	State of mind of consumers who view themselves as estranged from the norms, values and principles governing the market (Allison, 1978).
<b>Self-confidence</b>	Extent to which an individual feels competent and assured in their decision-making and behavior in the market (Bearden et al., 2001).
<b>Market metacognition</b>	The consumer's beliefs regarding their own mental states and processes and other actors' mental states, strategies and intentions in the specific realm of market interactions (Wright, 2002).
Materialism	Importance attached to the acquisition and possession of material goods for achieving a goal or desired state (Richins and Dawson, 1992).
Need for uniqueness	Seeking to be different from others through the acquisition and use of consumer goods in order to develop and improve one's personal and social identity (Tian et al., 2001)

unique and of materialism with regard to their behavior (Table 1a).

*Psychological reactance.* Defined as a trait (or state), reactance refers to the predisposition to react negatively to a deprivation of liberty, whether this be due to impersonal or interpersonal causes (Brehm, 1989; Clee and Wicklund, 1980). Experiencing motivational arousal in the face of the threat to their freedom, or the removal of a freedom that they want to restore, the reactant consumer also very often reveals themselves to be attracted by the option they feel deprived of (Brehm, 1989). Although similar, the concepts of resistance and reactance are distinguished by four key features (Roux, 2007a). First, the trigger for reactance is the fear of a loss of freedom, while the trigger for the resistance lies in a perceived attempt to influence or exert pressure. Second, one of the effects of reactance is restoring the lost freedom, while resistance primarily consists of counteracting the pressure exerted. Third, the

importance attached to the feeling of freedom is crucial in reactance, while it is not necessarily so in resistance. Fourth, reactance does not involve a deliberative process with regard to the originator or source of the action, which is central in resistance (Clee and Wicklund, 1980).

*Antecedents related to doubt.* A number of variables such as skepticism, cynicism, defensive suspicion, distrust and alienation have also been put forward as determinants of resistance.

*Skepticism,* mainly studied in relation to advertising (Boyer et al., 2006; Obermiller and Spangenberg, 1998), and more recently in relation to promotion (Oudou and de Pechpeyrou, 2012), defines the tendency to doubt, in principle and without evidence, the promises made by commercial sources. The dispositional approach recognizes in the individual a particular propensity for questioning, fueled by their day-to-day interactions with the commercial sphere (Cottet et al., 2012; Dobscha

and Ozanne, 2001; Thompson et al., 2006). These doubts regarding commercial discourses could give rise to a perception of their attempt to influence, and hence skepticism towards advertising could be a good predictor of CPR.

For the same reasons, other variables may be considered. *Cynicism* has been studied in the *continuum* of doubting reactions towards market mechanisms (Boyer et al., 2006). Some multidimensional approaches to skepticism even include it, along with suspicion, within a broader set of negative attitudes towards advertisers' arguments and intentions (Boush et al., 1994). However, studies show that cynicism is distinguished from skepticism in that it concerns the motives or intentions behind the action, rather than on the veracity of the content of the information or message (Boyer et al., 2006; Kanter and Wortzel, 1985). *Distrust*, in turn, comes within situational approach to skepticism, where certain features of the offering are more likely than others to lead to acceptance or rejection of a claim (Obermiller and Spangenberg, 1998; Odou and de Pechpeyrou, 2012). In a more specific context, *defensive suspicion* has been analyzed by Darke and Ritchie (2007) as the result of a feeling of initial deception from a misleading advertisement. These authors show that this excessive distrust is characterized by paranoid cognition patterns and a defensive posture on the part of the individual. Although arising in the context of advertising, this reaction is liable to appear in other deception situations, inducing persistent distortions between the consumer's perceptions and reality, and possibly leading him to form negative stereotypes with regard to market sources and mechanisms. Finally, *alienation* refers to the feeling of dissatisfaction of people who do not view themselves as consumers (Lambert, 1980; Sitz, 2009). As such, it captures their tendency to feel excluded from the norms, values and principles that govern market functioning and that may predispose them to resist.

*Consumer self-confidence and market metacognition.* In addition to the above variables, the consumer's *self-confidence* represents the degree to which the individual feels capable and assured in their decision-making and behavior in the market (Bearden et al., 2001). It shows their capacity both

to (1) search for information and evaluate alternatives in the market and (2) to understand the influence tactics used by *marketers*. In fact, in an influence situation, a consumer with high self-confidence is in principle less likely to alter their decisions than someone with low self-confidence.

*Market metacognition* is another key antecedent of resistance. Formed from secondary knowledge on the part of the consumer about influence techniques (Friestad and Wright, 1994), it represents a set of deliberative processes on persuasion devices and their effectiveness (Roux, 2007a). Most studies find that the activation of this knowledge adversely affects the effectiveness of influence techniques (Campbell and Kirmani 2000). When consumers have memorized the situations in which manipulative methods have been used, they are better equipped to identify and thwart them, in particular by putting themselves on guard against their effects (Friestad and Wright 1994; Roux, 2007a).

*Resistance and its signs of distinctiveness.* With a view to constructing a measurement scale of 'anti-commercial consumer rebellion', Austin et al. (2005: 62) attempted to measure what they define as 'open and avowed resistance to institutionalized marketing practices'. The authors considered two determinants of this: materialism – characterizing the centrality of possessions in the individual's life, the happiness they seek to obtain through them and the social success of which they are indices (Richins and Dawson, 1992) – which is related to it negatively (- 0.24), and the need to be unique, related to it positively (0.22). They thus approach resistance from the angle of a kind of distinctiveness. Their results show that the need to be unique – i.e. to distinguish oneself through anti-conformist choices – helps to predict anti-commercial rebellion. The latter is also negatively linked to materialism, suggesting that people maintain a kind of detachment towards material goods, through which their centrality in their lives decreases. We will therefore extend this idea by proposing that certain consumer choices, like socially responsible behavior, are potential effects of CPR.

Though providing a rich panorama of the determinants and manifestations of resistance, these studies do not, however, sufficiently illuminate



consumers' propensity to resist. A dispositional approach therefore needs to be constructed, the theoretical basis of which we now present.

*Towards a proposal for conceptualizing consumers' propensity to resist.* The propensity to resist has been defined as a 'stable individual tendency of the consumer to oppose perceived forms of pressure or influence' (Roux, 2007a: 68). The choice of the term 'propensity' derives from Popper's (1959) definition of it as all the possibilities (or measures or 'weights' of the possible) possessing realizable tendencies or dispositions. To be expressed, the propensity therefore needs a context, a favorable situation. Consequently CPR corresponds to what Mowen (2000) defines as a *situational trait*, that is to say, the joint activation of the individual's most stable elementary traits (derived from their genetic endowment and early learning), compound trait, including social and cultural factors (which have influenced their education and the training of their judgments), and specific situational characteristics (such as those to which they are exposed in the realm of consumption). CPR thus captures a feature that is simultaneously shaped by the person's environment and is activated by the contexts in which they evolve. In the present study, we are interested only in contexts relating to consumption. It is therefore not a question of capturing a general trait that would concern every kind of influence, but rather the forms of pressure exerted by market actors, discourses and devices. However, outside the realm of consumption, an individual may have a tendency to resist other forms of pressure or influence – in their work, in politics, in the face of social pressure, etc. – when they perceive them as dissonant and show a stable psychological tendency to oppose them. Although taking into account different kinds of propensity to resist in the same individual has not been the subject of previous research, approaches to resistance in management and education studies allow its bases to be better understood. In management, 'resistance to change' indicates the cognitive rigidity that prevents the person adjusting to new conditions. It is manifested in particular by his orientation towards the short term, by negative emotional reactions to changes in the organization and by a fixation on routines from which the person

does not want to deviate (Oreg, 2003). In educational studies, resistance is conceived as the effort the person makes to achieve his goal of preventing external or internal distractors from compromising its accomplishment (Broonen, 2007). Both contexts reveal the existence of pressure on the individual – change or managerial directives in the first, internal or external distractors in the second – the effect of which they seeks to annul. They also suggest that resistance is not solely a matter of motivation, but also of *volition* to keep focused on a desired goal. Defined by Corno (1994: 229) as 'the *tendency to maintain focus and effort toward goals despite potential distractions*', volition exercises an executive control and regulation function with regard to the outside world, by allowing the subject to stay focused on their decision (Baumeister et al., 1998). With regard to consumption and market influence contexts, Dholakia (2000) also suggests that the mechanisms through which consumers defend themselves against temptations to which they are exposed are volitional in nature. From the work of Kuhl (2001) and Kuhl and Fuhrmann (1998), this author shows that two internal orientations can be used to combat tendencies to impulse buying: self-control and self-regulation. Self-control enables the individual to keep to their goal by relying both on a memory of the objective to be attained and on processes oriented towards the accomplishment of the task. Self-regulation, on the other hand, aims to protect the individual from disturbances in the environment by mobilizing processes for detecting perceived dissonance. While the former is used to support and maintain a decision, the second acts as a defense against inappropriate *stimuli*. These mechanisms reveal how the individual, in a resistance situation, manages to reduce perceived dissonance (Festinger, 1957; Roux, 2007a). Faced with perceived dissonance, two main activation patterns described by regulatory *focus* theory (Higgins, 1997) emerge: promotion and prevention. The self-control volitional mode corresponds to a promotion-type regulatory focus, i.e. to promotion strategies that orient the individual towards achieving their goals. The self-regulation volitional mode, on the other hand, follows a regulatory focus oriented towards prevention, i.e. aimed at avoidance of what is feared and the implementation of protection



strategies. In market situations, the consumer's responses to various forms of influence are thus likely to take two possible routes: either to firmly maintain their decisions whatever the influences emanating from the environment (self-control, 'promotion' focus), or to avoid pressure or manipulation situations that give rise to dissonance (self-regulation, 'prevention' focus).

In summarizing the various theoretical arguments, we propose viewing CPR as a situational trait that, to be activated, requires an influence context that the individual perceives and rejects. Volition gives the individual a stable predisposition to oppose whatever might be attempted to obtain from them, by helping them to firmly maintain the trajectory set or to avoid the perceived dissonance (Festinger, 1957). Thus we propose defining CPR as *the consumer's stable, conscious and voluntary psychological tendency to thwart market influence attempts in order to protect themselves from them or to maintain consumption choices and decisions*. The volitional character of CPR distinguishes it from an attitude, which does not necessarily involve a major effort to achieve the desired goal (Corno, 1994; Perugini and Conner, 2000). A qualitative study will now allow us to explore empirically the nature and dimensionality of the CPR construct, as well as its possible antecedents and effects.

### **Qualitative approach to CPR and its antecedents and effects**

In the absence of previous work on CPR as a trait (differentiating this construct from previous approaches to resistance as behavior), an in-depth qualitative study was carried out. Two focus groups were used to explore the nature of resistant dispositions and 22 semi-structured interviews with a separate sample helped deepen our understanding of the differences among individuals.

#### **Method**

For reasons of convenience, group meetings led alternately by the researchers were organized with

undergraduate language students attending a university in Paris. To maximize the quality of the data collected, the meetings were conducted successively with the two halves of the same class, thus respecting the sample size of a dozen people recommended for this approach (Herbert, 2008). Due to the exploratory nature of the research, the students were invited to express themselves freely on their consumption habits and the outlets frequented. To avoid prematurely introducing the subject of the study, at the outset very general questions were asked, such as: 'Where do you shop? For what reasons? What do you like or dislike in these situations?' The first evocations of resistance indices related to situations or sources of influence arose spontaneously in the two groups, and became the focus of the discussion. We then sought to understand how the participants defined their level of resistance and what they reacted to. Various projective techniques – sentence completion, a '20 questions' game about the 'resistant' consumer, images representing different market influence contexts in selling, mass retail and advertising – were used at the end of meeting to explore in greater depth the various topics mentioned.

In-depth interviews were then conducted with 22 respondents who had not participated in group meetings. Because the focus group participants were very homogeneous in terms of age, income, educational level and socioprofessional category (SPC), we sought to introduce variation in these criteria, as well as in the central construct of the study. Thus a preliminary question allowed respondents to say whether they felt themselves to be more, or less, resistant to market techniques and devices. Given that resistance is likely first to be an expression of the person's conscious intentionality, this self-declaration question sought to contrast CPR levels and to limit over-interpretation bias related to the researchers' personal opinions (Hollander and Einwohner 2004; Sitz, 2008). The meetings and interviews were all recorded and fully transcribed. They were then subjected to a lexical analysis, used to quantify the frequency of certain occurrences, and to a content analysis by manual thematic coding, from which we obtained the elements relevant to our project.

**Table 1b.** Dimensions and manifestations of CPR from the qualitative study.

Dimensions of the CPR construct	
Self-affirmation	Self-affirmation expresses a firm and categorical rejection of influence attempts. This dimension reflects the behavior of an individual confident in their ability to resist. They are not afraid to confront influence techniques, devices and agents and defend themselves against these.
Self-protection	Self-protection reflects the evasion or circumvention of influence attempts. This dimension takes account of the consumer's desire to protect themselves from market influences by actively (exit) or passively (inertia) avoiding interactions with influence techniques, devices or agents. Seeking to protect themselves, the consumer strives not to succumb to perceived pressures, by avoiding them or remaining impassive toward them.
<b>Manifestations of CPR retained after the qualitative study</b>	
Consumer Susceptibility to Salesperson Influence	Predisposition to be affected by a salesperson's attitudes, beliefs and behavior, allowing them to have an impact on their own purchasing behavior (Goff et al., 1994).
Impulse buying	Tendency to buy immediately and spontaneously, without thinking, in a kinetic way (determined by impulses) (Rook and Fischer, 1995).
Deal proneness	Degree to which a consumer is influenced by promotions, for a given occasion, product category and/or promotional technical (Froloff, 1992).
Smart shopping	The investment of considerable time and effort in finding and using information on promotions, so as to achieve price savings (Mano and Elliott, 1997).
Critical motivations favoring alternative channels	Psychological and material motivations expressed through a willingness to bypass conventional channels, ethical and environmental concerns about recycling and anti-waste, and an 'anti-ostentation' orientation in consumption (Guiot and Roux, 2010).
Socially responsible consumption	Purchasing goods or services seen as having a positive (or less adverse) impact on the environment and/or society and using one's purchasing power to express social and/or environmental concerns (François-Lecompte, 2005).

## Results

The thematic content analysis illustrates three major themes relating to (i) the dimensions of CPR; (ii) the situations liable to activate it; and (iii) its psychological antecedents and its effects. These results allow us to formulate a succession of hypotheses around the dimensionality of the construct and around the nomological network in which it is inserted. The variables retained at the end of the qualitative study are presented in Table 1b.

*The dimensions of the concept: Self-affirmation CPR and self-protection CPR.* The first theme helps refine our understanding of CPR. People who have a tendency to resist emphasize their refusal to comply with the dictates of the market and a desire to keep control of their lives, as shown by the transcripts in Table 2. Two dimensions underlie their psychological orientation:

the desire for self-affirmation (1)<sup>1</sup> and the desire for self-protection (2). Thus some individuals resist with assurance and are able to behave in accordance with what they are. Since influence devices tend to get them to adopt a certain behavior, opposing these devices is for them a way of expressing their disagreement and asserting their independence (1a and b). Other people are more concerned about protecting themselves. They perceive their vulnerability to certain situations and deploy defensive behaviors that prevent them falling into the traps of consumption (2a and 2b). The results thus seem to support the idea that CPR encompasses two dimensions – self-affirmation and self-protection. The first reflects firm and categorical opposition to perceived influence attempts. Confident in his ability to resist, the person is not afraid to confront the techniques, devices or actors seeking to influence him. Self-protection CPR, on the other hand, reflects avoidance of influence attempts.

**Table 2.** Analysis of the dimensions, determinants and consequences of CPR in the qualitative stage.

Dimensions of CPR	
<b>Self-affirmation dimension</b>	1a. 'In general, when I go to a store, I want something specific. I know what I want and it's almost impossible to make me change my mind' (Léopold, 34). 1b. 'With sales staff, it goes very badly and I often make comments that make it clear I don't need them, I can manage by myself, and if I do need them, I'll come and find them myself' (Damien, 24) .
<b>Self-protection dimension</b>	2a. 'I say, "end the consumption society"... My consumption is now reasonable. It's not that I no longer want to, but I restrain myself ... I control myself' (Maryse, 47). 2b. 'As a consumer, I tend to step back, I'm not pushy, and I need to have lots of protection on my side not to be had' (Yohann, 26).
<b>Situational antecedents</b>	
<b>Advertising</b>	3. 'Advertising is "we encourage people to consume, we push things at people and create needs they don't have". And that irritates me.' (Delphine, 29).
<b>Salespeople</b>	4. 'When I go into a store, I am wary of the sales staff. If they offer to help, I say no! No thank you, I'm looking around! And I'll ask a salesperson, for example, if there's nothing my size, things like that, but that's all. I don't even give them the opportunity to try and influence me, and that way I'm never pushed into buying something' (Cédric, 26).
<b>Marketing</b>	5. 'I know that with marketing today they also try and sell inferior quality products cheaply; and by adding fat, because there are fewer raw materials; and by having larger margins' (Stéphanie, 30).
<b>Retail</b>	6. 'You now get large retail groups who do ads for organic products, and natural products, but that's still manipulation. I'd like to know where they really produce their organic products' (Anne-Laure, 28).
<b>Promotions</b>	7. 'I see all the underlying promotion, in fact, regarding the product and the impact that product should have' (Télès, 28).
<b>Loyalty cards</b>	8. 'When I go into stores, I often say to myself, "if you take their loyalty card, you'll be able to get certain advantages", and then by thinking about these advantages, that necessarily makes us take these cards' (Laure, 35).
<b>Psychological antecedents</b>	
<b>Psychological reactance</b>	9. 'They want to tie us into a system. I think that nowadays they want to control people's thinking by imposing a collective way of looking at things, and I'm against that ... But with me, it doesn't work much' (Yohann, 26).
<b>Self-confidence</b>	10. 'I don't let myself be influenced in an interpersonal context, that is, if someone tries to influence me, it doesn't work, I have my own idea, and that's it' (Jordan, 22).
<b>Skepticism toward market discourses</b>	11. 'I'm skeptical in principle, but I only want to see whether the products or the thing they want to sell is good. I need to get an idea ... I try to be an informed, careful consumer. I remain on guard, watchful without being paranoid' (Paul-Henri, 49).
<b>Market metacognition</b>	12a. 'I'll try and find out more about it before deciding. It's a reflex I have, but I haven't always had it. I acquired it gradually from my experience as a consumer' (Télès, 28). 12b. 'Since I've become aware of all this, and know about the system, I've changed my way of living and consuming ... I clearly keep my wants in check, I regulate myself in how I consume' (Olivier, 52).

(Continued)

**Table 2.** (Continued)

Effects of CPR	
<b>Susceptibility to Salesperson Influence</b>	13. 'The limpet salesperson, someone who comes and won't let go, who absolutely wants you to buy something, who sticks to you, it's an attempt to influence you, but very bad' (Jordan, 22).
▪ in terms of information	13a. 'I don't necessarily think it's a lie, but everything's done to attract customers. I never trust these people's opinion. I never ask for salespeople's opinion' (Fatma, 22).
▪ in terms of recommendation	13b. 'In a store, I only ask the sales staff for technical information, or questions regarding price or the products, well, that's what they're there for. I don't ask for recommendations or opinions about my choices' (Lionel, 30).
<b>Non-impulse purchases</b>	14. 'I don't buy a product on impulse, but usually after analyzing it and making comparisons ... I need at least to evaluate things' (Marc, 36).
<b>Low responsiveness to promotions</b>	15. 'If I've not planned on making a purchase, I don't buy it, just because there's a special promotion' (Laure, 34).
<b>Smart shopping</b>	16. 'And to avoid having just one source of information, I go to various sites, I look at different sources, and afterwards I look at all the information I can so as to make my own decision' (Lionel, 30).
<b>Critical motivations favoring alternative channels</b>	17. 'Ever since I was a child, I've been going to secondhand markets, charity shops and the like, I was brought up doing this barter stuff, and so I'm not into this consumption race ... Going to secondhand markets is much more responsible consumption, it's buying something that's already been useful, so you don't create transport, and everything that's linked to buying a new products. It's also giving a second life to a product' (Allison, 23).
<b>Socially responsible consumption</b>	18. 'I consume what's useful for me. I consume what I need. I feel close to the idea, "let's consume what comes from nature, what the soil can produce with GMOs, without pesticides, without anything"' (Nicolas, 25).
▪ Behavior of companies	18a. 'I take the example of the stupid ads they do on mineral water and tell you to lose weight. It's astounding, whereas there's absolutely no connection between drinking water and losing weight! So I think that's misleading advertising. And I really feel opposed to that, because I think it's not ethical to lie in order to sell a product' (Léopold, 34).
▪ Reduction of consumption	18b. 'I say, "I'll limit myself, too much of that, I'll be happy with that, buy black bread, not buy too much bread." This also produces a respectful attitude to the environment, which I prefer to all this consumption that partly destroys the environment' (Serge, 37).

It expresses the consumer's desire to guard against them and protect themselves from them.

*Influence situations and sources.* The second theme of the qualitative study allows us to illustrate what constitutes a market influence attempt. It comprises a set of devices, methods and actions, which consumers perceive as seeking to alter their intentions, behavior and/or attitudes (Lunardo and Mbengue, 2009, 2011). The transcripts (3–8) refer in particular to advertising claims and messages

(88 occurrences), to sellers (44 occurrences), to marketing understood as a set of offerings, discourses and practices that are sometimes perceived as unethical (16 occurrences), to retailing (14 occurrences) and to other purchase incentive devices such as promotions (9 occurrences) and loyalty cards (9 occurrences). On this basis, we chose to retain the two most frequently mentioned sources – salespeople and advertising – as the validation context of the CPR scale. A structural model including antecedents and effects was then

tested on the ‘salespeople’ context only. For while contexts of resistance to persuasion and, more recently, resistance to advertising have been extensively covered (Cottet et al., 2012), resistance to selling offers new potential for exploration. In this regard, Kirmani and Campbell (2004) describe qualitatively the resistance strategies of customers confronted by the influence of salespeople. It seems appropriate to clarify this context by testing the predictive potential of CPR on a series of behaviors prior to purchase (smart shopping), in a purchase situation (Deal proneness, impulse buying) and in relation to certain consumption choices (tendencies to socially responsible consumption and critical motivations leading to secondhand shopping). We also retain the antecedents mentioned by our respondents, described below.

*The antecedents of CPR.* Four antecedents emerged from the discourses – psychological reactance, self-confidence, skepticism towards advertising and market metacognition. The comments show that some respondents are particularly sensitive to confinement, a characteristic of a high level of psychological reactance. This characteristic seems more particularly to fuel a self-protection CPR and avoidance of influence (9), confirming the observations of Darpy and Prim-Allaz (2006). These authors show that the reactant consumers respond to attempts to control their behavior by adopting a position of withdrawal and by avoiding interaction with a brand or retailer and their relational devices (Clee and Wicklund 1980; Kivetz, 2005). In contrast, consumers with a high level of self-confidence, as one would expect, also present a self-affirmation CPR profile (10). Their confidence seems decisive in helping them persevere in their decisions (Bearden et al., 2001). Skepticism (not cynicism) with regard to advertising discourse also occurred in several discourses. Paul-Henri (11), for example, says that he does not doubt everything, but only what he has not been able to verify himself. Skepticism is a key element that seems to be shared both by those who are assertive in their choices and by those who are inclined to avoid influence situations. The reflective processes

developed by respondents in relation to the market system also emerge as important determinants of their propensity to resist. Market metacognition is thus very recognizable among respondents who stick to their decisions despite any disturbances encountered (12a), as well as those who seek to evade different types of perceived commercial pressure (12b).

*The effects of CPR.* Six effects variables emerged from the coding of the discourses. Three of them – Susceptibility to Salesperson Influence (13), impulse buying (14) and sensitivity to promotions (15) – appear to be directly related to the purchase context. They show that consumers try to counteract incentives that encourage them to purchase, such as promotions or the action of salespeople regarding information (13a) or recommendations (13b) (Clark and Goldsmith, 2006; Goff et al., 1994). The interviews also show that resistance leads to adopting strategies prior to the act of purchase. Respondents inform themselves in detail in order to thwart influence attempts, thus illustrating the informational component of smart shopping (16). Mano and Elliott (1997) understand smart shopping as the fact of investing considerable time and effort in seeking information on promotions with a view to making price savings. Lastly, the propensity to resist also leads people to engage in certain types of private consumption (Dobré, 2002). References to frequenting secondhand channels testify, for example, to the need for ‘responsibility’ mentioned by some respondents (17), their motivations being based not only on economic reasons but also on critical attitudes towards conventional channels (Guiot and Roux, 2010). Aspects in relation to types of consumption were also mentioned, illustrating in particular two dimensions of the socially responsible consumption scale studied by François-Lecompte (2005): sanction of firms’ unethical behavior (18a) and the desire to reduce their level of consumption (18b).

### **Synthesis: A proposed measurement model of CPR**

Contributions from the literature and the results of the qualitative study allow us to formulate a set of

hypotheses on the determinants and effects of CPR. For the sake of parsimony, we decided to retain only those antecedents that are common to previous work and to our qualitative study. We also postulate, as appropriate, general or specific links to the two dimensions of CPR.

*Regarding the determinants of CPR*, we postulate that skepticism toward advertising (H1) and knowledge about persuasion (H2) are common antecedents of the two CPR dimensions. On the other hand, we hypothesize that self-confidence (H3) is a specific antecedent of self-affirmation CPR, while psychological reactance (H4) would more specifically predict self-protection CPR.

*Regarding the effects of CPR*, we postulate that there are negative relationships between the two dimensions of CPR and three forms of influence in purchase situations: Susceptibility to Salesperson Influence (H5 and H6) in terms both of the information (a) and recommendations (b) provided; impulse buying (H7 and H8); and sensitivity to promotions (H9 and H10). Conversely we postulate that, as a predisposition to resistance, CPR is positively related to information-seeking behaviors specific to smart shopping (H11 and H12), critical economic motivations contributing to secondhand shopping (H13 and H14), and the two dimensions of socially responsible consumption mentioned in the qualitative stage (H15 and H16). We choose to retain only the ‘economic criticism’ dimension of the scale of motivations pertaining to buying secondhand that appeared in the qualitative stage (Guiot and Roux, 2010). Indeed, these authors recommend an aggregated or disaggregated use of their scale depending on the research requirements. Given that the respondents’ discourses specifically emphasized a critique of the consumption system and its effects, we do not include its ‘hedonic and recreational’ dimension. For the same reasons and in order not to complicate the model, we retain only two of the dimensions of the socially responsible consumption scale developed by François-Lecompte (2005) – companies’ behavior and reduction of consumption – which were the only ones to emerge from our interviews.

The construction of a measurement scale and the validation of the nomological network of CPR will now be considered in what follows. Four data

collections were carried out, the last two on samples whose representativeness was checked.

## **Validation of the CPR measurement scale and model**

### *Generation of items and exploratory analyses*

The mental representations expressed by our respondents form the propensity to resist an abstract construct. Following Rossiter (2002), we need to specify the type of attributes supposed to represent it. A large number of mental constructs can be measured, either formatively – as an index listing several characteristics (Jarvis et al., 2004) – or reflectively by considering the manifestations of the construct through indicators. In this research, we focus on how consumers perceive *themselves* as resistant, which means viewing CPR as a reflective constructive whose indicators constitute the manifestations.

The transcripts from the qualitative study allowed us to generate terms with a view to developing a measurement tool. Taking ‘salespeople’ as the source of influence, 31 items – 15 for the self-affirmation dimension and 16 for the self-protection dimension – were formulated. However, for subsequent application to other contexts – advertising also being tested in this study – the formulation of the items was designed to allow the term ‘salespeople’ to be replaced by other influences (in italics in Tables 3 and 4). The 31 items were reviewed by five experts in consumer behavior, who were asked to assess their clarity and relevance, as well as their discriminating power compared to other variables similar to CPR, particularly psychological reactance, skepticism towards advertising, metacognition and self-confidence. At the conclusion of this stage, items not classified as good constructs by at least two of the five experts were removed. Finally 26 items were retained and/or reformulated on the basis of the experts’ comments (Table 3).

Two data collections were then carried out to purify the measures, on the two influence devices most frequently mentioned by the consumers questioned in the qualitative phase, namely salespeople and advertising.



**Table 3.** The 31 initial items (and 26 retained) following the assessment of experts (in bold).

Dimension	Items
<b>Self-affirmation CPR</b>	<p><b>AFF 1: I refuse to buy a product if I feel a <i>salesperson</i> is pushing me to do so</b></p> <p><b>AFF 2: I am not the type of person to make my consumption choices according to <i>salespeople's</i> arguments</b></p> <p><b>AFF 3: My choices are determined by my wants and not by the ploys <i>salespeople</i> use to make me buy</b></p> <p><b>AFF 4: I resist when <i>salespeople</i> try and influence me</b></p> <p><b>AFF 5: I identify the techniques used by <i>salespeople</i> so as better counteract them</b></p> <p><b>AFF 6: I buy a product because I need it, not because a <i>salesperson</i> encourages me to do so</b></p> <p><b>AFF 7: I happen to benefit from the loyalty devices offered by <i>sales staff</i>, but only when I make the decision</b></p> <p><b>AFF 8: I like buying products that are recommended by <i>salespeople</i>*</b></p> <p><b>AFF 9: I tend to accept the arguments put forward by <i>salespeople</i>*</b></p> <p><b>AFF 10: The tactics used by <i>salespeople</i> to make one buy do not change my behavior</b></p> <p><b>AFF 11: If I do not intend buying a product, I will not do so despite all the ploys used by the <i>salespeople</i></b></p> <p><b>AFF 12: The more I feel that a <i>salesperson</i> is using ploys to make me buy a products, the less I want to buy that product</b></p> <p><b>AFF 13: I manage to counter the attempts of <i>salespeople</i> to make me buy products I do not need</b></p> <p>AFF 14: I monitor how <i>salespeople</i> try to make me buy products that I do not need</p> <p>AFF 15: Before buying I try to obtain all the information needed so as not to let myself be manipulated by the opinions expressed by <i>salespeople</i></p>
<b>Self-protection CPR</b>	<p><b>PROT 1: In planning my purchases, I avoid being subjected to the influence of <i>salespeople</i></b></p> <p><b>PROT 2: I avoid buying products promoted by <i>salespeople</i></b></p> <p><b>PROT 3: I avoid the temptations to which <i>salespeople</i> could make me succumb by sticking strictly to my shopping list</b></p> <p><b>PROT 4: I avoid listening to <i>salespeople's</i> arguments because I know they are trying to influence me</b></p> <p><b>PROT 5: I discipline myself so as not to let myself be influenced by what <i>salespeople</i> say</b></p> <p><b>PROT 6: I avoid confronting <i>salespeople</i> because they always try and influence our behavior in the direction that suits them</b></p> <p><b>PROT 7: I control my desires so as not to succumb to the temptations put my way by <i>salespeople</i></b></p> <p><b>PROT 8: I stay away from products promoted by <i>salespeople</i></b></p> <p><b>PROT 9: As much as possible I avoid listening to <i>salespeople's</i> arguments for fear they may influence me</b></p> <p><b>PROT 10: I avoid joining the loyalty programs offered by some <i>sales staff</i> because they are traps to make us buy more</b></p> <p><b>PROT 11: I rarely go to certain stores, in order to protect myself from the manipulations of the <i>sales staff</i></b></p> <p><b>PROT 12: I make an effort not to yield to the influence of <i>salespeople</i></b></p> <p><b>PROT 13: I avoid exposing myself to <i>salespeople's</i> arguments, because they encourage one to overconsume</b></p> <p>PROT 14: I prefer avoiding the products promoted by <i>sales staff</i></p> <p>PROT 15: I do not listen to the information provided by <i>sales staff</i> because I know that there is underlying manipulation</p> <p>PROT 16: When I go shopping, I concentrate on the purchase I need, rather than allow myself to be influenced by the products promoted by the <i>sales staff</i></p>

\*These items are formulated in reverse.

Words in italics refer to sources or contexts of influence that can be altered according to the requirements of the study.



**Table 4.** Final CPR scale and measurement of reliability on the ‘salespeople’ device after two data collections ( $N = 125$ , then  $N = 500$ ).

CPR dimensions	Items
<b>Dimension 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ My choices are determined by my wants and not by the ploys used by <i>salespeople</i></li> </ul>
<b>Self-affirmation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I keep control of my purchase decisions despite <i>salespeople’s</i> attempts to influence them</li> </ul>
Cronbach’s alpha = 0.872*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I keep control of my purchase decisions despite <i>salespeople’s</i> attempts to influence them</li> <li>▪ The tactics used by <i>salespeople</i> to make me buy do not change my behavior</li> <li>▪ I do not allow myself to be taken in by <i>salespeople’s</i> tricks</li> </ul>
<b>Dimension 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I avoid listening to <i>salespeople’s</i> arguments because I know they are trying to influence me</li> </ul>
<b>Self-protection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In general, I stay clear of <i>salespeople</i> to avoid being influenced</li> </ul>
Cronbach’s alpha = 0.820*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ As much as possible I avoid exposing myself to <i>salespeople’s</i> arguments, for fear of being influenced</li> </ul>
	<hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ (I try to protect myself from <i>salespeople’s</i> manipulations)**</li> </ul>

\*The results provided are those of the ‘replication’ in the third data collection ( $N = 500$ ).

\*\*The item in parenthesis was removed after analyzing the results of the third collection ( $N = 500$ ).

Words in italics refer to influence sources or contexts that can be altered according to the requirements of the study.

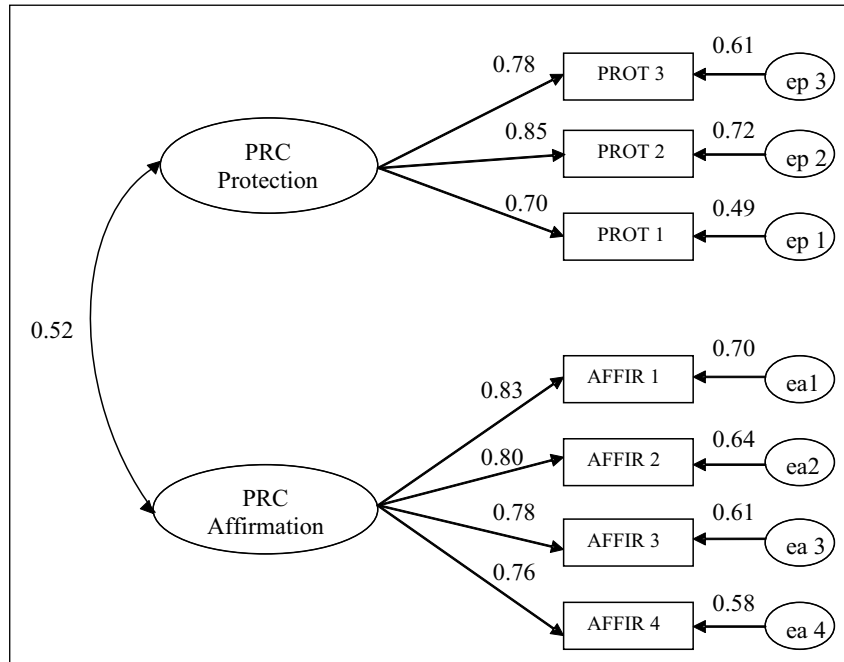
The first collection ( $N = 110^2$ ), a pre-test conducted on a convenience sample, included the previous 26 items and the determinants of CPR. An unsatisfactory structure of three factors and nine items led us to reformulate some of them and initiate a new data collection. The second collection ( $N = 1252$ ) included 14 measurement items (the nine previous items and five newly formulated items) of CPR and its determinants. After purification, six items were removed because of their low communality or factor contribution. The final structure of the scale retained turned out to be the same for both devices. The results allow us to produce a stable scale with eight items in two dimensions – self-affirmation CPR and self-protection CPR – whose reliability is confirmed on the basis of Cronbach’s alpha (0.727 and 0.741 respectively) (Table 4). Furthermore, to monitor the impact of social desirability bias in the responses to the items of the CPR scale, we introduced into both versions of the Crowne and Marlowe’s (1960) social desirability scale questionnaire, translated into French by François-Lecompte (2005). The analysis shows that the items of the CPR scale are rather weakly correlated with the calculated score of the social

desirability scale (from 0.043 to 0.205), suggesting that the responses obtained were not influenced by this bias.

The third data collection was conducted with a quota sample ( $N = 500$ ), the representativeness criteria of which were checked.<sup>3</sup> This collection allowed us to ‘replicate’ the factorial structure of the ‘salespeople’ device. The results of this principal component analysis (PCA), whose two-dimensional structure is maintained satisfactorily, led us to remove one item: ‘I try to protect myself from the manipulations of salespeople’, whose communality of 0.46 is below the 0.5 threshold recommended by Evrard et al. (2000). Table 4 shows the final structure of the CPR scale and its reliability.

### Confirmatory analyses

A confirmatory factor analysis using AMOS 5 (Figure 1) was carried out on the seven-item scale obtained at the end of the third collection. Evaluation of the multinormality of items led us to adopt the method of maximum likelihood and a bootstrap procedure, so as to remedy the multinormality problems of the data (Didellon and Valette-Florence,



**Figure 1.** Confirmatory factor analysis of the CPR scale on the 'salespeople' device.

**Table 5.** Confirmatory analyses of the CPR scale on the 'salespeople' and 'advertising' devices.

Fit indices	'Salespeople'	'Advertising'
Chi square	27.57; $p = 0.01$	94; $p = 0.000$
GFI	0.985	0.964
AGFI	0.967	0.923
TLI	0.985	0.966
CFI	0.991	0.978
RMSEA	0.04	0.09

1996). The model's fit indices, which were entirely satisfactory, were subjected to further analysis with a view to demonstrating its stability.

The fourth data collection therefore served as a 'replication' of the 'advertising' device through a new quota sample of 751 respondents.<sup>4</sup> The results confirm the good fit indices in both contexts (Table 5). With regard to these indicators, a correspondence analysis (CA) attests to the goodness of fit of the empirical data to the theoretical model. However, the high correlation between the two CPR dimensions (0.52) raised the question of the two-dimensionality of the construct. To

remove any ambiguity, a two-dimensional model was compared to a one-dimensional model in which the two latent variables – self-affirmation and self-protection – were considered as a single construct. The results of the comparison of the two theoretical models<sup>5</sup> shows the superiority of model A (two-dimensional), both through its much higher fit indices than those of model B (one-dimensional) and the significant chi square difference between the two models (376.7 for 1 degree of freedom;  $p = 0.01$ ). At a theoretical level, the content validity of the CPR scale in its two-dimensional version is also supported by the two-facet volition construct (approach/avoidance) (Higgins, 1997; Kuhl and Fuhrmann, 1998). This view was supported by the judgment of the five experts on the definition of the construct and its two dimensions. The theoretical foundations therefore argue, as does the empirical evidence, in favor of a two-dimensional solution for the CPR scale.

### *Analysis of reliability and convergent and discriminant validity*

The scale obtained has good reliability in the context of 'salespeople', as well as good convergent

**Table 6.** Discriminant validity of CPR in the 'salespeople' context.

	Self-affirmation CPR	Self-protection CPR
$\rho$ CV	<b>0.629</b>	<b>0.607</b>
Skepticism towards advertising ( $R^2$ ij)	0.408	0.542
Metacognition ( $R^2$ ij)	0.273	0.072
Psychological reactance ( $R^2$ ij)	0.073	0.197
Susceptibility to Salesperson Influence ( $R^2$ ij) – information	0.092	0.096
Susceptibility to Salesperson Influence ( $R^2$ ij) – recommendations	0.276	0.098

validity as evidenced by the observation of factor inputs, all of which are significant and above 0.60 ( $\rho$ CV affirmation = 0.629 and  $\rho$ CV protection = 0.607) (Evrard et al., 2000). In addition, (intra-construct) discriminant validity is successfully met because CPR is more highly correlated with its two dimensions than with potentially similar constructs such as skepticism towards advertising, metacognition, psychological reactance and sensitivity to the influence of salespeople (Table 6) (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

### *Validation of the nomological network of CPR*

The conceptual model of the nomological network of CPR was tested using AMOS 5. Apart from the CPR scale developed ad hoc, the different measurement tools used have been validated in previous studies and, for the determinants, they were also pre-tested in the exploratory stage. The tools selected and their reliability and validity are detailed in Table 7. The model's fit indices are very satisfactory (normalized chi square: 1.212; GFI = 0.924; AGFI = 0.902; TLI = 0.983; CFI = 0.987; RMSEA = 0.021; RMR = 0.04; CAIC = 2556.848 < 7142.462 CAIC of the saturated model).

*With regard to the determinants of CPR*, the structural relationships confirm all the hypotheses except the link between metacognition and self-protection CPR (Table 8). The latter is well predicted by skepticism toward advertising and psychological reactance, but not by metacognition, with which the relationship is not significant. This result is interesting in that, for this type of CPR, being able to recognize influence tactics seems not to affect the tendency of consumers to protect

themselves from them and that this relationship (whose direction is negative) tends to show that the propensity to protect oneself from influence attempts is matched by a poor capacity to recognize them. CPR self-affirmation, on the other hand, is well explained by metacognition and self-confidence. This result confirms the hypothesis that knowledge about persuasion and the person's confidence in their capacity to thwart influence attempts are good predictors of this type of CPR. Skepticism toward advertising emerges as a common antecedent to both dimensions.

Regarding the effects, not all the hypotheses are confirmed, and there are significant differences between the two types of CPR. While they both tend to be insensitive to the recommendations of salespeople, only the self-protection CPR profile is unresponsive to information provided (the link is not significant with the self-affirmation CPR dimension). This result suggests that the need for protection creates insensitivity to any kind of influence from salespeople, even information they might be able to provide, whereas self-affirmation CPR does not predispose the individual to react in as clear-cut a way in this situation, which occurs quite often in stores. Similarly, with regard to variables prior to purchase, only the self-protection CPR dimension predicts smart shopping in its information-seeking dimension (the link is not significant for self-affirmation CPR). The self-protection CPR profile thus protects itself from external disturbances by preparing purchases and ignoring information or recommendations provided by sales staff in stores. The results are again very different for the other two influence variables in purchase situations – sensitivity to promotions and impulse buying. While self-affirmation CPR has a negative impact,

**Table 7.** Reliability and validity of all constructs.

Variables	Authors and example of items	Joreskog rho	Vc Rho
<b>ANTECEDENTS</b>			
Skepticism towards advertising	Boyer (2006) - I often doubt the veracity of salespeople's arguments	0.74	0.59
Metacognition (knowledge about persuasion)	Bearden et al. (2001) - I have no difficulty understanding the persuasion tactics used by salespeople	0.82	0.61
Self-confidence	Bearden et al.(2001)	0.86	0.61
- purchase decisions	- I often wonder if I've made the right purchase decision	0.79	0.66
- evaluation of alternatives	- I'm confident in my ability to recognize worthwhile brands		
Psychological reactance	Hong and Faedda (1996) - Opinions and recommendations usually make me do the opposite	0.79	0.65
<b>EFFECTS</b>			
Susceptibility to Salesperson Influence	Goff et al. (1994)	0.891	0.67
- information	- I think that salespeople are good sources of information on products	0.846	0.58
- recommendations	- I often feel obliged to buy the products recommended by salespeople		
Impulse buying	Rook and Fischer (1995), translated by Giraud (2002) - I often buy without thinking	0.87	0.59
Responsiveness to promotions	Froloff (1992) - Promotions make me buy brands that I wouldn't have bought otherwise	0.78	0.54
Smart shopping (seeking information)	Mano and Elliott (1997) - I make a point of collecting as much information as possible about a product before buying it	0.79	0.65
Critical motivations (secondhand shopping)	Guiot and Roux (2010) - Buying secondhand allows me to distance myself from consumer society	0.93	0.77
Socially responsible consumption	François-Lecompte (2006) - As far as possible, I try...	0.88 0.74	0.72 0.58
• behavior of companies	- not to buy products made by companies that use child labor		
• reduction of consumption	- to limit my consumption to what I really need		

consistently with our hypotheses, self-protection CPR reveals significant but positive links with these two variables. It therefore appears that this profile succumbs more easily than it believes to the effect of devices, even though it seeks to protect itself from them. In fact, it seems more sensitive to inter-individual influences than to impersonal incentives

to consume (such as promotions), but whose possibly manipulative effects it does not perceive so clearly as an opinion or a recommendation.

Finally, in terms of consumer choice, the two types of CPR also do not result in the same effects. Self-affirmation CPR is a good predictor of the two dimensions of socially responsible consumption

**Table 8.** Hypotheses, values and significance of the relationships of the structural model.

Hypotheses	Standardized coefficients	t-test <sup>3</sup>	p	
<b>Antecedents of CPR</b>				
H1 <b>Skepticism</b> toward advertising positively influences:				
- Self-affirmation CPR (H1a)	0.494	10.402	***	Confirmed
- Self-protection CPR (H1b)	0.739	12.067	***	Confirmed
H2 <b>Market metacognition</b> positively influences:				
- Self-affirmation CPR (H2a)	0.294	4.839	***	Confirmed
- Self-protection CPR (H2b)	-0.046	-1.135	NS	Not confirmed
H3 <b>Self-confidence</b> positively influences self-affirmation CPR				
Self-confidence in decision making	0.182	3.068	***	Confirmed
Self-confidence in evaluating alternatives	0.270	5.246	***	Confirmed
H4 <b>Psychological reactance</b> positively influences self-protection CPR	0.114	3.565	***	Confirmed
<b>Effects of CPR</b>				
<b>CPR → Susceptibility to Salesperson Influence</b>				
H5 Self-affirmation CPR negatively influences:				
- sensitivity to information provided by salespeople (H5a)	0.056	0.932	NS	Not confirmed
- sensitivity to salespeople's recommendations (H5b)	-0.348	-5.339	***	Confirmed
H6 Self-protection CPR negatively influences:				
- sensitivity to information provided by salespeople (H6a)	-0.595	-6.660	***	Confirmed
- sensitivity to salespeople's recommendations (H6b)	-0.283	-3.817	***	Confirmed
<b>CPR → Impulse buying</b>				
H7 Self-affirmation CPR negatively influences impulse buying	-0.354	-5.258	***	Confirmed
H8 Self-protection CPR negatively influences impulse buying	0.163	2.172	*	Not Confirmed
<b>CPR → Deal proneness</b>				
H9 Self-affirmation CPR negatively influences	-0.354	-4.875	***	Confirmed
H10 Self-protection CPR negatively influences deal proneness	0.397	5.108	***	Not confirmed
<b>CPR → Smart shopping</b>				
H11 Self-affirmation CPR positively influences smart shopping	0.099	1.252	NS	Not confirmed
H12 Self-protection CPR positively influences smart shopping	0.239	2.653	***	Confirmed
<b>CPR → Critical motivations (secondhand shopping)</b>				
H13 Self-affirmation CPR positively influences critical economic motivations favoring alternative channels	-0.343	-4.017	***	Not confirmed
H14 Self-protection CPR positively influences critical economic motivations favoring alternative channels	0.469	4.459	***	Confirmed
<b>CPR → Socially responsible consumption (SRC)</b>				
H15 Self-affirmation CPR positively influences SRC				
- behavior of companies (H15a)	0.230	2.747	***	Confirmed
- reduction of consumption (H15b)	0.214	3.237	***	Confirmed
H16 Self-protection CPR positively influences SRC				
- behavior of companies (H16a)	0.171	1.716	NS	Not confirmed
- reduction of consumption (H16b)	0.106	1.317	NS	Not confirmed

<sup>2</sup>The standardized regression coefficient testifies to the value of the causal relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable.

<sup>3</sup>The confirmation of the causal link between two variables requires a Student's *t* higher in absolute value than 1.96.

(Iyer and Muncy, 2009), but contrary to our hypothesis, it is negatively related to critical motivations leading to secondhand purchasing. Conversely, self-protection CPR is a good predictor of critical motivations, but has no significant relationship with the two socially responsible consumption dimensions. These two types of CPR thus do not manifest the same consumption choices, the one again being more assertive than the other in its orientations (consuming responsibly rather than bypassing conventional channels). All in all, the two dimensions of CPR capture the tendency of consumers to resist in accordance with the orientation of their regulatory focus (Higgins, 1997), with the self-affirmation dimension being aligned with promotion focus, while the self-protection dimension is more oriented toward prevention.

### Managerial implications

At the managerial level, this seven-item scale gives companies a parsimonious measurement tool that allows them to quantitatively illuminate behavior that to date has been little explored. Although it is difficult to profile individuals in all situations, for example when a salesperson or telemarketer addresses a customer, the CPR scale could be used upstream as a segmentation variable in market studies or in customer research. It would also allow firms to analyze *ex post* the potential resistance of consumers with regard to their actions and to adapt their response in terms of communication, sales and customer relations to the identified profiles – self-affirmation CPR and self-protection CPR.

#### *Communication targeted at consumers with a strong propensity to resist*

Individuals with a strong propensity to resist are skeptical consumers, who need to feel that they are able to ward off or evade potential distractors, and that these distractors do not influence their decisions and behavior. Communication should therefore take the form of factual and useful information. It should point out the product's characteristics and its added value, without trying to over-emphasize its advantages (Holt, 2002). False claims in this area

risk reinforcing the already pronounced skepticism of these consumers toward advertising.

In terms of profile, individuals with a high level of self-affirmation CPR, because they are confident of their ability to resist and have market metacognition, are likely to decode the 'tricks' used by marketers to attract them. These savvy consumers therefore need to be presented with arguments that allow them to assess the discourses and offerings before accepting or rejecting them (Kanter, 1989). Since they are in principle unresponsive to the peripheral elements of messages, communication should instead be technical and informative. Moreover, depending on the orientations decided by the company, elements relating to the conditions of social and environmental production could be effective arguments to which these consumers are responsive. Similarly, potentially significant topics for these individuals, such as smart innovations aimed at reducing the harmful effects of consumption, would show them the efforts being made by the company to limit its environmental impact.

The self-protection CPR profile, however, calls for a different type of approach. Feeling vulnerable, skeptical and having little confidence in their ability to decode commercial influences, such consumers may avoid mass communication, the influencing power of which they are aware. They may therefore be more responsive to word-of-mouth, opinions expressed by other consumers and viral marketing techniques. Similarly, communication using sponsorship and endorsement would be more likely to lead them to develop a positive attitude, rather than traditional advertising, which risks being quickly identified as a means of influencing their behavior.

#### *Selling to and managing relations with resistant consumers*

Our results have shown that consumers with high self-affirmation CPR tend to react negatively to approaches from salespeople. Such consumers need to shop without being solicited, but at the same time want to be helped when needed. It is therefore essential to emphasize their sense of freedom, while if necessary providing a discreet and non-intrusive presence. This consideration is particularly relevant to in-store sales staff, who should not approach such



customers without being specifically asked for help. Since customers with this profile wish to take the initiative in interaction with sales staff, they may also be more responsive to 'reciprocity' techniques (Rhoads and Cialdini, 2002), involving exchanges that are not accompanied by specific recommendations. The sales argument should primarily focus on the product's functional characteristics and its real value. Similarly, hard selling techniques, purchase incentives such as 'limited time offers' or offers with an immediate purchase option are likely to be poorly received by these customers due to their time pressure aspect. Offering a loyalty card may lead to refusal in these profiles if it reinforces their negative perceptions of companies' market behavior (El Euch Maalej and Roux, 2013). Furthermore, any approach that involves obtaining their personal data is likely to generate opposition, which means limiting the information requested to an absolute minimum (Lancelot-Miltgen, 2006). Outside of the actual sale context, approaches using telesales techniques are also to be avoided, since they may increase the feeling of pressure induced by direct marketing (Micheaux, 2007).

Self-protection CPR profiles, on the other hand, are greatly concerned about being deprived of their freedom. This worry is likely to make them more resistant to any practices that call for commitment (Darpy and Prim-Allaz, 2006), such as loyalty programs (El Euch Maalej and Roux, 2013), the collection of personal data (Lancelot-Miltgen, 2006) or telemarketing (Roux, 2007b). These consumers will have a more pronounced propensity to evade all such approaches and to guard against their influence. In stores, their sensitivity to the efforts of sales staff to make recommendations or even provide information suggests that retailers should adopt the 'laissez-faire' recommendations mentioned by Cochoy (2004): waiting for the customer to ask the salesperson and not pressing them too much; avoiding invasive procedures and advantages dependent on subscriptions; and favoring information and comparison approaches that emphasize the idea of tips, bargains and smart shopping. 'Limited offer' techniques, however, could be effective with these consumers, as the idea that a product is in short supply and may no longer be available the next day could appeal to them. These consumers are also more

likely to prefer online shopping, where the feelings of being free to choose and protected from the influence of sales staff is greater. With regard to the management of customer relations, these highly reactant profiles are likely to refuse loyalty cards for fear of feeling trapped, but they may also accept them to avoid having to say no, without subsequently using them (El Euch Maalej and Roux, 2013). Finally, recent work on how people decode the ambience created in stores could be usefully complemented by looking at their CPR levels. Indeed both profiles may indeed react by avoiding stores viewed as overly artificial and manipulative in the use they make of atmosphere variables, because resistant consumers interpret this as a way of controlling their behavior (Lunardo et al., 2012).

### Limitations and future research

Based on the literature and the results of a qualitative study, the CPR scale provides a valid and reliable two-dimensional structure, developed through 1721 individuals in four collections, two of which are close to the representativeness criteria of the French population on five key socio-demographic variables. Two exploratory quantitative studies and a confirmatory study around 'salespeople' helped validate the scale, and then to replicate it on 'advertising', with very satisfactory psychometric properties.

This initial work, however, is not without its limitations. First, the exploratory stages were conducted on samples of students, and social desirability bias may have marred this part of the research. Second, although replicated on advertising for its validation, the CPR scale only tests a series of hypotheses around the selling context. Nevertheless, it was designed to apply to a variety of sources and market influence devices, and was formulated to be used in other contexts in accordance with the researcher's needs. In fact, it has many possible applications in different contexts and sectors. This initial endeavor, however, calls for further work in at least four respects. First, on the assumption of heterogeneity of consumer profiles in terms of propensity to resist, one extension of the research should aim to discriminate groups according to their CPR profile. In this regard, the impact of



socio-demographic variables, particularly age and education level, would require specifically examining what should be investigated further following this research. In showing how people are able to decode advertising persuasion attempts, Friestad and Wright (1994) suggest that the level of market metacognition – and therefore resistance – increases with age and educational level. Although they did not directly address consumer resistance, their contribution opens up a second line of research around the analysis of the metacognitive mechanisms involved in resistance that a longitudinal approach would allow to be better understood. A third line of research could seek to verify, through ‘replication’, the stability of the CPR scale in other contexts, whether they be cultural or concern other influence situations. Finally, by manipulating the varying levels of pressure exerted on people, experimental work could contribute to the study of the differential effect of the situation and their CPR on their reactions. Furthermore, it would be necessary to verify that CPR actually leads to the expected behaviors, namely manifestations of opposition for the self-affirmation CPR profile, and avoidance for the self-protection CPR profile.

This work thus lays the foundation stone for a wide range of research on consumers’ opposition and avoidance strategies and on the phenomena of exit and voice conceptualized by Hirschman (1970) more than 40 years ago. Thanks to a new measuring instrument, it will allow researchers to investigate a series of psychological effects arising from people’s prolonged immersion in market culture and to respond to the challenges that this culture represents for those who shape it.

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### Notes

1. The numbers in parentheses refer to the transcripts presented in Table 2.
2. The number used on each device – ‘salespeople’ and ‘advertising’.
3. Representativeness criteria of the French population were introduced in terms of gender, age, education level, income and occupation. The sample nevertheless over-represents people in work aged under 60 (especially the 30-44 age bracket) and above-median income levels.
4. The same representativeness criteria were applied to this new collection, which satisfactorily matches the structure of the French population. Only the income levels of the upper strata are still over-represented in relation to the groups below the median.
5. The first condition corresponds to an estimation of the non-standardized gamma coefficient when the covariance between the two CPR dimensions is left free (model A), whereas the covariance between the dimensions is set at 1 in the second condition (model B).

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