DEVELOPING A MEASURE OF SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION IN FRANCE

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The very definition of consumption means to consume, waste, squander, or destroy. However, consumption need not be synonymous with environmental destruction and the squandering of natural resources. Socially responsible consumption (SRC) can promote social and/or environmental causes consumers deem important. The primary objective of the present study is to develop a scale designed to measure SRC in France. Through the scale development process we attempt to identify whether French consumers share the same ecological and social concerns with their US counterparts as Roberts' (1995; 1996) work might suggest, or is their SRC more idiosyncratic in nature. Our scale building process led to a five-factor SRC scale. It appears that French consumers do exhibit social and environmental concerns, but ones that differ somewhat from those exhibited by US consumers. The factors generated from our scale building process focused on corporate responsibility, country of origin preferences, shopping at local or small businesses, purchasing cause-related products, and reducing one's consumption. Implications of the present study's findings and directions for future research are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Evidence of ethical or socially responsible consumption (SRC) date back hundreds of years (Crane 2001). However, close academic scrutiny of this type of consumer behavior began in the 1970s. More recent research shows that consumers increasingly include ethical criteria in their purchase decisions (Roberts 1995; 1996). Such ethical considerations are likely viewed as "added value" above and beyond the basic needs met by the product itself (Crane 2001). Roberts (1996) concludes that price, quality, convenience, and value appear to be the most important buying criteria for a large segment of US consumers, products with an environmental or social appeal may have an edge if they meet other competitive requirements. Manifestations of this type of consumption are numerous. Common examples include the boycotting of firms judged to behave in an unethical manner, or the boycotting of some countries of which one disapproves of its political actions or, at the contrary, the purchase of products deemed to have a beneficial impact on the natural environment or society. Another way of describing this reality is to view these consumption behaviors as consumer "votes" (Dickinson and Hollander 1991). The market is then a place to express support for the causes that we deem important, either concerning the physical environment or social issues. The process of taking into account the public consequences of one's private choices is at the heart of socially responsible consumption.

The study of socially responsible consumption is of critical importance. The very definition of consumption means to consume, waste, squander, or destroy. Consumption has become synonymous with environmental destruction in most corners of the globe (Anderson and Challagalla 1994). A number of present environmental problems can be linked to consumer lifestyles. More sustainable lifestyles cannot be achieved without marking changes in consumer attitudes and behavior (Olander and Thogersen 1995). Anderson and Challagalla

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(1994) state that "we live in a global village and can ill afford the negative legacy of consumption …." (p. 174). However, consumption need not be synonymous with environmental destruction and the squandering of natural resources. Socially responsible consumption can promote social causes consumers deem important. As one type of socially responsible consumer behavior, boycotts have become a pervasive tool to express consumer discontent. Consumers are increasingly willing to withhold patronage, and encourage others to do the same, to control corporate abuses and/or heighten their sensitivity to economic, political, and social concerns (Sen, Gurhan-Canli and Morwitz 2001). Simultaneously, firms are asked to support charities, protect the environment, and contribute to social causes. Increasingly, firms are being asked to be socially responsible members of society (Mohr, Webb and Harris 2001).

Despite the importance of this type of consumption, it has largely been neglected by marketing researchers. Except for a few early contributions, like those of Webster (1975) and Roberts (1995), efforts have largely concentrated on ecologically conscious (green) consumer behavior or consumer boycotts (Sen, Gürhan-Canli and Morwitz 2001; Klein, Smith and John 2002). The broader concept of socially responsible consumption has rarely been considered. However, several specific studies can be linked to it. For example, all the studies on green consumption, boycotts, buying of cause-related products, and reactions of consumers to corporate social responsibility fall under the definition of SRC. But few works have tried to clarify the content of this concept. Thus, 30 years after Webster's founding works, this concept is still not very clear. Roberts (1995) argues that this behavior includes an environmental dimension and a social dimension. But what are the different dimensions and behaviors that fall under the rubric of SRC? And, do all the behaviors previously studied belong under the SRC umbrella? Furthermore, there is a diversity of expressions used to describe what we refer to here as SRC. The term "ethical consumption" is recurrent and there is a need to clarify the conceptual domains of SRC and related constructs.

The primary objective of the present study is to develop a scale designed to measure SRC in France. Several reasons support such study in France: (1) recent research has shown that the concept of SRC may be different across cultural boundaries (Maignan 2001; Maignan and Ferrell 2003). Lodge (1990) differentiates between individualist (e.g., USA) and communitarian (e.g., France) ideologies. Individualism values the short-term betterment of the individual, where communitarianism emphasizes community needs and consensus decision making (Maignan 2001). Given the divergent national ideologies, there is a good chance that French consumers will be more likely (and perhaps differentially) to incorporate society's well-being into their shopping decisions. And, they may be ready to sacrifice to further the social good – paying a higher price for SR products, or avoiding more convenient and lower cost products that are seen as less socially desirable. These types of proactive behaviors may not be as prevalent in more individualistic cultures such as the US. (2) Developing a measure of SRC in France will allow one to determine if SRC is somewhat of a global notion or one that is idiosyncratic to the culture under study. It may be that SRC in France will share much in common with other European countries who espouse more communitarian ideologies (Maignan 2001).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Examining the Concept of Socially Responsible Consumption

Webster (1975) was the first to offer a definition of SRC by leveraging earlier sociological works concerning the social responsibility of individuals (Berkowitz and Lutterman 1968). He defines the socially responsible consumer as "a consumer who

takes into account the public consequences of his or her private consumption or who attempts to use his or her purchasing power to bring about social changes" (p.188)**.** Webster's research sets the foundation for work in the field of SRC and in this sense remains a reference point for all future research. Prior to Webster's (1975) work, SRC was thought to be analogous to social consciousness which represents an individual's willingness to help other people even if there is no personal gain (Berkowitz and Lutterman 1968).

However, Webster's definition does not precisely identify the direction of public consequences intended by socially responsible consumers. Without more precision, Webster's view of SRC includes all types of consumer behavior whether the consequences for others are good or bad. Other researchers defined SRC as an environmentally conscious/responsible behavior. For Henion (1976) and Antil (1984), SRC consists of behaviors and consumer's purchasing decisions relating to environmental resources problems. Later, authors defined more precisely the consequences sought by socially responsible consumers - social and environmental wellbeing (Engel and Blackwell 1982). Roberts' (1995) definition proposes that " the socially responsible consumer is one who purchases products and services which he or she perceives to have a positive (or less negative) impact on the environment and/or uses his/ her purchasing power to express current social concerns " (p.98) . Parallel to this current of research inspired by Webster's works, other researchers have adopted a narrower view of SRC. Hence, many focus on consumer behavior based on perceptions of corporate social responsibility (Brown and Dacin 1997; Webb and Mohr 1998; Carrigan and Attala 2001; Sen and Bhattacharya 2001; Sen, Gürhan-Canli and Morwitz 2001; Klein, Smith and John 2002). In this approach, a socially responsible consumer avoids buying products from companies that harm society and actively seeks products from companies that help society (Mohr, Webb and Harris 2001). Boycotting a company's products is a good example of this type of SRC.

As detailed above, SRC has been considered by some to be a broader notion of attempts by consumers to bring about positive ecological and social good and by others from a more restricted perspective. The present study adopts a more global notion of SRC, one which can include specific dimensions of consumer behavior like green consumption, boycotting a company's products, or buying products tied to social issues important to the consumer. Using Roberts' (1995) definition of SRC requires that we adhere to a more global notion of SRC consistent with Webster's work. We propose that SRC includes purchasing products and services which are perceived to have a positive or less negative impact on the physical environment and/or the use of purchasing power to express social concerns. This definition is consistent with the concept of corporate social responsibility: the socially responsible consumer is a person who considers the well-being of stakeholders that may be affected by his or her purchasing. It seems that the notion of stakeholders is very useful for describing consequences sought by socially responsible consumers and is commonly used by authors (Marks and Mayo 1991).

SRC and Ethical Consumption

Whereas the majority of authors employ the term SRC, others speak of ethical consumption or of ethical consumerism. It appears that some treat socially responsible and ethical consumption as tantamount. Although the two constructs are unique, the overlap between the two constructs deserves further scrutiny. Ethics refers to moral principles or values which generally govern the conduct of individuals or groups. Consuming in an ethical manner means consuming in accordance with society's view of "good" (Smith 1990). This seems a priori to be very close to the definition of SRC that has been adopted. It seems apparent that the act of consuming in a socially responsible way converges with what is recognized as "good". So, a socially responsible consumer may be construed as an ethical consumer as well. However, there exist several differences

between these two concepts. First, many consumption behaviors have an ethical content, but do not affect the well being of others. For example, behaviors such as drinking alcohol or buying condoms are ethically non-neutral acts but do not overlap with our understanding of SRC. In this sense, SRC is a more restrictive notion than ethical consumption. Second, ethical consumption supposes a totally disinterested motivation. Ethics as consumption values has been conceptualized by Holbrook (1994) and Cooper-Martin and Holbrook (1993) as a seeking of virtue, of altruism.

SRC does not stipulate such a pure motivation from individuals. On the contrary, Smith (1996) contends SRC can be motivated by personal interest. As Ziegler Sojka (1986) explains "while socially conscious behavior may appear to be motivated by purely unselfish desires, since the society benefits which includes the individual, the individual will also benefit. Hence, socially conscious behavior may, in fact, be somewhat motivated by simultaneous self-interest as well as social interest" (p.242)**.** Finally, the term ethical consumption refers to the concept proposed by Muncy and Vitell (1992). They define ethical consumption as "the moral principles and standards that guide behavior of individuals or groups as they obtain, use or dispose of goods and services" (p.298). Their scale describes all behaviors in the consumption sphere that may be deemed unethical: for example, the fact of copying a CD instead of buying it, or lying about a child's age in order to get a lower admission price. Their scale describes the degree of honesty of the consumer in his behavior rather than the act of purchasing based upon ethical criteria. In this study we investigate SRC as defined by Roberts (1995), but it is important to keep in mind that ethical consumption and SRC clearly overlap.

Identifying the Content and Structure of SRC - Different Ways to Measure SRC

Just as socially responsible consumption has been conceptually defined in different ways by various authors; it also has been operationalized in several different manners. In early studies, SRC has been measured by the Social Responsibility Scale (SRS) of Berkowitz and Lutterman (1968) (Anderson and Cunningham 1972; Anderson, Henion and Cox 1974). This 8-item scale comes from sociology and measures the degree of social responsibility of individuals in their every day life. It describes more or less the degree of involvement in the community and one's concern for others with such items as: " Letting your friends down is not so bad because you can't do good all the time for everybody", "It is no use worrying about current events or publics affairs; I can't do anything about them anyway". This scale does not contain any consumer behavior related items and is therefore not well suited to research in a consumer behavior context (Leigh, Murphy and Enis 1988).

Subsequent to this earlier attempt to measure SRC, socially responsible consumption has often been operationalized solely by the use of environmentally conscious consumer behavior items. For example, Webster (1975) built an 8-item Socially Conscious Consumer Index tapping people's environmentally responsible consumption (use of a recycling service, reuse of paper grocery shopping bags, use of low phosphate detergent, etc.). In the same way, Brooker (1976), Belch (1979, 1982) and Antil (1984) measured SRC through scales or indicators that focus on environmental concern. Roberts' (1995; 1996) works are a turning point in that they constitute the first attempt to include a social aspect in a measure of SRC. His scale consists of two dimensions: an 18-item ecologically conscious consumer behavior (ECCB) dimension which captures 49 percent of the variance and describes behaviors intended to protect the environment and an 8-item socially conscious consumer behavior (SCCB) dimension that captures social concern expressed through consumer behavior. Both dimensions possess good internal consistency with coefficient alphas of .95 and .86, respectively. A cluster analysis based on summed responses to items of both dimensions

identified four clusters: those that comprise the "socially responsible" cluster are both socially and environmentally concerned, the "greens" score high on the ECCB dimension, the "Middle Americans" are moderately concerned about environmental and social aspects, and the "browns" score low on both dimensions of the scale. Table 1 summarizes the results and socially responsible consumption measures of earlier studies in the field.

Crane's Framework: Four Levels of Ethical Augmentations

Crane (2001) proposes a framework as to the different ways ethics can affect consumer decision making. Although his work does not deal with the concept of socially responsible consumption directly, it may provide a framework from which to understand such behavior. Crane bases his analysis on Levitt's (1980) notion of the augmented product. Levitt contends that the product can be conceptualized at three different levels: the "core product", which is the fundamental benefit, or problem-solution sought by consumers; the "expected product", which is the basic physical product which delivers those benefits; and the "augmented product", which is the addition of extra or unsolicited services or benefits to the consumer in order to prompt purchase. Ethical considerations, as Smith (1990) notes, are likely to be seen as product augmentations. Crane proposes that these ethical "augmentations" can affect the product at four different levels:

- *Product level*. At the product level, ethical augmentation can be seen in terms of those issues which are directly related to the actual product or service itself. Ethical augmentation at the product level entails the product's potential for individual/ social good or harm. Crane's examples are the beneficial augmentation of green products and their impact on the environment and the negative and positive impact of cigarettes and certain safety features of automobiles on individual and societal well-being.
- *Marketing level*. The way the product is sold can lead to ethical considerations. In this case, it is not the product in itself that is implicated, but the way it is offered. Cause-related marketing, misleading publicity, or the Nestle infant formula scandal, is used as examples of this category of ethical augmentation.
- *Corporate level*. The third level of Crane's typology refers to the ethical behavior of the firm supplying the product. Over the past 20 years, firms have increasingly attempted to appear as socially or environmentally responsible as possible. It has been shown that firm's ethical behavior enters into the decision making of consumers (Brown and Dacin 1997; Sen and Bhattacharya 2001; Sen, Gürhan-Canli and Morwitz 2001; Klein, Smith and John 2002). The scope of the corporate level is broad and includes all type of companies' actions that have ethical implications: the way the firm deals with its employees, the impact of production on the environment, the attitude of the firm toward its strategic partners and even the behavior of the firm's parent or subsidiary companies. Among the four levels, consumers' reaction to corporate social responsibility is probably the one that has received the most research attention.
- *Country level*. Finally, the last level of product augmentation can be identified in terms of the country with which the product or its manufacturer might be associated. For some consumers, the country of origin of their purchases is a significant ethical consideration, with positive augmentation for domestic products and negative augmentations for products made in countries with government policies deemed unacceptable. Crane gives the example of American boycotts of South African products and more recently of French and Chilean products.

For each level, the ethical augmentation can be either positive or negative. This approach leads Crane to affirm that a product is best viewed not as ethical or unethical in itself, but as a bundle of ethical attributes. This framework may prove helpful in attempting to measure

TABLE 1
Early Socially Responsible Consumption Studies

Author	Construct measured	Operationalization (theme measured by items)	Sample	Independent variables		
				Significant socio-demographic variables	Significant Personality variables	Uncorrelated variables
Berkowitz and Lutterman, 1968	Individual's social responsibility	8-items SRS (involvement toward others)	766	Social class +, education level+, age-, gender (fem.)	Alienation -, isolation feeling-, involvement in community+, religiosity +, political interest+	
Anderson and Cunningham, 1972	Socially conscious consumer	8-items SRS (involvement toward others)	412	Occupation +, socioeconomic status +, age -	Alienations -, dogmatism -, conservatism –, status consciousness-, personal	Annual income, education, stage in the family life cycle
Anderson, Hénion and Cox, 1974	Socially conscious consumer / ecologically conscious	8-items SRS (involvement toward others) / recycling	200/149	Age -, education+, profession +	Alienation +, conservatism – cosmopolitanism +, dogmatism -, personal competence	Income, economic status
Webster, 1975	Socially	Socially conscious	227	Gender (fem.),	Perceived consumer	Age, socialization,
Brooker, 1976	Socially conscious consumer	Purchase of detergent and lead-free gasoline	99	Have children +	Self actualization level +	Age, gender, marital status, socioeconomic status
Belch, 1979	Socially and	20 items scale	125	Concerned consumers :		
Belch, 1982	Socially	20 items scale	267	Concerned consumers :		
Antil, 1984	Socially responsible consumer	40 items scale (environment)	690	Urbanization degree	Perceived consumer effectiveness +, knowledge+, SRS +,	Age, income, household size, education,
Roberts, 1995	Socially	25 items scale (1	605	Income -,	Liberalism +,	Marital status,
Roberts, 1996	Socially	25 items scale (1	605	Gender (fem.),		Education,

SRC. One need only keep product ethical features that impact the natural environment or which address social issues and ignore those that affect individual consumer well-being. Hence, we could consider four ways in which consumers may judge the SR of a given product: considerations about the product itself, the way it is sold, the company's behavior, and the product's country of origin. Crane's framework suggests that the concept of socially responsible consumption could have four dimensions. Roberts' scale (1995, 1996), probably the most reliable tool to measure SRC, includes two dimensions: an environmental factor and a social factor. If we compare both approaches, it seems that Robert's ECCB (ecologically conscious consumer behavior) dimension includes items analogous to Crane's product level. As for the scale's socially conscious consumer behavior (SCCB) factor, it includes items which more or less describe ethical corporate behavior. These items correspond to Crane's marketing and corporate levels. Hence, Roberts' scale contains no items which measure country of origin preferences– Crane's country level augmentation.

It is apparent from the above that Crane and Roberts' scales overlap conceptually. Despite this overlap, Roberts' scale and Crane's framework adopt somewhat different views about both the content and the structure of socially responsible consumption. Crane's approach focuses on product augmentation whereas Roberts' scale attempts to capture broader dimensions of SRC: environmental and social concern. This assessment leads us to wonder about the real structure of the concept of socially responsible consumption. Do consumers exhibit a generalized concern for environmental or social issues? Or, do they focus on more specific social or environmental aspects of a particular product? These questions highlight the need for a renewed attempt to more fully understand and measure the construct of socially responsible consumption. Will a new scale confirm Roberts' measure of SRC developed in the US, Crane's framework, or a mix of both?

METHODOLOGY

The first step suggested for developing adequate measures (Churchill 1979) involves specifying the domain of the construct. The current literature review has led us to adopt Roberts' definition of SRC: "The socially responsible consumer is one who purchases products and services which he or she perceives to have a positive (or less negative) impact on the environment and/or uses his/her purchasing power to express current social concerns" (Roberts 1995, p. 98). It was felt that Crane's framework had not received the research attention needed to adopt his definition of ethical consumption. However, the overlap between the two constructs suggests that using Crane's framework to help interpret the current results may prove helpful.

The second step consisted of generating items that capture the domain as specified. In that aim, we used a variety of different sources including depth interviews, focus groups, and an extensive literature review to generate the needed items.

First, 17 depth interviews were conducted with French subjects ranging from 25 to 57 years of age. The sample consisted of nine females and eight males with a variety of life experience: non-working persons, administrative, executive, farmer, and student. Interviews lasted between 45 to 90 minutes with an average length of approximately one hour. Respondents were asked at the beginning of the interview to explain what the term socially responsible consumption meant to them. No definition of this concept was given so as not to influence their views on the subject. In some cases, when respondents lacked an opinion, a purchasing occasion list was given to help them respond in a relevant manner. In addition to the depth interviews, two focus groups of 7 and 13 persons were conducted. Both groups were made up of young French working people ranging from 24 to 31 years of age. Groups were asked to discuss the meaning of the term socially responsible consumption. The information generated from the focus groups was largely consistent with that obtained through the depth interviews. This provides a measure of confidence that most themes and specific behaviors related to SRC were included in the initial items that comprise the SRC scale. Themes evoked in the interviews and focus groups are presented in Table 2.

Initial items of the SRC scale evolved from the above depth interviews, focus groups, and an extensive literature review. The literature review included academic studies, but also articles and web sites' information on fair trade, ethical investment, or French consumption reports. The above sources led to the development of 73 items.

In an attempt to enhance the content validity of our scale, three independent judges were asked to assess the correspondence between these 73 items and our SRC definition. This step led to the elimination of 22 items for different reasons: some items were not strictly describing consumption behavior (e.g., choosing firms in which to invest), some others were not automatically driven by socially responsible

TABLE 2
SRC Themes Identified in Depth Interviews and Focus Groups

Themes Identified in Answering the Question:
"For You, What is Socially Responsible Consumption?"

- Not shopping every time in supermarkets/ hypermarkets
- Buy in small businesses
- Not buying products which use misleading advertising
- Not buying products which use shocking advertising
- Buying some fair trade products*
- Buying products of which part of the price goes to a good cause/ developing countries
- Not buying from companies that are linked with extremist political groups or the mafia
- Not buying from companies that use child labor forces
- Not buying from companies that lay off their employees while they are still profitable
- Not buying from companies that strongly harm the environment
- Not buying products made in countries that don't respect human rights
- Not traveling in countries that don't respect human rights/ which political action is unacceptable
- Limiting consumption of household products that harm environment
- Buying French products/ Investing in French companies
- Buying European products/ Investing in European companies
- Buying regional products
- Buying some recycled paper / other products that doesn't harm environment
- Investing in ethical funds
- Not buying meat/ eggs/ fish when animals have not been well treated
- Reducing one's consumption
- Not buying products with a large amount of packaging
- Not buying products made of scare resources (fur, ivory…)
- Not buying everything in chain stores
- Not trying to obtain lowest prices in front of an underprivileged seller

*Fair trade products ensure a fair deal of third world producers. This label is mostly intended for food products like coffee, tea, fruits, chocolate…Fair Trade is a growing trend in France

concerns, or some were deemed too abstract. Subsequent analyses were run on 55 items.

The next step consisted of collecting data. Analyses were run on two different samples. The first was a convenience sample of 522 French respondents. The large majority of respondents were young (60 percent are under 30 years old) and 66 percent are middle or senior managers and 87 percent live in urban areas. The first sample was collected in order to purify the measure through exploratory factor analysis. To ensure external validity, a second wave of data was collected on a more representative sample. This sample included 714 respondents of which 45.5 percent were male and 54.5 percent female. The sample matched the general French population on both age and socioeconomic status.

RESULTS

An exploratory factor and confirmatory factor analyses were conducted on the first and second samples, respectively. We will present the results of these two steps and then the results of the tests of the scale's validity and reliability.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

A principal component analysis with promax rotation was performed on the first sample of

522 respondents. Items that didn't correlate significantly to any factor were dropped. We used a factor loading cutoff of .5 as our level of significance. Variables that grouped together without any logical meaning were also dropped. The 20 remaining items loaded onto five factors. All of these five factors have eigenvalues superior to 1 and together explain 63.6 percent of the variance. All variables' communalities are above .5, except one at .45 which was deemed acceptable. The loadings of the items on the five factors are reported in Table 3.

Factor 1 clearly represents consumption acts related to irresponsible corporate behavior: disrespectful attitude toward employees, harmful to the environment, links with reprehensible organizations, child labor forces, etc.

Factor 2 represents the preference for cause-related products including purchases that help underprivileged persons, inhabitants of developing countries, or small producers located in southern France.

Factor 3 expresses the desire to help small businesses. This theme was a common topic in the exploratory depth interviews. For some respondents, being a socially responsible consumer consists of supporting traditional small businesses as opposed to bigger businesses like hypermarkets or supermarkets. This factor also contains the idea of helping one's quarter (neighborhood) storekeepers.

Factor 4 corresponds to the purchasing of French or European products. This factor finds its corollary in Crane's (2001) country level. This domestic preference especially manifests itself through the buying of cars and vegetables.

Factor 5 corresponds to the idea of reducing one's consumption to what is only necessary. This last dimension is a manifestation of a global environmental concern. Behaviors here focus on concerns regarding the impact of consumption on the physical environment and try to minimize such impact by reducing consumption.

This 5-factor solution is interpretable and provides good preliminary results as to the dimensionality of SRC in France. This structure has yet, however, to be confirmed through further analysis.

Confirmatory Factory Analysis

A confirmatory factor analysis was performed on the two samples to test the five- factor solution obtained through exploratory factor analysis. AMOS 4 was used to run the confirmatory factor Analysis (CFA). Table 4 presents the results of the CFA.

Because of the large sample, we will scrutinize the fit indices for assessing goodness of fit rather than the Chi-square. The GFI, AGFI, CFI and NNFI are all around or above .90 which indicates a good fit for the model. Furthermore, RMSR and RMSEA are under the usually recommended cut-off values. The five-factor solution represents an acceptable fit based on the usual criteria employed in structural equation modeling.

The last step of the scale building process consists of testing the reliability and validity of the scale. In order to ascertain that the results were not dependent on the samples and that the data's distribution is not multinormal, a bootstrapping method was used. The scale's reliability and validity are largely predicated upon the bootstrap results (variance extracted and Joreskog's rho).

Scale Reliability

Joreskog's rhos for the five dimensions of the SRC scale are presented in Table 5. They are all above .70, with the exception of Factor 5 which addresses the issue of reducing one's consumption. This index shows acceptable reliability for all factors.

TABLE 3
SRC Scale Items and Factor Loadings

Items	Fact.1	Fact.2	Fact.3	Fatc.4	Fact.5
42. I pay attention not to buy products from companies that are narrowly linked with mafia or sects	.86				
53. I try not to buy products from companies that employ children	.80				
55. I try not to buy products from companies that don't respect their employees	.78				
72. I try not to buy products from companies or shoppers that are narrowly linked to political parties that I condemn	.77				
63. I try not to buy products from companies that strongly harm the environment	.76				
9. I buy some products of which a part of the price is transferred to a humanitarian cause.		.94			
21. I buy some products of which part of the price goes to developing countries		.9			
47. I buy products of which part of the price is given to a good cause.		.76			
51. I buy fair trade products		.67			
1. I avoid doing all my shopping in big businesses (large retailers)			.85		
3. I buy in small businesses (bakeries, butcher's trade, book shoppers) as often as possible (small shopkeepers)			.81		
7. I help the storekeepers of my quarter to live through my purchases			.77		
34. I go to small markets to support fruits and vegetables small producers			.58		
37. When I have the choice between an European products and a non European product, I choose the European product				.84	
25. I buy preferably French cars				.75	
61. I buy some fruits and vegetables made in France				.73	
22. I buy products made in my country				.62	
30. I try to reduce my consumption to what I really need					.85
17. In a general manner, I try to reduce my consumption					.83
11. I try not to buy objects that I can do by myself					.65

TABLE 4
Results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Indices	Sample 1 N=522	Sample 2 N=714
RMSEA	0.052	0.076
RMSR	0.052	0.053
GFI	0.932	0.89
AGFI	0.910	0.87
CFI	0.946	0.90
NNFI	0.936	0.88

TABLE 5
Composite Reliability and Variance Extracted –SRC Scale

Factor	Item	loadings bootstrap sample 1 (N=522)	Student's t sample 1	loadings bootstrap Sample 2 (N=714)	Student's t sample 2	Variance extracted sample 2	Reliability (Joreskog's rho) Sample 2
Factor 1 : Firm's behavior	Q42	0.71	23.4	0.72	21.8	0.51	0.86
	Q53	0.71	23.4	0.67	16.9		
	Q55	0.84	39.3	0.78	29		
	Q72	0.67	19.8	0.68	20.5		
	Q63	0.77	29.5	0.71	18		
Factor 2 : Cause-related products	Q9	0.74	24.5	0.84	39.4	0.65	0.88
	Q21	0.80	31.5	0.84	39.7		
	Q47	0.78	26.2	0.76	30.3		
	Q51	0.76	27.3	0.78	31.5		
Factor 3 : Small businesses	Q1	0.61	15.5	0.53	16.2	0.51	0.80
	Q3	0.78	24.8	0.82	38.4		
	Q7	0.69	18.8	0.81	38.7		
	Q34	0.61	13.8	0.67	24.7		
Factor 4 : Geographic origin	Q37	0.69	19.1	0.71	22.1	0.43	0.79
	Q25	0.47	10.2	0.45	11.5		
	Q61	0.73	19	0.68	19.3		
	Q22	0.67	18.3	0.75	24.9		
Factor 5 : consumption volume	Q30	0.82	19.5	0.72	18.7	0.40	0.65
	Q17	0.70	16.8	0.67	16.4		
	Q11	0.47	10.4	0.45	9.9		

Scale Validity

Several steps were taken to enhance the scale's face validity. First, we rigorously specified the construct's domain as per the earlier work of Roberts (1995). Second, the items were largely created based upon both depth interviews and focus groups which discussed the question: "What does socially responsible consumption mean to you?" Additionally, an extensive literature review helped identify individual items and themes that merit inclusion. Early assessment of each item by independent judges increased the likelihood that each item corresponded to the chosen definition of SRC.

Construct validity is composed of convergent validity and discriminant validity. We used Fornell and Lacker's (1981) recommendations to measure convergent validity. Confirmatory factor analysis allows calculating the variance that each factor shares with its indicators. For our scale, extracted variances are above 0.5 except for Factors 4 and 5. We can then conclude that our scale has good convergent validity for three factors and a low but acceptable validity for two factors. Furthermore, the student's t-statistic exceeds 2

for all scale items which provides a measure of assurance that the scale possesses convergent validity.

Discriminant validity is the extent to which the measure is indeed novel and not simply a reflection of another construct. According to Bagozzi and Yi (1991), discriminant validity can be assumed if Chi-square is significantly different between the free models (correlations between factors are free) and all constrained models (correlations between two factors are constrained to 1). Chi-squares for the 10 constrained models are between 803.6 and 899.1 for 161 degrees of freedom. As Chi-square of the free model is 770.5 for 160 df, the difference between the constrained models and the free models is consistently superior to theoretical chi-square (15.13 for 1 df and p=0.0001). From this, we can conclude that scale has exhibited acceptable discriminant validity.

DISCUSSION

An important objective of this study was to clarify the conceptual domain of SRC and to assess its structure in a European setting. More precisely, an important issue was to identify if consumers have a global social and/or environmental concern as Roberts' (1995; 1996) work suggests. Or, are consumer concerns more specific and focused on certain aspects of the offer made to the consumer? In this vein, Crane (2001) proposes that the socially responsible content of an offer can be divided into four levels: the product itself, the marketing level, the corporate level, and the country of origin. Our scale building process led to a 5-factor SRC scale. An important contribution of the present study lies in the juxtaposition of the present SRC scale to the earlier works of Crane (2001) and Roberts (1995; 1996).

Compared with Roberts' scale, our scale includes more dimensions. It does not appear that French consumers are socially or environmentally concerned in a global sense, but have more specific concerns. Even if we look at the second order structure of our scale, no such distinctions appear. The first factor extracted includes both social and environmental aspects of corporate behavior. However, a social/ environmental dichotomy does appear to make sense when interpreting the dimensions. Factors 2, 3 and 4 tap the preference for buying domestic products, supporting small businesses and purchasing cause-related products, respectively, and can be construed as a manifestation of social concern. Factor 5 related to reducing one's consumption appears to be a form of environmental concern. If people try to limit their consumption, it seems to be in large part an effort to reduce one's impact on the natural environment. Manifestation of this love for nature and rebellion against marketing has been studied by Dobscha (1998). Hence, it is interesting to note that one of our factors represents an environmental concern, others focus on social concerns, and a third contains a mix of both concerns. Even if Roberts' two factors structure does not appear in our scale, the distinction between social and environmental concerns in SRC appears relevant.

Our scale's structure can also be compared with Crane's (2001) framework. Crane's first level includes consideration about the product's potential for social good or harm. We can consider that our second factor concerning buying of cause-related products taps a similar consumer behavior dimension. Products that guarantee support for a good cause can appear as "good" in themselves. Crane's corporate level corresponds to the first dimension of our scale. As Crane suggests, corporate behavior is an important issue to the socially responsible consumer and constitutes a homogeneous concern. This factor brings together very different items: corporate behavior can refer to a firm's attitude toward employees, its respect for the environment, its links with political organizations, or even the firm's attitude toward profit making. Crane's country of origin level is also found in the fourth dimension of our scale. French consumers placed a priority

on purchasing products produced by French and European companies. Crane's marketing level concerns the way a product is offered. In our study, Factor 3 represents the idea of supporting small businesses. Perhaps the way a product can be distributed is included in Crane's marketing level.

It appears that Crane's four levels of ethical considerations are reflected in our scale but in a slightly different configuration. The present scale contains one more factor concerning the idea of reducing one's consumption. It appears that both Crane's and Roberts' frameworks are relevant: at a concrete level, our scale is close to Crane's four levels of 'ethical' augmentation; and at a more abstract level, our five factors can be considered as manifestations of social and environmental concerns, or a mix of both.

RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

A major contribution of the present research is highlighting the different domains of socially responsible consumption for French consumers. Few studies have focused on the concept of SRC. Hence, this study is the first one to link a variety of consumer behaviors to the concept of SRC. For example, it seems that the willingness to support small businesses has never been linked to SRC. Similarly, the preference for domestic products has never been associated with socially responsible issues with the exception of Crane's framework. Consistent with Crane's (2001) proposal to "unpack" and explore ethical products, in this study we also explored in detail the content of the construct of SRC in France.

Managerial implications of the study are numerous. First, this study refutes the idea that SRC is restricted to consumer purchasing based on corporate behavior. Our scale shows that this is indeed a major aspect of SRC, but it only represents one factor among five. Second, our results suggest that some socially responsible issues may be out of an individual firm's control. For example, country of origin and channels of distribution seem to have important meaning to the socially responsible consumer in France. Firms anxious to attract socially responsible consumers need to be aware of these proclivities. Third, our study gives us information about the way consumers assess corporate behavior.

The first factor of the SRC scale represents many different ways in which a firm can discredit itself in the eyes' of the consumer. It is striking to note that the first factor includes only consumer's non-purchasing behaviors. Corporate social responsibility campaigns do not seem to influence consumers. Hence, consumers are more likely to boycott reprehensible behavior on the part of firms rather than to reward their socially responsible initiatives. This result is consistent with earlier studies in this area (Creyer and Ross 1996, 1997; Carrigan and Attalla 2001). Several reasons may explain this phenomenon. First, pro-active SRC assumes that consumers have access to adequate information regarding a firm's socially responsible initiatives. Such information is difficult to find and evaluate and even more difficult to integrate into one's consumer decision making. This "rewarding" behavior requires that consumers look for such information and then exert the energy needed to find a particular firm's product among the plethora of brands. Relatively speaking, "punishing" behavior is easier to practice. Usually firms' reprehensible behaviors are widely disseminated by the media which makes it easier for consumers to incorporate the information into their consumer decision making.

Another possible explanation would be that consumers are not ready to take into account socially responsible criteria at each purchase. It would be too demanding, especially as consumers are limited in their capacity to process large amounts of information (Titus and Bradford 1996). In this sense, "punishing" behavior reduces this complexity as it allows consumers to focus on specific corporate behaviors addressed in the media. It is,

however, important to note that pro-active buying behavior corresponds to Factor 2 of our scale. Items in this dimension describe support for products that contribute to good causes. It appears that consumers do not reward corporate behavior but rather make donations to a good cause through their purchases. The case of fair trade products is particularly illustrative.

Finally, our scale introduces an interesting dimension of SRC: consumption reduction (Factor 5). Reducing one's consumption can express itself in several manners. For example, it can result in avoidance of over-packaged products (Dobscha 1998). If consumers feel that a product's packaging is excessive and that it would create too much waste, they may refuse to buy it. In this instance, the consumer is careful to assess his/her consumption's impact on the natural environment.

In the same vein, Factor 5 may translate into a refusal to buy some trivial products or gadgets. During exploratory interviews, several respondents shared examples of sophisticated and largely useless household products like "ready for use" wipes and appliances which serve no real need. Others mentioned products that purport to be new where in reality they are essentially the same as old ones, or contain only minor cosmetic changes, but are more expensive. Additionally, respondents also felt uncomfortable with the present society's preoccupation with new products. Thus, Factor 5 may be somewhat linked to a rejection of consumer culture values and the desires it creates. Additionally, it is telling that this factor did not appear in Roberts' (1995; 1996) research which used U.S. consumers.

It appears that US consumers will consider purchasing more responsibly, but do not consider the alternative of "going without" or reducing consumption. French consumers are willing to express concerns through withholding consumption. This difference may be explained by the divergent ideologies (individualistic vs. communitarian) of the two cultures. In communitarian cultures like France, community needs and consensus decision making are given a higher priority compared to the shorter term, more self-interested decision making of individualistic cultures (e.g., USA).

STUDY LIMITATIONS

Although this study expands our knowledge of socially responsible consumption, it must be tempered by certain limitations. First, our study used only French consumers. The results may be culture specific. However, as a country that holds a communitarian ideology, French consumers' SRC may be consistent across other cultures who share the same ideology. Finding countries/cultures that share similar SRC patterns should be an important focus of future research efforts. Second, a potential limitation of the current study is the nature of the data collected. Self-report behavior does not directly represent the way people act in real life. The gap between declarations and behavior has been shown as particularly important in this research area (Simon 1995; Roberts 1996). It is difficult to be sure that the respondents expressed their concerns rather than their actual buying behavior. A measure of social desirability as a control variable would have helped address this concern. Third, some of the scale's factors show low convergent validity and reliability. It appears that Factor 5, which addresses consumption volume, could use further refinement.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Our literature review shows that, despite the importance of the topic, little research has focused on the concept of SRC. Instead, many authors have focused on more specific aspects of such behavior as boycotts, green consumption, or reactions to corporate social responsibility. To better understand SRC, we need more research that would include these variously identified aspects of SRC. Our study is an attempt to explore the concept of socially responsible consumption in France at the beginning of a new century. It would be interesting to test our scale in different cultures.

Are our results culturally specific or can we apply them globally? Lodge's (1990) distinction between individualist (e.g., USA) and communitarian (e.g., France) may prove helpful in this regard. Maignan (2001) found that French and German consumers appear more willing to actively support socially responsible businesses than US consumers.

Do social and environmental concerns express themselves in the same manner in other cultures? Two related questions evolve from this larger one: would the same dimensions appear in the scale building process undertaken in other cultures? And, would respondents in other countries have similar priorities as it pertains to the five factors identified in the present study? Additionally, our results may be time sensitive. Socially responsible consumption is a dynamic concept and it is likely that socially responsible concerns will change in the future or be expressed differently. Future research studying these potential changes will be necessary.

In order to help managers better understand and target socially responsible consumers, further study of the determinants of SRC is needed. Socio-demographic variables have not been found to be good predictors of this behavior (Webster 1975; Roberts 1996). Psychological variables seem to constitute better antecedents. For example, Perceived Consumer Effectiveness has been identified as the most promising variable in explaining variations in SRC. Future research should focus on the possible antecedents of PCE and on development of the most effective strategy for combating negative PCE (Roberts 1995). The predictive power of other variables such as personal values and life-styles also provide possibilities for future research. Another rich area of research lies in the exploration of the motivations for socially responsible consumption. Klein, Smith and John's study (2003) deals with the motivations behind boycotts but does not address the full spectrum of SRC. Is altruism the main reason for this type of behavior, or do personal interests play an important role? Is SRC a way to express one self, or to self-actualize, as some authors suggest (Kozinets and Handelman 1998; Brooker 1976)?

Previous researchers have highlighted the fundamental role of information in SRC (Carrigan and Attalla 2001). This element is particularly crucial for the consumer rewarding and/or punishment of companies based on the company's perceived behavior. Future research should focus on the information sources used by socially responsible consumers and which prove to be most persuasive? What role does brand proliferation and information overload play in SRC? What is the role of word of mouth and the Internet in such behavior? How effective are labels of corporate responsibility to consumer decision making?

To conclude, the possibilities for research in the area of socially responsible consumption are numerous. It is hoped that future research will see more contributions in this important, yet under-researched area of consumer behavior.

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