Consumer Resistance: From Anti-Consumption to Revenge

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1 Introduction

There are many examples of consumers resisting consumption, marketing practices and questionable corporations. For example, adepts of voluntary simplicity prefer to offer something they themselves made for Christmas rather than to buy gifts at the store. After the Volkswagen crisis about the diesel engine, some owners swore they would never buy another car from this company. In addition, many of them complained aggressively about the "dishonest" German manufacturer on social media. Although the manifestations of consumer resistance are omnipresent, this area of research has received limited attention in the academic literature. The current contribution aims to fulfill this gap by providing state-of-the-art reviews on two streams of research—consumer anti-consumption and revenge—that are closely associated with consumer resistance.

In this contribution, consumer resistance refers to the voluntary opposition to marketing activities or corporations that leads consumers to engage in a variety of anti-consumption actions (Lee et al. 2009) and revenge behaviors against corporations (Grégoire and Fisher 2008; Grégoire et al. 2010). Generally speaking, research on consumer resistance focuses on the unbalanced power that exists between consumers and firms (Price and Penaloza 1993), and the current contribution investigates two types of actions—anti-consumption and revenge—that consumers may use to regain some of their perceived lost power (Price and Penaloza 1993). Although both anti-consumption and revenge behaviors are driven by a similar feeling of opposition toward corporations and marketing, these two types of behaviors also possess different characteristics, as illustrated in Fig. 1. Given

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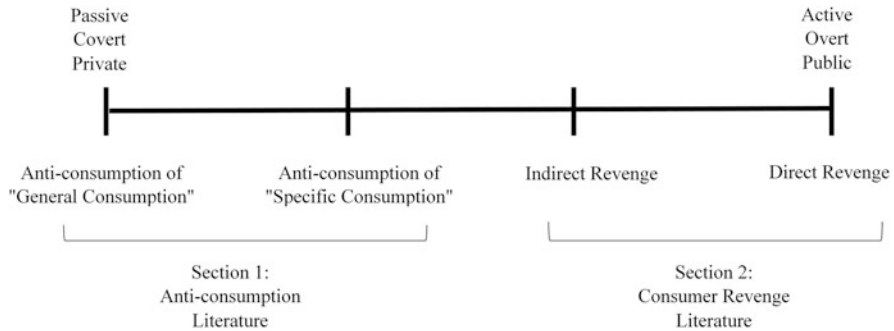e-mail: yany.gregoire@hec.ca

Fig. 1 Consumer resistance behaviors and the arrangement of this contribution

their differences, the two literatures dealing with these behaviors are reviewed separately in the first two sections of this contribution. In our concluding remarks, the similarities between these two types of behaviors and their links with the notion of resistance are discussed further.

Anti-consumption literally means "against consumption," and this literature examines consumers who are strongly opposed to the acquisition, use and dispossession of goods and brands (Lee et al. 2009). The first section of the contribution focuses on the refusal to consume brands and products as a lifestyle. Specifically, this section discusses different typologies of anti-consumption lifestyles as well as the antecedents and consequences of these lifestyles. Compared to the revenge responses, anti-consumption behaviors can be viewed as more private and passive in nature (see Fig. 1). These actions constitute a form of "quiet" (but persistent) refusal to go along with consuming products or services. Most of these behaviors are not primarily designed to hurt corporations, although firms (like Volkswagen) could suffer from these behaviors (e.g., boycott) as a byproduct. Most of anti-consumptions are also covert because managers may not be aware of the existence of these consumers.

The second section of this contribution proposes a comprehensive model of consumer revenge—which is defined as consumers' efforts to punish and cause inconvenience to corporations for the damages they have caused (Grégoire et al. 2009). Revenge behaviors—made in person or through social media—are strong manifestations of consumer resistance; when consumers endeavor to get revenge, they invest time, energy and even money to get back at firms. This second section of the contribution discusses the cognitive and emotional antecedents leading to a desire for revenge as well as the most common revenge manifestations (indirect and direct). Revenge behaviors—especially the direct form which includes vindictive complaining and marketplace aggression—are arguably the strongest and most active form of consumer resistance. Given the overt nature of direct revenge, these actions are difficult to ignore by firms and managers.

2 Anti-Consumption Lifestyles

2.1 Typologies of Anti-Consumption Lifestyles

Marketing is inherently biased to investigate what makes consumers buy, as this facilitates the creation of persuasive communication strategies, as well as the development of products and services tailored to consumers' needs and wants. Research in marketing focuses mostly on investigating the reasons for consuming (Chatzidakis and Lee 2013). However, the reasons for consuming are not necessarily the logical opposite of the reasons against consuming (Chatzidakis and Lee 2013). A study might conclude that consumers bought a given brand because it represents environmental values, but one should not conclude that consumers who did not buy the same brand are not environmentally concerned. Therefore, it is important for marketing to study not only the "reasons for" a given behavior, but also the "reasons against" this same behavior. In addition, behaviors are better explained when individuals are asked both whether they intend to do something and whether they are against doing something (Chatzidakis and Lee 2013). For example, while the intention to reduce consumption is driven by environmental concerns, the intention to maintain current consumption may be motivated by a desire to maintain current lifestyles. This reinforces the importance of studying not only why consumers buy, but also why they refuse to buy products or services.

In light of these points, the first part of this contribution reviews research on anti-consumption and focuses on its two motivations (Iyer and Muncy 2009): societal and personal. Consumers who refuse to consume for societal reasons believe that society at large would be improved if consumers reduced their consumption. For them, consumption is not simply the act of buying. They believe that consumption has much broader implications, impacting society and the well-being of a community. Consumers who resist consuming for personal reasons are motivated to satisfy private concerns. For instance, they may reduce consumption in response to personal ethical beliefs or to avoid the pain they experience when spending.

Anti-consumption also has two principal objects: general consumption and specific consumption (Iyer and Muncy 2009). Consumers who resist general consumption will avoid all consumption, reducing the acquisition of all types of products and services. Conversely, consumers who resist specific consumption are against acquiring specific brands or product categories because of what such brands and products symbolize. By combining the two objects and the two motivations of anti-consumption, Iyer and Muncy (2009) proposed four types of anti-consumers. We briefly summarize them below.

First, *global impact consumers* resist general consumption for societal reasons. They want to reduce all consumption to benefit the society or the environment. They believe that social inequalities are too strong and that current eco-systems cannot cope with present levels of over-consumption.

Second, *market activists* resist acquiring specific products and brands for societal reasons. They believe that consumers should boycott certain brands or products

because they represent a menace to general well-being. These consumers blame certain brands or products for low wages and illegal or immoral practices as well as for environmental degradation. They believe that consumers should use their wallets to force companies to make positive social changes.

Third, *anti-loyal consumers* resist acquiring specific products or brands for personal concerns. They avoid purchasing particular brands and products because of perceived inferiority or because they had negative experiences with the product or brand. Their resistance to consumption is not motivated by societal concerns; rather, it is based on their own personal experiences. These consumers may also resist buying certain products and brands because of their associated negative image.

Fourth, *simplifiers* resist general consumption for personal reasons. They reduce all their consumption to satisfy self-centered goals. They believe that consumption distracts them from more important life goals, and that consumption is not an important source of happiness. Therefore, they resist consumption to live simpler and have more meaningful lives. They are also motivated by personal ethical concerns, and they reject consumption as focusing too much on self-serving activities.

Of note, in line with recent research (Nepomuceno and Laroche 2015a), we argue that consumers may resist all consumption for personal reasons other than those related to voluntary simplicity. For example, consumers could reduce consumption because they feel pleasure when saving or pain when spending. These consumers are known respectively as being frugal and tightwad (Nepomuceno and Laroche 2015a). Taking the existence of these consumers into account opens the scope of research on anti-consumption; it expands the limited view that resisting all consumption is due only to personal motivations related to simplicity.

Now that we have briefly presented the different types of anti-consumers, we turn our attention to the drivers leading these individuals to adopt such lifestyles. In particular, we summarize antecedents that have been found to correlate with a person's inclination to resist consumption. The next section provides insights into which traits explain people's willingness to resist consumption.

2.2 Antecedents of Anti-Consumption Lifestyles

Specifically, we review the following traits: materialism, self-control, long-term orientation and environmental concern. Note that we do not present an exhaustive list of the antecedents of anti-consumption; we focus on the most important ones according to prior research.

Materialism describes how much a given person attributes importance to possessions. A materialistic person believes that possessions are an important source of happiness, that possessions signal success, and that acquiring possessions is a central goal in their lives (Richins 2004). Extensive research has shown that materialism is an important predictor of a person's intention to consume or resist

consumption. Materialism correlates negatively with anti-consumption lifestyles, such as tightwadism, voluntary simplicity and frugality (Lastovicka et al. 1999; Nepomuceno and Laroche 2015a). While low materialism is associated with resistance to consumption, high materialism is associated with increased consumption. Though research has investigated instances in which materialists might resist consumption (Nepomuceno and Laroche 2015b), research strongly suggests that endorsing materialistic values makes it difficult for consumers to resist consumption.

Research has also paid particular attention to the role of self-control as an antecedent of anti-consumption. Self-control is the ability to override, alter, or inhibit behaviors that would normally occur because of undesired physiological processes, learning, habits or situations (Tangney et al. 2004). Studies looking at the effect of self-control on consumption have found that impulsive consumption correlates negatively with self-control. In addition, a self-control scale designed to measure consumer spending self-control correlates positively with frugality and tightwadism. Overall, research indicates that self-control is an important antecedent of anti-consumption lifestyles (Tangney et al. 2004; Nepomuceno and Laroche 2015b) because the dominant culture in the west is that consumer expenditures are desirable (Borgmann 2000), so one needs to exert self-control to avoid falling into consumerist temptations.

Authors have also examined how long-term orientation is associated with anti-consumption. Long-term orientation refers to how much a person is focused on obtaining future gains and benefits (Bearden et al. 2006). A long-term oriented person values planning, hard work, and perseverance. Given that in the west materialism is desirable and endorsed (Borgmann 2000), a long-term oriented individual will be more likely to resist temptations in the present to obtain greater gains in the future. For example, long-term oriented individuals might save today to buy something in the future.

A final important antecedent of anti-consumption is environmental concerns. This construct measures how much individuals are concerned about the environment and how much they believe that human development threatens the availability of resources necessary for survival (Fransson and Gärling 1999). Interestingly, individuals concerned with environmental risks endorse altruistic values and the well-being of other humans (Slimak and Dietz 2006). Given that environmentally concerned individuals endorse altruistic values, and considering that they believe that current consumption levels pose a threat to the environment and society, it is likely that environmental concerns are an important motivation for some consumers to endorse anti-consumption lifestyles. For example, global impact consumers may be motivated to improve society by reducing their own environmental impact through what they consume. Likewise, market activists may believe they can improve the well-being of society by refusing to buy brands that threaten the environment and society at large. In sum, environmental concerns are likely an important antecedent of endorsing an anti-consumption lifestyle.

2.3   Consequences of Anti-Consumption Lifestyles

What if large consumer segments were to resist consumption? How would that affect a given economy? The current zeitgeist is that consumption is "good" and that economies grow stronger if consumers increase their consumption levels (Borgmann 2000). Given this rationale, it is logical to conclude that economies would shrink if consumers were to resist consumption.

Here, we wish to point out another outcome that could occur with resisting consumption. At a macro-level, anti-consumption could be beneficial for some economies. Let's consider oil as an example. This commodity serves many purposes: oil is used to generate power and its derivatives are widely used in many industries. A country that is not self-sufficient in the production of oil is especially dependent on international suppliers. Given that oil derivatives are used in many products (such as plastics, synthetic materials, and chemical products), a given country could gain an economic advantage if its population were to voluntarily reduce its overall consumption. In this case, the country would become less dependent on foreign suppliers. Even a country that is self-sufficient on oil could benefit from a reduction in consumption; it would allow this country to have more oil derivatives to export—which in turn would generate greater national revenues. Therefore, by motivating consumers to resist consumption, policy makers could create strategic commercial advantages. In short, our argument is that strong macro-economic advantages may arise if consumers reduce their consumption.

To illustrate additional benefits of resisting consumption, consider the recent work by Nepomuceno and Laroche (2015a). These authors found that voluntary simplicity negatively correlates with personal debt. This finding suggests that resisting consumption leads to greater account balances and lower inclination to obtain debt. Conversely, individuals who do not voluntarily resist consumption are more likely to encounter and suffer from financial difficulties. Also important, consumer debt has been positively correlated with negative emotions, mental disorder, depression, and suicidal completion (Richardson et al. 2013). Thus, by motivating consumers to voluntarily resist consumption, governments and other institutions could also assist them to live happier and more meaningful lives.

Research has indicated that resistance to consumption leads to increased well-being. Thrift consumers and consumers who spend money wisely (Dunn et al. 2011) are more likely to experience well-being. This finding directly contradicts the Western belief that possessions are a source of happiness (Richins 2004). Interestingly, research suggests that one is happier because, after resisting consuming, one experiences a greater sense of authenticity and greater ease in self-expression (Black and Cherrier 2010). In addition, consumption has a displacement effect. That is, it forces individuals to work longer hours, distracting them from leisure activities and time devoted to family, community, or religion (Borgmann 2000). Given that consumers are likely to enjoy happier lives if they resist consumption, research on consumer resistance and anti-consumption can produce knowledge that might be used to improve consumers' lives (Nepomuceno and Laroche 2015b).

An additional benefit of resisting consumption is the potential impact on sustainability. Authors have suggested that resistance to consumption should reduce the constraints on the environment. They argue that when consumers systematically reduce consumption, the strains on the environment are reduced as the demand for resources is also reduced (Sheth et al. 2011). Therefore, policy makers motivated to tackle growing environmental challenges should consider the promotion of anti-consumption values and educate consumers about the benefits of resisting consumption for society and themselves. In short, research on anti-consumption has the potential to produce knowledge that might assist in achieving sustainability outcomes (Sheth et al. 2011).

2.4   Consumer Resistance and Marketing Practices

In the early twentieth century, marketing was highly focused on the products developed. The goal was to mass market a product and make it appealing to consumers. Fortunately, marketing has come a long way since then. As competition grew in the marketplace, the shift changed from the products being sold to the consumers. Quickly, marketers noticed that consumers had "needs and wants" to be satisfied, and products that best satisfied these "needs and wants" were more popular among consumers (Narver and Slater 1990). Segmentation was a natural evolutionary step, as practitioners attempted to group consumers in homogeneous groups, providing tailored solutions. When companies started to focus on consumer segments, the competition within these segments grew, forcing companies to focus on smaller and smaller segments as well as niche marketing (Sheth et al. 2000).

The fact that niche marketing has grown in importance demonstrates that practitioners are increasingly aware that consumers have diverse goals, ambitions, and motivations. In particular, consumers are increasingly concerned about the environment (Brown and Wahlers 1998), sustainability (Hinton and Goodman 2010), and social responsibility (Mohr et al. 2001), to the point that they take these issues into consideration when selecting a product. These changes in consumer profile and marketplace competition have pushed companies to perceive consumer resistance in a different way. Companies are now realizing that consumers who want to resist consumption are still consumers and will need to purchase solutions for their needs and wants. Therefore, companies should not ignore consumers who voluntarily resist consumption. In fact, companies should attempt to provide solutions that will satisfy these consumers. Companies that fail to do so risk losing space to competitors. Reinforcing this point, research has found that 18% of the general population scores as high on frugality as subscribers of a book promoting a thrift lifestyle (Lastovicka et al. 1999). These convincing results indicate that consumers resisting consumption are a sizeable group.

Of note, this substantially large group is particularly important for the banking industry. Consumers who adopt an anti-consumption lifestyle are expected to spend less money, as they resist acquiring new possessions. This has been shown in recent

research demonstrating that frugal consumers have larger account balances, possibly because of their different lifestyle (Nepomuceno and Laroche 2015a). Because anti-consumption leads to less consumption, the money saved after resisting consumption must be kept somewhere. Naturally, individuals would deposit their savings in financial institutions and either invest or simply leave the money in their bank accounts. Therefore, practitioners working in financial institutions should pay particular attention to anti-consumption lifestyles.

2.5   Anti-Consumption and Consumer Revenge

The next section covers consumer revenge (see Fig. 1), defined as the effort made by consumers to punish companies for the damages they have caused. Some typologies of anti-consumption seem to have overlapping behaviors with consumer revenge. In particular, market activists refuse to consume because they believe that by doing so they will improve society at large, whereas anti-loyal consumers might refuse to consume because they had negative experiences with a company. Similarly, consumer revenge might occur because consumers had negative experiences with the company and because they believe that by punishing the company they will improve society. So, anti-consumption and consumer revenge might be motivated by personal and societal concerns. However, while anti-consumption lifestyles involve the refusal to purchase from a given company or buy a particular brand, consumer revenge leads individuals to act more actively against the company and to spend time and energy in order to get even with it.

3   Consumer Revenge: Another form of Resistance

After discussing different anti-consumption lifestyles, we now turn to consumers who take the extra steps in their opposition by retaliating against firms. Here, we focus on consumers getting "their" revenge and the psychological process leading to these extreme responses. For instance, the revelations of Volkswagen's diesel engine car emissions ignited a great deal of anger among auto wholesalers, private dealers, and, of course, owners. Car dealers now have to handle a flood of angry calls, emails and tweets from the owners (cbsnews.com). It has been estimated that the whole crisis could cost Volkswagen 87 billion dollars (money.cnn.com).

People are increasingly getting revenge through online applications. Most people have already seen examples of this recent form of revenge (which started about 10 years ago). For example, there are plenty of examples on Facebook and Twitter of consumers who were overcharged by mobile phone operators, or who missed a connection for a delayed flight. How did these consumers feel? Why did they engage in revenge behaviors—that is, actions motivated by a desire to harm the firm for what it did in the first place (Grégoire and Fisher 2008)? In this section, we

examine what leads consumers to get revenge against firms when a company fails to serve them properly or violates important societal norms (such as care for the environment).

We propose a general framework to better understand the cognitive and emotional drivers of consumer revenge behaviors (see Fig. 2 for the model and Table 1 for recent work on this issue). The proposed framework draws on the well-established cognitive appraisal theory of Lazarus (1991) in order to better explain how consumers' assessment of failures affect their cognitive, emotional, motivational, and behavioral responses (see Fig. 2). Accordingly, this section tries to answer the following questions: What are the cognitive, emotional and motivational antecedents to consumer revenge? What are the different ways that consumers can enact revenge? How should firms respond when consumers get revenge? Once we understand why consumers engage in vengeful behaviors, we can better understand what firms should do to manage their occurrences.

Previous research illustrates that consumer revenge can be caused by a service failure (i.e., a service situation that brings dissatisfaction) or a societal failure (i.e., a company's misbehavior that negatively affects the whole society, like an oil spillage). In both cases, the process is almost the same, and it involves similar cognitions and emotions. A service failure is experienced when a product or service is not performing as it should (e.g., luggage damage by an airline). Indeed, experiencing both a service failure and a poor recovery is the context that leads to 96% of online complaints (Grégoire et al. 2009). Societal marketing refers to firms' efforts to reach company goals by considering society's long-term interests and benefits. Accordingly, consumers may hold a grudge against firms that neglect to consider the best interest of society—that is, a societal failure.

The revenge process strongly relies on Lazarus' appraisal theory, in which consumers' judgments about a negative event precede their emotions (Lazarus 1991). Specifically, consumers initially form a moral judgment about a service or
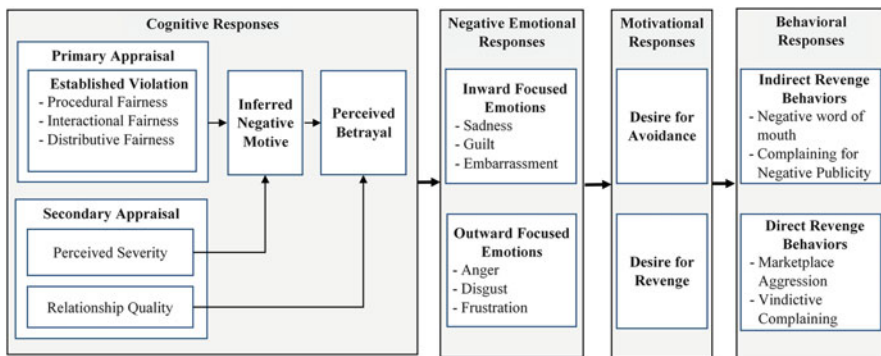

Fig. 2 Conceptual framework for the revenge process

Table 1 Review of consumer revenge work in marketing

Author(s)/Journal	Theoretical approach	Findings/contributions
McColl-Kennedy and Sparks (2003) *Journal of Service Research*	Justice theory	(1) Adapting a fairness theory for studying consumers' emotions during a service recovery. (2) Studying the role consumers' counterfactual thinking and accountability according to the procedural, interactional, and distributive justice, on their emotional response.
Grégoire and Fisher (2008) *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*	Justice theory Social exchange theory	(1) Perceived betrayal is the key motivational force that leads consumers to restore fairness by all means possible. (2) Relationship quality moderates the link between a consumer perception of a service fairness and betrayal.
Grégoire et al. (2009) *Journal of Marketing*	Forgiveness theory	(1) Explores the effects of time and relationship quality on the evolution of consumer grudge in online public complaining contexts. (2) Time affects consumer negative motivational responses differently. (3) In contrast to low relationship quality consumers, consumers with strong relationship quality with the firm are more amenable to any level of recovery attempt.
McColl-Kennedy et al. (2009) *Journal of Retailing*	Affective Events Theory (AET) Cognitive Appraisal Theory	(1) Develops scales for consumers' emotions, expressions, and behaviors. (2) Different forms of consumer rage emotions lead to different types of expressions and behaviors.
Grégoire et al. (2010) *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*	Appraisal Theory Justice Theory Attribution Theory	(1) Incorporates inferred negative motives as the key drivers of consumers' desire for revenge, (2) Categorizes consumers' vengeful behaviors as direct vs. indirect. (3) Explains the antecedents of consumers' direct and indirect revenge behaviors.

societal failure. This judgment then creates negative emotional responses, such as anger, that lead to the development of antisocial motivations (such as a desire for revenge) and behavioral responses (e.g., negative word of mouth or marketplace aggression). This model is explained in the following subsections.

3.1   The Cognitive Antecedents Leading to Revenge

Lazarus (1991) identified two levels of cognitive appraisal: (a) the primary appraisal is about the unfairness of the situation, and (b) the secondary appraisal concerns the assessment of the failure severity and the prior level of relationship quality (before the failure). While the primary appraisal focuses on the general assessment of the negative event, the secondary appraisal is more specific and it helps in selecting the appropriate coping mechanism (Zourrig et al. 2009). Building on justice theory, the primary appraisal is shaped according to three dimensions: procedural fairness (i.e., firms' policies and procedures to address the failure), interactional fairness (i.e., employees' interactions in the recovery process), and distributive fairness (i.e., the compensation or the outcome that consumers receive) (Tax et al. 1998).

The secondary appraisal includes severity, which is defined as the magnitude of the loss or the inconvenience of a failure (Grégoire and Fisher 2008). This category also refers to the prior assessment (before the failure) of relationship quality, which is defined as consumers' trust (i.e., confidence that the firm can be relied on), commitment (i.e., a willingness to preserve a relationship with the firm), and social benefits (i.e., a perception of a "one-to-one" connection through personalization and customization of services).

Moving downward in the model (see Fig. 2), Grégoire et al. (2010) found that the more consumers perceive procedural and interactional unfairness, the greater they infer that a firm has negative motives. Here, inferred negative motive is defined as the extent to which a consumer believes a firm intended the wrongdoing to maximize its own benefits and take advantage of the situation (Grégoire et al. 2010). This judgment has been found to be one of the most powerful cognitions leading to anger and a desire for revenge. When a failure occurs, consumers act as jurors and they infer whether or not the firm had negative motives for causing the failure. If so, they will then judge that the firm deserves to be punished for its actions.

If consumers perceive they have been unfairly treated—on the basis of the three dimensions—they may also perceive a sense of betrayal (Grégoire and Fisher 2008). Betrayal is defined as the extent to which a consumer perceives that a firm has intentionally violated the norms regulating their relationships (Grégoire et al. 2009). Unlike dissatisfaction, consumers' perceived betrayal is strongly associated with anger and a desire for revenge; this variable is also a powerful antecedent causing revenge. In addition, the results of a longitudinal research study with online complainers (Grégoire et al. 2009) indicate this assessment is influenced by the prior level of relationship quality (perceived by a consumer). Relationship quality is positively related to consumers' perceived betrayal, and this effect is persistent over time. In other words, when consumers perceive a high level of prior relationship quality, they experience a greater sense of betrayal—this phenomenon is called the "love becomes hate" effect.

3.2   The Emotional Antecedents to Consumer Revenge

According to the appraisal theory, emotions are created by the cognitive appraisal of a situation. These emotions ultimately lead them to choosing a coping behavior in order to reduce emotional dissonance (Haj-Salem and Chebat 2013; Lazarus 1991). This mechanism is aligned with the cognitive change theory that argues that individuals try to integrate the stressful experience within their current reference system, also called their "inner" model. Accordingly, individuals have two options. Either they can face the stressful event and try to solve the problem, or they can try to manage their negative emotions and establish a new inner model that matches the stressful event better. As can be seen in Fig. 2, consumers' perceptions of negative motives and/or betrayal lead them to experience diverse negative emotions (Lazarus 1991).

Lazarus (1991) introduced two distinct categories of negative emotions: namely, inward vs. outward. This distinction is based on the attribution of agency, which refers to the attribution of the stressor to self vs. others (Haj-Salem and Chebat 2013). Inward negative emotions occur when individuals believe they are responsible for the negative event. They blame themselves and feel that they could have done better. Consumers who perceive that they are more responsible for a negative outcome (e.g., selecting the wrong service provider) are more likely to feel inward negative emotions such as sadness, guilt, and embarrassment (Haj-Salem and Chebat 2013).

In turn, outward negative emotions occur when an individual puts the blame on the other party for the occurrence of a negative event (Lazarus 1991). In a consumer context, the more consumers blame a firm for a failure, the greater they should feel outward negative emotions, such as anger, disgust, or frustration (Haj-Salem and Chebat 2013). According to the model proposed in this section, the more consumers perceive betrayal and infer a firm's negative motives, the more they feel outward negative emotions (such as anger) rather than inward negative emotions. In contrast, if consumers perceive that they are responsible for the situation and the negative outcome, they feel more inward negative emotions.

Grégoire et al. (2010) demonstrate that consumers' inferences of a firm's negative motives (such as greed) are very influential cognitions that drive anger, which is defined as an intense negative emotion that leads consumers to strongly respond to the source of anger (McColl-Kennedy et al. 2009). In addition, consumers' perception of the severity of a failure has both direct and indirect effects on anger. In sum, anger (and perhaps rage) is definitely the strongest emotional driver leading consumers to consider revenge as an appropriate coping mechanism.

3.3 Key Motivational Responses: A Desire for Revenge vs. A Desire for Avoidance

Consumers' cognitions and negative emotions about an unfair experience drive them to have some negative motivational responses, such as a desire for revenge, a desire for avoidance, or both (Grégoire et al. 2009). A consumer's desire for revenge is a felt need to punish and cause harm to a firm because of the damages it has caused in the first place (Grégoire et al. 2009). Desire for avoidance, which is mostly caused by dissatisfaction, is defined as a consumer's motivation to keep as much distance as possible between him/her and the firm. A desire for revenge is the major force leading consumers to engage in extremely negative behaviors, such as negative word-of-mouth or vindictive complaining.

Generally speaking, consumers can cope with a stressful situation (e.g., service or societal failure) in two ways: problem-focused versus emotion-focused coping (Lazarus 1991). The first coping strategy refers to managing the environment or the situation in order to reduce its impact or try to resolve the problem. In the second coping strategy, individuals try to manage and regulate their emotions in order to adjust their inner model. By avoiding the firm (i.e., developing a desire for avoidance), consumers may try to ignore the service failure and escape from the uncomfortable emotional states caused by anger (Grégoire et al. 2009). Alternatively, consumers may decide to confront the firm and seek to cause it harm in order to get even (i.e., developing a desire for revenge) (Grégoire et al. 2009, 2010). In other words, consumers may hold a desire for revenge, a desire for avoidance, or both to show their lack of forgiveness when they experience a severe failure.

For instance, an angry consumer can hold a grudge against a firm by stopping purchasing from the company and switching to a competitor (i.e., an avoidance approach). In the meanwhile, this consumer can also blog negatively about the transgressing firm (i.e., a revenge approach). Although consumers' desire for revenge and desire for avoidance are correlated, they are also conceptually distinct and can simultaneously coexist (McCullough et al. 1998).

Because of their different natures, these two desires follow different evolutionary patterns over time (Grégoire et al. 2009). As illustrated in Fig. 3, when a firm does not take action after receiving an online complaint, consumers' desire for revenge is high but tends to fade away over time, although it never disappears. The diminishing desire for revenge is replaced by consumers taking their business elsewhere and a growing desire for avoidance over time.

The different effects of time on consumers' desires for revenge and avoidance are also moderated by the level of relationship quality that consumers perceive to have with a firm (Grégoire et al. 2009). High relationship quality consumers are firms' best and most loyal consumers, with strong emotional connections with firms. In turn, low relationship quality consumers are casual consumers who only make periodic purchases and do not have strong emotional attachments with firms. In an online complaining context, consumers with high relationship quality hold their desire for revenge over a longer period of time, compared to low relationship
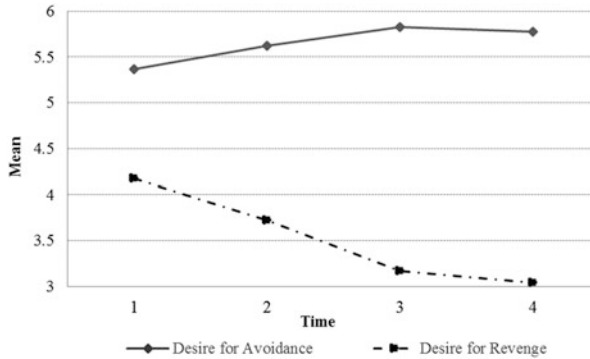
Fig. 3 Evolution of revenge and avoidance over time. Source: Adapted from Grégoire et al. (2009). Note: This study was conducted in a series of four questionnaires over a 2-month period (every 2 weeks). The initial sample of participants was 431. Then, 300 participants completed the survey at time 2, and 215 at time 3. Overall, 172 participants completed all four waves. For both desires, the scale varies between 1 (lowest) and 7 (highest)

quality consumers (see Fig. 4, Panel A). Meanwhile, the desire for avoidance of high relationship quality consumers amplifies more rapidly over time, compared to those with low relationship quality (see Fig. 4, Panel B). This set of patterns has been described as a longitudinal "love becomes hate" effect.

Fortunately, Grégoire et al. (2009) demonstrate that high relationship quality consumers are also more amenable to any form of post-complaint recovery—although these consumers hold a longer grudge when no recovery is offered. High relationship quality consumers tend to care more about firms' efforts to resolve a problem than the monetary value. In contrast, low relationship quality consumers are mainly concerned about the size of a compensation. While low relationship quality consumers require high value compensations, high relationship quality consumers are more interested in the social value of a recovery.

3.4 Consumer Revenge Behavioral Responses and Firms' Interventions

The cognitive-emotion process leads consumers to have negative motivational responses (i.e., desires for revenge or avoidance) toward the wrongdoing firm. In that case, consumers may engage in different types of vengeful behaviors to get even with the transgressing firms and "make them pay" with concrete actions (Grégoire and Fisher 2008; Grégoire et al. 2010). The behaviors could vary from passively exiting the relationship to engaging in aggressive behaviors, such as slamming the door and insulting employees (McColl-Kennedy et al. 2009; Grégoire et al. 2010). With the fast rise of social media, consumers' vengeful behaviors are becoming more salient, and the resulting inconvenience could be even more severe

Fig 4 Interaction effects between relationship quality and time on revenge and avoidance. Source: Adapted from Grégoire et al. (2009); Note: see Fig. 3
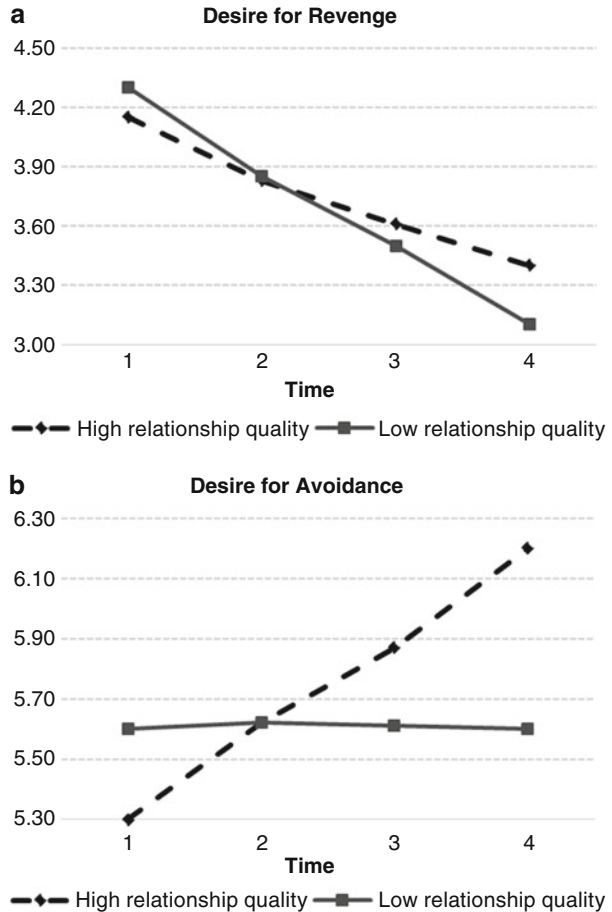
for firms. The side effects can be so important that in some cases even major recovery efforts are insufficient to stop the online crisis. For example, in the case of Dave Carrol—a musician whose guitar was broken during baggage handling on a United Airlines flight in 2009—the airline suffered from serious public relations humiliation and brand damages. And the damages still continue: The YouTube video "United Breaks Guitars" is still viral in 2016, and it has been viewed more than fifteen million times!

As mentioned earlier, consumers may engage in different vengeful behaviors to get even with firms. A key question then becomes: How should managers deal with each type of revenge behavior? Understanding different types of revenge behaviors is important because it provides guidance to managers about the best ways to intervene and offer tailored solutions for each form of behavior. Previous research identifies two distinct categories of revenge behaviors: direct vs. indirect (Grégoire

et al. 2010). These two categories require different interventions from firms, since each one has different effects on firms.

First, *direct revenge behaviors* include consumers' actions that occur within a firm's borders and that directly target its employees and operations. A firm is necessarily aware of these actions. Vindictive complaining (e.g., insulting frontline staff) and marketplace aggressions (e.g., physical actions, such as hitting an object or damaging firms' properties) are two types of frequent direct revenge behaviors (Grégoire et al. 2010). Vindictive complaining refers to consumers' complaining behaviors that occur to cause inconveniences to and abuse of frontline employees (Grégoire and Fisher 2008). All sorts of direct retaliatory behaviors (e.g., physical aggression and vandalism) can be viewed as direct revenge.

It is not hard for firms to recognize consumers' direct revenge behaviors, as many examples easily come to mind. Because these behaviors may put pressure on the frontline employees, they could lead to an increase in the rate of absenteeism and turnover (Grégoire et al. 2010). For manifestations of direct revenge, managers are able to take immediate actions to rectify the situation and prevent the recurrence of these behaviors. In other words, this set of behaviors is more identifiable and manageable and, in that regard, less dangerous for firms. In addition, these behaviors do not have the potential to spread in viral and uncontrollable ways.

While most direct revenge behaviors occur in a face-to-face context, the *indirect types* include actions that happen "behind a firm's back" (Grégoire et al. 2010). For instance, negative word-of-mouth and online complaining for negative publicity are two popular forms of indirect revenge behaviors. Negative word-of-mouth refers to consumers' efforts to denigrate a firm to their family and friends to convince them to stop patronizing the transgressing firm (Grégoire et al. 2010). In turn, online public complaining for negative publicity occurs when consumers use online applications to inform the public about firms' misbehaviors (Grégoire et al. 2010).

In contrast to the direct type, frontline employees are not the target for the indirect revenge behaviors (Grégoire et al. 2010). As the qualifier suggests, indirect revenge behaviors are harder to recognize and control because they occur beyond a firm's borders. These behaviors can drastically damage a firm's reputation by indirectly influencing a larger number of potential consumers. It should be noted that the advent of the Internet and social media has made this form of behavior more dangerous than ever before in the history of consumption.

Now that we understand the different categories of revenge behaviors, the question becomes: What are the specific drivers leading to direct vs. indirect revenge behaviors? Consumers' desire for revenge naturally leads them to engage in both direct and indirect revenge behaviors (Grégoire et al. 2010). However, these two types of behaviors also have different and distinct antecedents. First, a multi-stage study (Study 2 in Grégoire et al. 2010) reveals that perceived severity has a significant effect only on the *indirect* revenge behaviors. When the inconveniences of a failure are major, it creates a strong internal pressure that leads consumers to share their stories by all means possible.

In addition, consumers' perceived power has main and moderating effects only on the *direct* revenge behaviors (Grégoire et al. 2010). Consumers' perceived

power is defined as the extent to which a consumer perceives being able to influence a firm in an advantageous manner. In other words, if consumers perceive themselves to be "powerless," they are less likely to engage in direct revenge behaviors. This effect is explained because these consumers may fear counter-retaliation from firms. Given the overt nature of direct revenge behaviors, powerless consumers may be afraid that firms could quickly recognize them and engage in counter-retaliation actions—these actions could make the situation even worse for consumers. In turn, if consumers perceive they are powerful enough to engage in direct revenge actions, they may assume that firms will be reluctant to counter-react in an unpredictable manner (Grégoire et al. 2010). Such consumers perceive that firms need their patronage more than the consumers need the firms' products or services, so they feel comfortable in retaliating in an aggressive manner.

3.5   An Overview of the Revenge Model

This review—presented in the second section—contributes to a better understanding of consumers' vengeful responses in the context of service and societal failures. Drawing on cognitive appraisal theory (Lazarus 1991), we propose a general conceptual framework that synthesizes previous research in a marketing context (see Fig. 2). Accordingly, the conceptual framework explains consumers' cognitive, emotional, motivational, and behavioral responses once they experience a failure. Overall, the conceptual model argues that consumers cognitively process an unfair experience, which consequently may lead them to perceive firms' negative motives and/or betrayal. The cognitive responses of these consumers drive them to experience various inward (e.g., sadness, guilt) or outward (e.g., anger) negative emotions in relation to the failure. The negative feelings, especially anger, motivate consumers to hold a grudge (i.e., desire for revenge, desire for avoidance) against firms. Finally, aggrieved consumers may engage in various revenge behaviors (i.e., direct vs. indirect) to get even with the transgressing firm.

4   Two Facets of Consumer Resistance: Concluding Remarks

In this contribution, we review two facets of consumer resistance—a phenomenon we broadly define as consumers' sense of opposition toward consumption, marketing, and corporations. As we explained in the anti-consumption section, this opposition can be general (toward all forms of consumption) or specific (toward a specific brand or product), and it can strongly influence a person's lifestyle. The first stream of literature that we reviewed is more abstract and sociological in nature, and the emergence of the four anti-consumption lifestyles is strongly explained by

general values that consumers possess toward materialism, long-term orientation, and environmental concerns. Broadly speaking, the anti-consumption movement has been described as more passive and covert than the revenge responses (see Fig. 1) because this movement refers to a quiet (but persistent) refusal to go along with consuming goods or services.

In turn, the second section of this contribution refers to consumer revenge (i.e., the actions to hurt a firm), which constitutes another distinct way that consumers can use to express their opposition toward firms. In contrast with the anti-consumption section, we study revenge under a psychological (rather than a sociological) lens. In this second section, we try to understand the internal process—in terms of cognitions, emotions, and motivations—that lead consumers to engage in direct and indirect revenge. Although revenge behaviors can be especially aggressive and confrontational, these extreme responses are also short-lived. Revenge relies on extreme cognitions (betrayal and motives) and emotions (anger) that are unhealthy to sustain over time. So, revenge behaviors and anti-consumption lifestyles also differ on the basis of their duration; lifestyles are based on routine behaviors that are much more permanent than revenge actions.

Despite the differences between the anti-consumption and revenge literatures, we wish to conclude this contribution by highlighting their commonalities. First, both behaviors can be motivated by personal or societal reasons. Indeed, consumers can engage in anti-consumption or revenge because a firm fails them personally (through a product or a service failure); or even worse, it fails to respect important societal values (such as respecting basic human rights). Second, both types of behaviors are motivated by a strong sense of opposition toward firms (and marketing), and both behaviors are grounded in a strong desire to regain power over firms. Through these behaviors, consumers reclaim their power, and they communicate that marketing or consumption will not dictate the way they should live.

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