

The analysis of the perceived proximity of local products as a catalyst for confidence in large supermarkets: the case of the SOUSS MASSA region

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Abstract

Short food distribution circuits have experienced a strong resurgence in recent years, particularly because they favor close relations between producers and consumers, which are supposed to strengthen confidence between these commercial partners. These findings relating to the development of local commerce raise a number of questions which will constitute our research problem. This work made it possible to identify the dimensions of perceived proximity with regard to a short circuit of local products, then to test the influence of perceived proximity on trust. The theoretical contribution lies on the one hand in the deepening and validation of the dimensions of proximity put forward by Bergadaà and Del Bucchia (2009), and on the other hand, this research allows an empirical application of work on proximity. in the case of short circuits of local products, and more specifically in supermarkets.

Keywords: *short supply chains, perceived proximity, trust, local consumption, local product, mass distribution, qualitative analysis.*

Résumé

Les circuits courts de distribution alimentaires connaissent depuis quelques années un fort regain d'intérêt notamment parce qu'ils privilégient des relations de proximité entre producteurs et consommateurs, censées renforcer la confiance entre ces partenaires commerciaux. Ces constats relatifs au développement du commerce de proximité soulèvent un certain nombre d'interrogations qui constitueront notre problématique de recherche. Ce travail a permis d'identifier les dimensions de la proximité perçue à l'égard d'un circuit court des produits de terroir, puis de tester l'influence de la proximité perçue sur la confiance. L'apport théorique réside d'une part dans l'approfondissement et la validation des dimensions de la proximité mise en avant par Bergadaà et Del Bucchia (2009), et d'autre part, cette recherche permet une application empirique des travaux sur la proximité au cas des circuits courts des produits de terroir, et plus spécifiquement dans les grandes surfaces.

Mots-clés : *circuits courts, proximité perçue, confiance, consommation locale, produit de terroir, grande distribution, analyse qualitative.*

INTRODUCTION

For several years now, proximity has been one of the major strategic concerns of large food retailers: "by seeking the economic performance of our stores and competitive prices for our customers, we risk detaching ourselves from our markets. We need to find our local roots and respond to local needs. Commerce is above all a relationship between people and the passion for a profession "(Plassat, 2013). Ultimately, to be close to the customer, proximity characterizes the desire of distributors to develop and maintain the quality of the relationship with the customer, modernized hypermarkets in order to create more experiences for the customer in the rehabilitated catchment area. , brand names are changed to capitalize on the reputation and brand image of the company, in order to create viral and / or emotional proximity with the customer.

In a context relating to the development of local commerce, summarizes a number of questions that will constitute our research problem. In general, we can ask ourselves whether the perceived proximity of local products has an influence on the purchasing intention of Moroccan consumers, therefore as a catalyst for confidence in large retail outlets? Proximity has several specificities: it is built a posteriori, it is dynamic and subjective (Pecqueur and Zimmerman, 2004); It is not a question of a state but of a relationship of places between the actors (Bellet et al., 1998).

At present, distribution companies are obliged to face, on the one hand, particularly fierce increased competition and, on the other hand, strong economic and socio-cultural pressure from their environment, it therefore seems relevant to join the idea of the place given to customers and their perception of the close relationship. Is the desired positioning of convenience stores applied taking into consideration consumers and stakeholders? Is the perception of proximity the same for the consumer and the distributor? Taking these alternatives into account, our purpose consists in understanding the determinants of the proximity of a point of sale from the point of view of the distributor and the consumer, to propose a new way to explain the commitment and the confidence of the customer towards his store.

I. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 Consumers' perception of proximity to local products

Herault-Fournier et al. (2010) studied the perception of proximity by consumers in the specific context, and more precisely of collective points of sale. They empirically confirm (based on a

quantitative study of 184 consumers) four of the five dimensions highlighted by Bergadaà and DelBucchia (2009). They set aside the functional dimension of proximity, considering it to be identical to the concept of utilitarian value. They offer a measure of these four dimensions of perceived proximity and test the influence of these variables on confidence in the point of sale. They show that identity, relational and process proximities participate in the construction of trust, which is measured on a scale close to that developed by Gurviez and Korchia (2002).

This relationship between trust and proximity, mentioned by Bergadaà and Del Bucchia (2009) has already been addressed in various research works in spatial economics (Dupuy and Torre, 2004 for example for the link between geographic proximity and trust) or in marketing: Morgan and Hunt (1994) thus consider that the sharing of value and communication, which correspond quite well to the similarities of identity and relationships in Bergadaà and Del Bucchia (2009), promote trust. Herault-Fournier et al (2010) are the first to test the link between the above four dimensions of proximity and trust. Our work is a continuation of these two studies, in that it measures the different dimensions of proximity using the scale of Herault-Fournier et al. (2010). For the same reasons, we only consider four of the five dimensions proposed by Bergadaà and Del Bucchia (2009) (The functional dimension is measured through the questionnaire but from the perspective of utility value). In relation to this work, the contribution of our research, specific to the case of mass distribution, is to:

- Seek to build a typology of consumers based on proximity perceived,
- Question the link between perceived proximity and trust.

The proximity between the consumer and the producer results in a reduction of the distance between them, in every sense of the word. Apart from the economic balance sheet in terms of transport for example, the consumer can attribute a value to this rapprochement: both because it allows him to perceive that the offer is closer to his criteria of choice, but also because the existence of a human bond with the producer is, in itself, a reason for satisfaction. We enter the field of "the economy of the link" in the sense of Cova (1995) and Robert-Demontrond and Joyau (2007). Besides the probable link with trust (Herault et al. 2010), this proximity can therefore constitute a factor of satisfaction and loyalty (Dampérat, 2006). The links between proximity, trust, satisfaction and commitment, partially analyzed in the literature, and in other contexts, therefore deserve to be examined in the case of mass distribution.

The literature on the relational chain has demonstrated the influence of trust on brand loyalty (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999; Kumar et al, 2013), as on point of sale loyalty (Mc Intosh and

Lockshin, 1997). ; Harris, 2004). Trust can be defined as a belief in the partner, the brand or the point of sale, making it possible to be able to count on them and to predict their behavior (Rempel et al, 1985). Among the works that analyze identification at a point of sale, only the conceptual model of Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) incorporates trust. This at the point of sale would reassure the consumer about the perceived identity of the point of sale, and increase the attractiveness of the identity of the point of sale. Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) therefore consider that trust is an antecedent of identification at the point of sale.

1.2 The dimensions of perceived proximity to the local product

The reconciliation of work on perceived proximity has led to questioning the links between the different forms of proximity and its identification at the point of sale. However, Bergadaà and Del Bucchia, (2009) identify five dimensions of the concept of proximity to qualify the relationship of consumers to a food distribution brand: identity, functional, relational, access, and process proximities. This work has been applied and deepened in research by Héroult-Fournier et al, (2012). These confirm the distinction between four forms of proximity perceived by a consumer with regard to the food point of sale. Proximity of access corresponds to the convenience for a consumer to easily reach the store in terms of distance, travel time, etc.). Relational proximity is expressed by the physical encounter and the direct relationship between the staff in contact and the consumer, and is similar to the behavioral proximity of Aron et al (1992). Proximity to processes, the importance of which is given to shared knowledge of the internal flow of the store, of the quality and method of product preparation and distribution. And finally, the identity proximity which refers to the relationship that the consumer maintains with the store linked to a sharing of values (the ways of producing, selling and consuming). Values are indeed only one of the components of proximity to the point of sale in the conceptual model of Bhattacharya and Sen (2003).

However, work on perceived proximity to local produce shows that this is likely to strengthen consumer relations with the point of sale. For Dampérat (2006), the proximity perceived by a consumer to a partner could generate increased loyalty, and distinguishes three forms of proximity: a so-called relational refers to the intensity of exchanges between customers and suppliers, another social corresponds to a more or less friendly or pleasant character of customer-contact staff. And functional proximity is concerned with the structural link between customers and suppliers. To better understand the consumer's perceived proximity to a local

product. Understanding the food act of the consumer is however necessary. Indeed, the consumer needs to identify it, to adapt it to his behavior. (Barnes, 1997)

Moreover, the analyzes conducted on the foundations of perceived proximity to a local product, Bergadaà and Del Bucchia, (2009); Herault-Fournier, Merle and Prigent-Simonin (2012) identified eight dimensions of proximity, namely: pleasure, uniqueness, identity, origin, practicality, experience, naturalness and functionality. This concept was thus used to study the relationship between a customer and a brand, a retail chain or a point of sale. Due to the nature of the local product to which the consumer feels close; Camus, (2004) and Ferrandi, (2013) confirm the five new dimensions identified in consumer discourse, which are linked to origin, experience, naturalness, pleasure and uniqueness, as well as the important role played by the authenticity of the product and by nostalgia in the diet. Our research therefore focuses on placing the consumer's point of view in order to better understand the close relationship between the brand that he perceives and the local products he eats. This has therefore led us to retain a priori three forms of perceived proximity: proximity of access, relational and process.

Consumers choose their products based on a set of needs and criteria. Purchases in short circuits are not systematic. They therefore involve a voluntary approach on the part of consumers. While some seek the quality of products and the environment, others are sensitive to the promotion of local know-how and heritage, social ties and solidarity with producers. Everything is a question of representations and of relation to questions of food, agriculture and territory.

To find out about consumer behavior, market studies, general statistics or even expert analyzes can provide information on the various existing profiles. To truly take action, it is then necessary to go through more territorialized approaches taking into account the areas of life, consumption and production as well as more targeted market studies. These approaches will benefit from being supplemented by surveys, focus groups and tastings. Consumer expectations are constantly changing and sometimes contradict economic or societal realities. Their behavior therefore remains quite difficult to pinpoint. However, setting up short local circuits requires a precise vision of the markets. Quantifying and qualifying them makes it possible to target promising projects and to communicate effectively to consumers. There is also an issue in comparing these representations and expectations with those of the producers. For area coordinators, it is about having the necessary information to guide project leaders.

Proximity between producers and consumers. This proximity is twofold: relational and geographic.

The geographical aspect is difficult to specify, it would be very risky to define a kilometer-long perimeter beyond which production would no longer be "close". It depends on the agronomic and climatic conditions of the regions and therefore on the possibilities in terms of agricultural production. Without defining such a criterion strictly, the fact remains that the concept of short circuit production is linked to a concern for the consumption of local, seasonal products, as much as possible. This is an important point because it has consequences for local development and the territorialization of food.

Relational proximity refers to the search for social relationships and exchanges built around food. Gilles Maréchal speaks in this regard of "appetite for relationships" or "staging the relationship around food". Obvious in a farmers market, the interaction is also reinvented by the protagonists of the other short circuits: letter from the producer accompanying each basket delivered, visits and mutual aid on the farm, days in the countryside, communal meals, etc.

As this relational aspect is fundamental, the notion of short circuit developed here will not include traditional outlets, such as large-scale distribution or its versions in mini-markets. It is understood that they are often significant customers for local products, especially in the marketing context of "terroirisation" of food. The concept of Food miles, or food mileage, highly valued in Great Britain in particular, has helped some large food chains to choose a larger supply in a limited radius around their stores or distribution centers. . We must also highlight certain projects such as those launched in Luxembourg by the Cactus group, one of the country's main supermarket chains. The "from region to region" campaign, launched in early October 2009, promotes regional products including organic products, also highlighting producers in communication documents.

However, the relational aspect is often reduced to the simple affixing of the name of the producer on the product. In addition, whether they are food from short or long circuits, products sold in supermarkets are treated from the same marketing and price point of view, more than intrinsic qualities or their mode of production, fundamental arguments for producers and consumers making the choice of short circuits.

1.3 The relationship of perceived proximity and trust

Perceived closeness has been exposed repeatedly as the antecedent of trust. Bergadaà and Del Bucchia (2009) developed five dimensions of the proximity perceived by the consumer to the agri-food sector, which are the result of several previous works based on the perceived proximity between partners and its impact on trust. Likewise, Herault-Fournier et al. (2010, 2012) studied the perception of proximity by consumers in the context of distribution. They empirically confirm four of the five dimensions highlighted by Bergadaà and Del Bucchia (2009). They test the influence of these variables on confidence in the point of sale. They also show that the dimensions of proximity participate in the construction of trust, which is measured using a scale close to that developed by Gurviez and Korchia (2002). This relationship between trust and proximity, already mentioned, has been addressed in various research works in spatial economics (Dupuy and Torre, 2004) or in marketing. Morgan and Hunt (1994) thus consider that the sharing of values and communication, which correspond fairly well to proximity, promote trust. If proximity is indeed considered as one of the main criteria of choice for consumers of a place of purchase (Crioc 2010), one can nevertheless wonder about its impact on trust, considered as a flagship concept in relationship marketing. especially in the agrifood sector (Sirieix, 1999), also confirmed by the work of Morgan and Hunt (1994) who for him the sharing of values is a determinant of trust.

More generally, by demonstrating the influence of different forms of perceived proximity on trust, this study responds to the desire to enrich and explore the reflections and values relating to the relationship between consumers of local products and mass distribution. . Likewise, retail chains are now trying to reposition themselves by highlighting an offer built around a more assertive identity, such as the construction of convenience stores based on a relationship of trust and proximity with consumers. (Moati et al, 2005). This is in particular the point of view defended by Filser (1998) who insists on the importance of integrating a relational approach in the study of the relationships between the consumer of local products and distribution brands and of studying, in particular , the role of trust in understanding this relationship. Using the scale of Herault-Fournier et al. (2010) and in relation to our literature.

As an essential variable and mediator of marketing, trust is a flagship concept in relational marketing considered as an important asset for consumer satisfaction and loyalty (Sirieix and Dubois, 1999), thus a powerful strategic tool for a company (Berry, 1996). According to

Guibert, (1999) and Gurviez and Korchia, (2002), its presence guarantees a stable and lasting relationship between the actors.

Indeed, as part of the work of Merle, Prigent Simonin and Hérault-Fournier, (2012), the relationship between proximity and perceived trust in the indirect circuit has been exposed and confirmed. Their results show that trust is influenced in a positive way, by - in ascending order -: identity, process, and access proximity. Nevertheless, relational proximity participates via its role in the creation of other types of proximity, and ultimately an indirect influence on trust. If the role of relational proximity in food circuits as a creator of confidence, these results therefore suggest that we moderate our comments. Admittedly, direct exchange in a cost circuit with producers and / or distributors promotes the creation of knowledge and shared value. However, for Dufeu and Ferrandi (2011), these funds confirm this observation where perceived proximity has an influence on trust, in the event that it is no longer a mediator between commitment and satisfaction but rather an antecedent. Proximity, sought after by market players, contributes to building their trust, thus determining the link between commitment and possible satisfaction.

However, the influence of proximities on identification seems to be moderated by the nature of the circuit studied. Indeed, various research studies on the behavior of consumers in short circuits (Jarosz, 2000; Merle and Piotrowski, 2012) insist on relational motivations to buy in short circuits, in a search for an alternative to traditional distribution methods. This alternative character is then considered mainly on the relational level, and to a lesser extent on the identity level. It is assumed here that relational motivations are higher for consumers when they buy in short circuits than for consumers who buy only in long circuits. Stokburger-Sauer et al (2012) show that the social benefits associated with buying a brand (socialization, meeting other buyers...) have a significant and high effect on brand identification. Relational proximity here measures some of the social benefits associated with frequenting a short-circuit point of sale, namely social relations with sellers.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The objective of a qualitative study of an exploratory nature is therefore part of a perspective of understanding and exploration (Evrard et al., 2003). Qualitative studies aim to explore and analyze the psychological mechanisms that may be involved in consumer behavior. They apply in particular when seeking to explore a consumer universe (in this case the consumption of local products). The qualitative approach makes it possible to investigate the causes of consumer behavior by exploring the needs, motivations, attitudes and values of the individual.

For Perrienet al. (1984), "the qualitative approach perceives the individual as a complex entity, difficult to quantify, which, through his own experiences, will shape his environment with all the subjectivity inherent in his understanding and interpretation of events". In order to try to understand the purchasing behavior of consumers vis-à-vis local products and to presume the possible consequences on their perceived proximity, a qualitative approach is therefore perfectly justified.

In order to answer our research questions, we have chosen to conduct semi-structured interviews in order to better understand the issues in our field of research. We have chosen to limit our exploratory research to the Souss Massa region. The first reason for this choice lies in the fact that we live and work in this region and that our network of relationships allows us to carry out our qualitative study with greater credibility and ease. In addition, if we refer to a classification made, the Souss Massa region is one of the Moroccan regions with a strong territorial identity, given that the availability of local products can vary greatly from region to region. This region is a real place of incubation on the one hand for several cooperatives of local products in Morocco and on the other hand, for several large distribution stores and market players.

We therefore selected a convenience sample of 31 women and 21 men. This greater female presence is confirmed by some work on the subject (Jekanowski, Williams and Schiek, 2000; Eastwood, Brooker and Bray 2002; Brown 2003; Zepeda and Leviten-Reid, 2004; Wolf, Spittler and Ahern, 2005). With regard to socio-demographic characteristics such as age or level of education, we sought to ensure that a wide range of opinions and a diversity of points of view regarding the subject of the research be expressed, without for all that to have quotas among each criterion, nor to guarantee scientific representativeness of the population studied (Evrard et al., 2009). The size of the sample was determined by the expected principle of semantic / theoretical saturation at the level of qualitative interviews (Royer and Zarłowski, 1999), (Glaser and Strauss, 2006).

In addition, we have opted for individual interviews in a face-to-face situation. This helps to avoid pressure from the group and easily generates the interview (Fern, 1982). It is therefore relevant to collect information from both consumers of local products and players in mass distribution including Groupe Marjane, Aswak Assalam and Carrefour.

Table 1: Characteristics of the interviewees

Person interviewed	Number of interviews	Interviewee information	Location of the survey	Tools
Managers in mass distribution	4	Senior Manager, Middle Manager	Workplace	Semi-structured individual interview
Public bodies	3	Middle manager	Workplace	Semi-structured individual interview
Cooperative leaders	10	Director, Senior Manager, Middle Manager	Workplace	Semi-structured individual interview
Consumers	52	59.61-% Women and 40.38% Men; Average age 40.5 years (20 to 61 years)	On leaving the market or the distribution brand	Maintenance guide

However, we have drawn up a sample of professionals in mass distribution, cooperatives and national organizations who have been contacted after several reminders by email, phone calls or direct contact in the workplace. In fact, have agreed to respond favorably to our request from people from 10 cooperatives, 04 large distribution companies, and 03 public organizations. These face-to-face interviews, lasting between 45 minutes and one hour, were carried out between June 2018 and January 2020 with managers in various relevant functions. Appointments had been set beforehand and the topic was not announced in advance so as not to bias the interview. Therefore, we deliberately did not specify that the subject of our research concerned local products sold in supermarkets. The interviews were recorded on a dictaphone and fully transcribed and then destroyed for ethical reasons. This transcription allowed us to take an interest not only in the substance of the discourse, but also in its form which can also be meaningful (Barbillon & Le Roy, 2012).

After this approach based on a single collection method, namely a series of semi-structured individual interviews. Interviewees used their own terms to talk about the subject studied, avoiding the effects of projection of a frame of reference. The number of interviews was not predetermined. We chose to continue until the data was saturated (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). All interviews were conducted face to face with an average duration of 20 to 30 minutes and

were recorded on audio cassettes and transcribed. During these interviews, people were asked to express themselves, freely, about their act and consumption of local products and several themes were also discussed.

Moreover, during our survey, we used an interview guide, built from the literature review and field visits during the observation phase. The interviews began with an introductory phase whose role is to clarify what the consumers questioned understand by “local products”, by asking them to specify the categories and brands of local products marketed, and to express their opinion on the question of proximity. Subsequently, respondents were mainly asked about their convenience stores when buying local products, on the criteria justifying this choice, the advantages and disadvantages associated with the types of purchase and towards the end the interviewees were questioned on their perception of the proximity of local products sold in supermarkets, with comparison by other places of purchase in their daily lives. We will use the rephrasing to reassure ourselves that we understand each other, or to put an end to a flood of words. The summary, at the end of each part, will allow us to validate and agree on the key ideas exchanged, and ultimately to conclude our interview.

Due to the size of the corpus, textual data analysis of all interviews was performed using a recurring textual analysis tool, the Sphinx Quali software. It is intended to be a tool that mixes analytical approaches and resources. It is a complete set of tools making it possible to analyze very large corpora of various origins (open questions, free or semi-structured interviews, etc.), and to combine automatic syntheses, content analyzes and text searches. . In other words, it is multidimensional textual data analysis software specifically adapted for the analysis of a homogeneous body of text, such as a body of interviews or a set of responses to open questions. This approach is inspired by the ALCESTE methodology (Analysis of Cooccurrent Lexemes in the Simple Statements of a Text) (Reinert, 1990; Benzecri, 2007), which consists in splitting the corpus into homogeneous classes according to the words and / or the concepts qu 'they contain. It allows to reveal the thematic structures of the text. These are revealed by the display of word clouds specific to each class.

This method has two major advantages: it is automated, hence saving time and reducing the subjectivity of the results obtained, and it results in a "typology" of the content mentioned, hence the theoretical possibility of identifying consumer segments. by their specific expectations directly from the results of the analysis. The objective of this method is to synthesize the essential information contained in a text.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS: PERCEIVED PROXIMITY, A FACTOR PROMOTING CONFIDENCE IN LOCAL PRODUCTS

Trust is a flagship concept and an essential mediating variable in relationship marketing, all the more so when dealing with the agrifood sector (Sirieix and Dubois, 1999), by certain authors such as Berry (1996), Guibert, (1999), Gurviez and Korchia, (2002), trust is considered to be the most effective means for a company to create a stable and lasting relationship with its customers. The relationship with perceived proximity has been demonstrated in recent work by Hérault-Fournier, Merle, Prigent-Simonin, (2012) and Prigent-Simonin et Al. (2012) on the perceived value of consumption and plays a role in maintaining and the development of a long-term relationship, they demonstrated that trust is positively influenced by all types of proximity including proximity to identity, process, and access, which allow the brand to satisfy its needs. customers and keep their trust for a good integration at the point of sale.

Both at the level of the literature, it has been confirmed that in interpersonal and inter-organizational relations, sharing the same values resulting from the different signals emitted with other actors makes it possible to create trust. This promotes and facilitates the establishment of a relationship with the actors. The closer the value of the product is to that expected by the consumer, the more the latter feels a strong proximity to it and vice versa. Thus, the perceived proximity to a local product has created a certain confidence among Moroccan consumers. "The local products that I trust most often are mainly products that I feel close to, that is to say natural, fresh products with a good nutritional contribution" (Doctor).

The interviewees very spontaneously evoke the fact of going easily to the point of sale such as supermarkets or the central market, with a better identification of local products within the stores but also of the points of sale themselves "(...) distance, that I can walk there" (Housewife), "it is near my house, (...) it is easy to access" (Housewife). "Next to a place that I frequent often" (Housewife) or "(...) quickly accessible from my place of work" (Middle Manager). It is also the criterion of accessibility to the market or to the distribution point which is important appears relevant in the definition of proximity "I find that it is well located in different places I go there" (Teacher), accessibility of the producer present at the point of sale. Thus, the functional dimension refers to knowledge of the internal functioning of the store. On the other hand, in the discourse of the consumers questioned, identity proximity is not presented much, refers to a set of values that consumers associate with the point of sale (products and / or producers). These values are attached to the desire to be part of the deferent modes of

production and sustainable consumption of the practice. As well as for the proximity of the process, which in the eyes of consumers was mentioned less. There is no real desire to get to know the territory, its products and its farmers better: "(...) it is the cooperatives that do not use too many pesticides, (...) that is to say, it is important to know where it comes from". (Senior manager) "(...) know the origin where they produce, and with what type of agriculture" (Student). Relational proximity nevertheless plays a role in the construction of proximity, in which consumers perceive the relationship they have with the producers at the point of sale and ultimately has an indirect and or direct influence on trust. If some evoke exchanges of friendship with the producers or salesmen in the store, some tackle more personal subjects "(...) we end up knowing the salespeople and those are more sympathetic (...)" (Middle manager), others are more about the sharing of information, richer and more or less frequent on local products, production methods and preparation. "We see immediately that it is the people who manufacture the product, who sell it to you" (Housewife), We thus find the distinction linked to the task to be accomplished between the social and functional flows directly put forward in the circuits as a trusted developer, these results therefore moderate these remarks (Bendapudi and Berry, 1997; Capelli and Sabadie, 2006; Dampérat, 2006).

Certainly, the relationship of the consumer with the producer or the distributor appears important for both. For those interviewed, the perception of a local product seems directly associated with proximity to the other actor, producer or distributor. However, the relationship with producers when visiting points of sale is limited. During the rest of the year, some foods are not produced and others are distributed in retail chains, an additional motivation for some consumers to purchase local products in supermarkets, even if the producer is absent. Moroccans are very attached to their producers or distributors when buying local products. They have frequented them for years (in town or village outlets, local grocery stores, supermarkets, etc.) and they recommend them to their close family or friends. They often use names like "my grocery store at Hassan..." (Housewife), to express the strong bond that binds them to their point of sale. However, the expectations of the Moroccan consumer are constantly evolving and in contradiction with the economic and or societal reality. While one seeks the quality of local products, the other is sensitive to the enhancement of local know-how and heritage, social ties and solidarity with producers. The behavior of the Moroccan consumer therefore remains quite difficult to define. The semi-structured interviews conducted with these consumers on the market for the sale of local products, and on the basis of an analysis of the literature, therefore confirms only the three dimensions of proximity: functional proximity,

where the Moroccan consumer seeks performance in relation to the proposed offer: finding easy access to products, having a wide choice of local products, etc.; the relational proximity to the physical encounter, direct relations between the staff in contact and the consumer and towards the end the proximity of access (convenience of access).

IV. CONCLUSION: DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

This article deals with perceived proximity and its relation to trust in the retail sector. It constitutes a theoretical and practical contribution on two aspects: First, it presents an analysis of the conceptual framework developed for the concept of proximity in the context of short circuits, and more specifically for mass distribution, which today constitutes a field of study particularly relevant when looking at producer / consumer relations. This research allows us to define the four dimensions of perceived proximity developed by Del Bucchia and Bergadaà (2009). Finally, it allows us to study the influence of perceived proximity on trust. By questioning a representative sample of consumers of local products, the measure proposed in this article makes it possible to assess the determinants of proximity on which the point of sale is well positioned and on which it appears weaker. Communication tools can then be re-established in order to develop dimensions that are weakly perceived by consumers, to allow distribution players to go further in their marketing strategy.

From a managerial point of view, the instrument for measuring the dimensions of proximity proposed is useful for enabling professionals to engage in the marketing of local products in short circuits and to carry out a diagnosis of proximity such as 'they are perceived by consumers. From a theoretical point of view, several limits can be underlined, even if the notion of proximity has been approached on several occasions in the literature including its relation with trust, one can question its relation with its presence in relation to it. to other concepts such as attachment or commitment usually discussed. It would therefore be interesting, in future work, to better establish the link between these concepts, thus tested them on the exploratory level via a quantitative study. In addition, our research has paid little attention to the articulation of the different forms of perceived proximity and its relationship with trust in local products between them and with Moroccan consumer profiles on the basis of the perceived proximities treated. It therefore appears relevant to continue the analyzes to bring out a typology of consumers on the basis of perceived proximity.

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