

Territorial relationship marketing: a lever of territorial attractiveness

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Abstract:

The attractiveness of the territory is a strategic objective of public policies. This objective is explained by the contribution of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) to economic growth and even to the sustainable development of the host country. Nevertheless, the frenzy of competition between territories on a global scale combined with a galloping globalization and the fragmentation of value chains on an international scale highlights the need to go beyond the promotion of location factors Multinational Firms (MNCs) providers of FDI. Inexorably, the factors of territorialization become significant in a context punctuated by the growing nomadism of foreign companies.

It is in this context that this work focuses on the need to adopt a relational approach to promote the economic attractiveness of the territory. This approach, which involves the implementation of a relationship marketing strategy, has demonstrated its effectiveness in maintaining lasting and fruitful relationships with customers in both B to B and B to C. This effectiveness relational marketing involves the mobilization of its determining variables, which are fully addressed by several theories such as the theory of commitment / trust and relational contracts.

Our research work seeks to broaden the scope of relationship marketing in order to question its ability to establish lasting and fruitful relationships with FDI. Therefore, the establishment of such relationships is important for the host territory insofar as it is no longer the attractiveness of FMNs carrying FDI that is dominant. We must also strive to retain the latter, increase the capital intensity of subsidiaries and even strengthen their local roots. This said anchoring is able to contribute to the territorial development of the host country.

Keywords: Relationship marketing, attractiveness of the territory, direct investment abroad (FDI), trust, commitment.

Classification JEL : F21, F23, M31

Article type: Theoretical article

Résumé :

L'attractivité du territoire est un objectif stratégique des politiques publiques. Cet objectif est expliqué par la contribution des Investissements Directs à l'Étranger (IDE) à la croissance économique et même au développement durable du pays d'accueil. Néanmoins, la frénésie de la concurrence entre les territoires à l'échelle mondiale combinée à une globalisation galopante et à la fragmentation des chaînes de valeur à l'échelle internationale met en exergue la nécessité d'aller au-delà de la promotion des facteurs de localisation des Firmes Multinationales (FMN) pourvoyeuses des IDE. Inexorablement, les facteurs de territorialisation deviennent prégnants dans un contexte scandé par le nomadisme croissant des entreprises étrangères. C'est dans ce contexte que le présent travail se focalise sur la nécessité d'adopter une approche relationnelle pour favoriser l'attractivité économique du territoire. Cette approche, qui passe par la mise en place d'une stratégie de marketing relationnel, a démontré son efficacité quant à l'entretien de relations durables et fructueuses avec les clients tant dans le B to B que dans le B to C. Cette efficacité du marketing relationnel passe par la mobilisation de ses variables déterminantes amplement abordées par plusieurs théories à l'instar de la théorie de l'engagement/ confiance et celle des contrats relationnels. Notre travail de recherche cherche à élargir le champ d'application du marketing relationnel pour ainsi interroger sa capacité, à établir des relations durables et fructueuses avec les IDE. *Ipsa facto*, l'établissement de telles relations est important pour le territoire d'accueil dans la mesure où ce n'est plus l'attractivité des FMN porteuses d'IDE qui est dominante. Il faut aussi tendre vers la rétention de ces dernières, l'augmentation de l'intensité capitalistique des filiales et même le renforcement de leur ancrage territorial. Cedit ancrage est à même de contribuer au développement territorial du pays d'accueil.

Mots clés : Marketing relationnel, attractivité du territoire, investissement direct à l'étranger (IDE), confiance, engagement

Classification JEL: F21, F23, M31

Type de l'article : Article théorique

1. Introduction

The UNCTAD (The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) report on investment in the world, World Investment Report 2019, highlights the increase in FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) flows attracted by Morocco. According to this report, the improvement in the attractiveness of our country enabled it to take 4th position in terms of FDI received with 3.6 billion dollars in 2018, an increase of 35.5% compared to 2017. This performance of the Moroccan economy is very interesting, if we take into account the drop in FDI flows of 13% at the international level to record 1300 billion dollars in 2018. More generally, in ten years, the stock of FDI has practically doubled to reach DH 614 billion. The double economic and health crisis of 2020 did not call into question the performance of the Kingdom in terms of attractiveness to the extent that inward FDI remained almost unchanged compared to 2019 even if the latter's flows fell by 35 % in 2020 globally, based on the findings of the 2021 UNCTAD report. The Kingdom's stated desire to attract more FDI is justified by the major role that investments play in both economic and social development. However, in the current context, the factors of attractiveness of the territory, whether sub-national, regional or international, are no longer sufficient. Indeed, in an environment marked by the distortion between the local and the global, by rampant digitization, by unbridled globalization, by the hardening of competition between territories, Morocco has an interest in no longer being satisfied with the factors that favor localization of FDI but also to strengthen the factors of territorialization of firms characterized by their growing nomadism. Otherwise, we consider that the policy of attracting the territory must seek to reconcile the duo attractiveness and loyalty of foreign companies. To do this, the use of marketing strategies and approaches could be of vital help. Indeed, in a context marked by strong competition between companies and by the frenzy of technological development, the shift from the transactional paradigm to a paradigm whose focal point is the sustainability of the relationship with customers is crucial for some companies. Thus, in recent years, we have been witnessing the rise of relationship marketing, the purpose of which is not only to attract customers but rather to retain them. Like businesses, we believe that Morocco should prioritize relationship marketing to attract foreign investors to settle in our territory while promoting sustainable attractiveness. Such attractiveness is able to promote the territorial anchoring of FDI and the increase in their capital intensity while preparing the ground for territorial development.

The objective of this paper is to highlight and analyze the possible interactions between relationship marketing and the attractiveness of the territory. That said, we question the ability of the territory to strengthen its attractiveness through relationship marketing. Our research work falls within an interpretive paradigm with an exploratory aim. To elucidate this relationship we will first highlight the theoretical and conceptual framework of relationship marketing (I). We are secondly interested in the attractiveness of the territory (II) before questioning the ability of relationship marketing to achieve this objective by highlighting the conceptual model that we have chosen to conduct the research in question (III).

2. Relational Marketing: Theoretical And Conceptual Framework

The considerable rise in relationship marketing is justified by several developments that mark the business environment both nationally and globally. Faced with increasingly versatile customers, ever-evolving technology, a complex and hostile environment and increasingly stiff competition, companies recognize the importance of switching from transactional marketing to another more relational. A shift amply justified by the marketing literature (1.1.). Ipso facto, and as its name suggests, relationship marketing favors the maintenance of fruitful, lasting, personalized and profitable relationships with customers while being part of a “win-win” logic in order to subsequently achieve a growing loyalty on their part (1.2.). Inexorably,

several authors and theories provide us with relevant analyzes reflecting the importance of relationship marketing (1.3.).

2.1. Relationship Marketing's Emergence

The growing globalization of economies, the considerable rise of new technologies, the development of a society of mass consumption and even of overconsumption or "smart consumption", and the rise of emerging countries are all factors that have game-changer for business. Indeed, to escape the process of natural selection, triggered by an increasingly complex, hostile and unstable environment, companies are putting customers at the center of all concerns. This is how marketing that was previously product-oriented (Marketing 1.0) shifted its center of gravity to focus more on customers (Marketing 2.0) (Kotler, 2017; Jallat and Lindon, 2016).

Indeed, several companies adopt "customer approach" strategies, strategies capable of taking into account the different variables that concern the customer at the level of strategic thinking (Lefébure and Venturi, 2005). This trend is partly explained by the increase in prospecting costs in a context where markets are becoming more and more saturated (Dubois, 2015). The considerable development of new technologies and the exacerbation of competition are also believed to be the origin of the transition from transactional marketing to one that is more relational (Sonkova and Grabowska, 2015).

All the salient features of the business environment justify the loss of momentum in transactional marketing, which is also considered mass marketing. The latter is more in line with a short-term perspective where the company seeks to win new customers to increase its market share. In the same vein, transactional marketing in the sense of Grènroos (1995) is focused on unique exchanges and transactions. However, in a context marked by growing competition both nationally and internationally and by the demands and growing discernment of customers, companies, in search of sustainability, has an interest in establishing relationships privileged with their clients (Ivens and Ulrike, 2003).

From the beginning of the 90s, Kotler put forward a new paradigm in marketing by referring to relationship marketing. He speaks of a reconceptualization of marketing (Kotler, 1992; 1994; 1996) marked by the shift from a mass paradigm to a personalized paradigm.

Hence, transactional marketing and relationship marketing should be thought of as two ends of the same continuum. In addition, despite the strong differences between these two approaches, the orientation and techniques of relationship marketing are complementary to those of transactional marketing (Baynast et al., 2017). It's about turning every transaction into a relationship. Indeed, selling is only the first step in a process marked by its complexity (Jallat and Lindon, 2016).

2.2. Relationship Marketing: finalized Marketing

For Léonard Berry, specialist in services marketing, relationship marketing is an old new concept (Berry, 1995). Indeed, an old-fashioned Middle Eastern trader's proverb states that it is better as a trader to have a friend in every town (Gronroos, 1994), shows the ancient character of the relational approach.

The publication of several seminal articles such as those by Dwyer et al. (1987), Berry (1983) or a little later by Morgan and Hunt (1994), marks the "academic" birth of relationship marketing. The latter "aims to establish, develop and maintain successful relational exchanges, more precisely it sets itself the objective of acquiring and retaining customers" (Berry, 1983). Otherwise, the relational paradigm implies an individualized production which is associated with a qualified experiential consumption, an instantaneous and multi-channel distribution, and a personalized communication. In a broader sense, Morgan and Hunt (1994) consider that relationship marketing could be practiced vis-à-vis several stakeholders. To do this, they approach relationship marketing as "the set of marketing activities geared towards

establishing, developing and maintaining successful trading relationships in lateral, internal, purchasing and supply partnerships." Jallat and Lindon (2016) also consider that relationship strategies can be generalized to all stakeholders in an organization. This more global approach is also defended by Gummesson (2017) who introduced the concept of total marketing relationship. In this sense, relationship marketing is understood as the interaction that exists between networks of relationships.

All of the above-mentioned relationship marketing approaches highlight a focal point of the latter, namely the maintenance of lasting relationships with customers. The aim of customer relationship management is "to enrich the interaction established between the company and the consumer or user" (Jallat and al. 2014). In other words, relationship marketing is finalized. It seeks to maintain lasting and profitable relationships with the client (Kotler and Dubois 2003; Coviello and al., 2002). From this perspective, maintaining longer-term relationships with customers seeks to focus on customer capital and its life time value (margin expectation over the probable total life of the consumer) instead of being satisfied with an analysis in terms of market share (Jallat and Lindon, 2016). The relational perspective of the company prioritizes retention and loyalty over "recruiting" new customers. In addition, beyond the sustainability of the relationship, relationship marketing aims to develop quality relationships. This relational quality (Palmatier et al., 2006) is understood as "the global assessment of the strength of the relationship" which has a multidimensional character insofar as it is influenced by trust, satisfaction and commitment (Julienne et al. Llosa, 2021).

2.3. The Relationship Marketing's Theoretical Foundations

Several theoretical references highlight the role and importance of relationship marketing. We will focus on what follows on two salient theories that allow us to account for said marketing.

2.3.1. The Theory of Engagement - Trust: Morgan and Hunt (1994)

Shelby D. Hunt published an article in 1994 entitled "*On Rethinking Marketing: Our Discipline, Our Practice, Our Methods*". The latter allows the author to highlight the work and research necessary to develop marketing. Among the three fundamental questions raised by S. Hunt, we find one concerning the reasons that push marketers to focus on "relationship dysfunctions" in the context of alliance and partnership strategies. Consequently, S. Hunt recommends the development of a relational marketing theory, the point of which is the duo commitment / trust which are two determining variables of the success of cooperation strategies between companies, adding the ethical approach (Jolibert, 2016).

The avenues of research identified by Hunt will be exploited by the author himself. Indeed, Hunt publishes, in collaboration with Morgan an article called "The Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing" (Morgan and Hunt, 1994) which aims to develop a real theory of "relationship marketing" whose axes of reference are commitment and trust (Jolibert, 2016). These decisive variables promote successful cooperation between partners. This finding is the result of testing a model using structural equations. For Morgan and Hunt, relationship marketing theory, based on commitment and trust, aims to fill the theoretical void in the explanation of inter-firm cooperation.

2.3.2. The Social Contract Theory: Ian Macneil

Exchange, the basis of any transaction, has been the subject of several developments in several research works related to different disciplines (Elommal and Manita, 2016). From a marketing perspective, the exchange used to be part of a transactional paradigm. The latter is marked by two major characteristics: First, its inclusion in a short time horizon; Second, the exclusion of any social link between the actors (Bagozzi, 1975, Nillès and al. 2015).

Nevertheless, the exacerbation of competition both nationally and internationally, the search for a sustainable and defensible competitive advantage, the considerable development of new technologies, the development of a production company and of mass consumption,... are all factors, among others, that have pushed companies and marketers to rethink the relationship with customers. This, under the influence of the aforementioned factors, is increasingly lasting. Consequently, we have seen the shift from a transactional paradigm to a more relational one: A paradigm that allows for a better understanding of the exchange (Ambroise and al., 2013). This evolution towards a relational approach is founded par excellence on the contributions of the theory of the relational contract (Macaulay, 1963; Macneil, 1974, 1978). The earliest development of relational contract theory dates back to 1967 at the annual conference of the Association of American Law Professors. Two years later, these developments will be published (Macneil, 1969). On the other hand, it was the publication of an article entitled "*The many futures of contract*" (Macneil, 1974) that marked the birth of this theory. With the publication of the book "*The new social contract*" (Macneil, 1980), research in management sciences will begin to focus on Macneil's work.

Ian R. Macneil (1980, 2000), American jurist and author of reference of this theory, highlighted the relational dimension characterizing an exchange by proposing transactional and relational norms to govern the relations between the actors (Elommal and Manita, 2016). In the same vein, Macneil considers that the relations between actors are governed by contracts but also by informal elements called "norms of exchange" (Dwyer et al., 1987, Ivens and Pardo, 2004).

In a global sense, norms are considered to be "*expectations of behaviors that are at least shared by a group of decision-makers*" (Gibbs 1981; Ivens, 2004; Blois and Ivens, 2006; Ivens and Pardo 2004). These standards make it possible to better understand relationships (Ivens and Pardo, 2004, Ambroise, 2013) and their respect is a necessary condition for establishing fruitful exchanges between partners (Perrien, Paulin; 1998, Durif and al., 2008).

Macneil distinguishes between transactional norms and relational norms. Among other things, we advance the fulfillment of promises (performance of consent), reparation, trust and expectations (cohesive standards), role integrity, contractual solidarity (maintenance of the relationship),...

In addition, the standards advanced by relational contract theory make it possible to justify relational satisfaction when approached as expectations (Prim-Allaz 2000; Pardo, 2004). They can also explain and justify the continuity of the relationship or its breakdown (Elommal and Manita, 2016).

In summary, the theory of commitment-trust as well as the theory of the social contract highlights the need to place exchanges with customers over a long time horizon. Ipso facto, relationship marketing is justified because it allows you to maintain lasting relationships with customers. Relationships are based on certain pillars such as commitment and trust. By analogy, the territory has every interest in establishing long-term relationships with foreign investors who set up there (considered here as its clients). In other words, it is about analyzing the impact of relationship marketing on the attractiveness of the territory to the extent that the latter aims first and foremost to attract FDI and secondly to retain them.

3. Attractiveness: A Strategic Objective for the Territory

The sense of territory has not stopped evolving, gaining in intensity and depth. Previously, reduced to space, to a simple receptacle for the factors of production, the territory was approached by economists and managers as a complex, constantly evolving system, sheltering tangible and intangible resources. It is also a finalized system aspiring to territorial development (3.1.). Such a goal achieved, *ceteris paribus* and in part, thanks to the attractiveness of the territory which has for years been one of the strategic and priority

objectives of the territories. All dimensions combined, attractiveness enables a virtuous circle to be triggered for the host territory (3.2.). Consequently, the factors promoting attractiveness are diverse and varied and relate to different disciplines (3.3.).

3.1. The Territory: A Socio-economic System

The concept "territory" has its Latin origin in the expression "territorius". It refers to a space conquered by the Roman army and under military control (Pesqueux, 2014). Management sciences and management attached little importance to the territory (Paradas and al., 2021). This concept of "territory" is also almost absent from classical or orthodox economic analysis. Only space is highlighted but it is thin because it is simply a source of transport costs, point space, "black box" (Zimmermann, 2008). The territory is also considered to be "homogeneous" as stipulated by the neoclassical school (Hurdebourcq, 2016). Nevertheless, over the years, the territory has gradually emerged as an object of research in management sciences (Fourcarde, 2021). Inexorably, according to the abundant literature on the subject, it is essential to draw up the salient differences between "territory" and "space". If space is reduced to a spatial entity characterized by its physical resources (Courlet, 2008), the territory, for its part, is considered as a social system characterized by its relational resources (Courlet, 2008). A priori, this distinction prompts us to consider the territory as a geographical space endowed not only with the factors of production that distinguish it, both at the subnational and international scale, but also with the actors who build it and the relationships that result from it. . In the same vein, the territory is understood as the "melting pot of complex interactions" developing between the different territorial actors and not just a simple support or passive receptacle housing economic activity (Paradas et al., 2021).

Sauvin gives us his conception of the territory by borrowing a systemic dimension. Indeed, the author considers the territory as "a system, that is to say a set of elements (actors / authors) in dynamic interaction organized in order to achieve a development objective" (Léon and Sauvin, 2010; Sauvin, 2015). This system is characterized by its complexity (Giraut, 2008) due to the large number of its actors, the profusion of interactions between them and the diversity of the objectives pursued (Hurdebourcq, 2016). It is also characterized by its multidimensionality (economic, social, cultural, environmental, etc.).

3.2. The Attractiveness of the Territory in Question

The globalization of the economy and technology has fostered competition between territories by affirming the differences in terms of endowments in factors of production and in terms of the market. This competition can be compared to a zero-sum game for territories and a positive-sum game for companies which manage to take advantage of the attractiveness policies put forward by nations to attract foreign investors (Zimmermann, 2005). Attractiveness is considered to be a major strategic axis for the territories (Soldo, 2018).

The beginning of the 1980s was marked by the emergence of public policies for the attractiveness of the territory, which sought to attract foreign investors and, by spillover effect, to improve the economic, financial and technological performance of the host country (Léon and Sauvin, 2010). The meaning of the company and more particularly of the FMN (multinational firm) is revisited in the sense that it is no longer synonymous with harm and exploitation of the resources of the host country (Thuderoz, 2005) but rather, it acquires the status of a rare commodity to be protected (Léon and Sauvin, 2010).

A priori, the attractiveness of the territory is the capacity and aptitude of the latter to attract and retain businesses and populations (Houllier-Guibert 2019). Used more and more since the 1980s (Cusin and Damon, 2010) and more popular in the 2010s, the concept of "attractiveness" gained momentum with the work of Fabrice Hatem. Attractiveness, as an

objective of public policies (Davezies, 2008), has become an important issue for several territories in a context of high mobility on an international scale (Houllier-Guibert, 2019). For Hatem, the attractiveness of the territory is its ability to attract and retain both businesses and populations. This capacity depends on the territorial offer intended for actors to convince them to set up in one territory rather than another (Hatem, 2004). This understanding of the attractiveness of the territory is similar to that advanced by Colletis and Pecqueur (2018). These authors recognize the importance of two components of attractiveness, namely attracting and retaining mobile factors in a context where globalization reinforces uncertainty and instability (Colletis and Pecqueur, 2018).

All the conceptions of the attractiveness of the territory distinguish two forms: an economic attractiveness and the other residential and tourist. Indeed, at the beginning of the emergence of attractiveness, the focal point of the latter was the economic aspect. Gradually, the extension of the field of attractiveness allowed it to embrace other urban, cultural and social aspects (Houllier-Guibert, 2019). That said, attractiveness is considered, nowadays, to be multi-target and multidimensional (Gérardin and Poirot, 2010). Residential or even tourist attractiveness refers to all potential users of a territory (Thiard, 2005) like tourists, foreign residents, students, etc.

Territorial economic attractiveness is conceived as the ability to capture and retain foreign economic activities. This attractiveness is in favor of territorial development (Serval, 2019). Of course, this form of attractiveness is essential for the territory (Sauvin, 2015) because of the potential effects of FDI on the economy of the host country. Nevertheless, even "face-to-face" or residential attractiveness creates wealth (tax revenue, consumption by tourists and residents, etc.) for the host territory (Davezies, 2008). This is how the residential variant of attractiveness becomes as decisive as the economic variant (Alexandre and al., 2010). It should be noted that we will focus in this paper on economic attractiveness.

States consider that economic attractiveness is one of the strategic objectives to be achieved because of the importance given to FDI both economically and socially. Broadly understood, the investment is an immediate expense or even a financial commitment to generate future revenue or save costs. At the macroeconomic level, national accounts quantify the investment of the various institutional sectors with the aggregate "gross fixed capital formation" (GFCF). A country's investment is measured by the investment rate.

Investment takes several forms. We will retain the approach of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which distinguishes between two main categories of investment: indirect and direct investments.

Indirect investments or portfolio investments are followers of a purely financial logic insofar as they relate to purchases of shares in companies or financial assets. Otherwise, portfolio investment means a purchase of bonds or a purchase of shares of part of the share capital of a company which, according to the definition of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), "does not generally aim to acquire a lasting interest in a company or to have effective decision-making power in the management of the company". This mode of investment generally follows investment motives.

It should be noted that the threshold to distinguish it from direct investment is conventional. For the IMF, the adopted threshold is an equity investment of less than 10% of the share capital of a company.

Direct investments relate to buyouts of existing companies or to the creation of new entities. They are part of an economic logic (Andreff, 2003). In other words, an FDI is the operation by which an investor based in one country (country of origin) acquires an asset in another country (host country). The objective of the investor is to significantly influence management. FDI covers three forms of operations:

- equity participation (by merger-acquisition or creation of new entities);

- on-site reinvestment of the profits of a subsidiary established abroad;
- short or long term loans made between the parent company and its subsidiary.

FDI also contributes to the creation of wealth on an international scale. Indeed, in a context of financial globalization, these forms of investment would promote the creation of jobs and the reduction of economic, financial, social, technological and spatial inequalities between countries. They are also in favor of a global economic catch-up. FDI creates a virtuous circle in favor of the attractiveness of territories: they energize the territories and make them more attractive (Leurion et al. 2017).

For all these reasons and many others, states are implementing public policies to improve the quality of attraction of their territory. However, the rise of emerging countries, the high mobility of capital, the exacerbation of competition on an international scale make these policies ineffective. In fact, attracting international investors is no longer enough today, but it is necessary to retain them in the host country and turn them into a factor of attraction for other foreign investors.

3.3. Several Factors Justify the Economic Attractiveness of the Territory

The exacerbation of competition on an international scale highlights the attractiveness of the territory as a strategic issue (Luisi, 2017). To attract the FTN (transnational firm), provider of FDI, the territories are obliged to highlight their competitive advantage which distinguishes them from other territories by mobilizing a policy of attractiveness constructed (Quére, 2005), in a context marked by globalization which, paradoxically, gives back importance to the local territory able to promote the competitiveness of firms thanks to specific assets and developed skills (Dunning, 2009).

Thereby, the choice of location is considered a strategic and decisive decision for FMNs carrying FDI. The economic literature has amply addressed the question of the location of companies and the factors justifying these choices. Weber (1909), by introducing his localization model, is the first author who tried to justify the choice of an optimal localization for a firm (Zimmermann, 2008).

Classical international trade theory considers that the antecedents of firm location choices have an exogenous character such as natural resources, factors of production and the distribution of technologies in space (Bazillier and al. 2014). By criticizing the hypotheses of this theory, in particular the hypothesis of perfect competition, Krugman, Nobel Prize winner in economics in 2008 and founder of the New Geographic Economy, gives us an approach different from that of the classics. The new geographic economy emerged in the early 1990s to account for the dynamic centripetal processes of agglomeration effects. For this school of thought, the determinants of the location of companies can be local demand or the size of the market, the costs of production factors, the number of local and foreign firms established, the public policies undertaken in favor of investors (Le Gall, 2020).

Michalet (1999) distinguishes between "fundamental" factors and "necessary" factors for attractiveness. The first type refers to essential determinants for an investor, namely economic and political stability, market size, infrastructural and institutional capital, fiscal measures and human capital. The measures described as "necessary" are intended to increase attractiveness, such as existing supply systems, measures in favor of research and development, the socio-cultural environment, free trade agreements, etc. By mobilizing the contributions of the local school, a recent study highlights the role played by the different forms of proximity (geographic, organizational, institutional and relational) in the attractiveness of the territory (Azouaoui and Lahlou, 2021).

The aforementioned business location factors represent only a few factors put forward by the authors to explain the choice of setting up businesses internationally. However, it is clear that the exacerbation of competition between the territories in a context of increasing capital

mobility, pushes us to think about other factors (possibly relationship marketing) other than the classic ones which not only make it possible to promote the location of foreign companies but also lead to their territorialization. This is how the present work aims to focus on the need to adopt a relational approach, through the establishment of relational marketing at the scale of the territory, to promote its economic attractiveness.

4. Relational Territorial Marketing A Catalyst Of Economic Attractiveness

To study the interactions between relationship marketing and the attractiveness of the territory, we will conduct a qualitative study that targets subsidiaries of multinationals established in Morocco. It is clear that all research work has as its starting point the choice of an epistemological posture. A posture that is not neutral in terms of methodological implications. We will first present our epistemological and methodological choices (4.1.) To subsequently develop the research model retained (4.2.).

4.1. Epistemological Positioning and Methodological Choices

The completion of any research work is conditioned by the choice of an epistemological positioning. Indeed, epistemology is closely linked to scientific work (Martinet, 1990; Dumez 2013). The latter is approached as being "the study of the constitution of valid knowledge, the term constitution covering both the conditions of accession and the conditions properly constitutive" (Piaget, 1967).

In management science, the epistemological foundations are established by Jirin (1990), Hatchuel et al. (2008) or Avenier and Schmitt (2007) (Paturel, 2015). Positivism, constructivism and interpretivism represent the main epistemological paradigms in management science (Girod-Seville and Perret, 1999; Giordano, 2003; Weber, 2004; Avenier and Thomas, 2012).

In the context of this research work, the choice of epistemological positioning is essential (Piaget, 1967). Moreover, the researcher is required to opt for an epistemological paradigm, even before starting his research, and to respect it throughout its realization (Dumez, 2013). That said, our research fits more into the interpretive paradigm. Indeed, we adhere to the relativistic hypothesis: we do not conceive of reality as immutable but rather it is subjective and multiple. We recognize our subjectivity and that of the actors subject to the study in question (principle of double subjectivity which characterizes the interpretivist approach). We are part of the knowledge production process and the interpretation process. In addition, our objective is moving away from the description of the facts and from reality considered objective. We do not seek to construct reality but rather to understand it.

This epistemological choice has repercussions on the research methodology to be borrowed. These choices are decisive for the validity of the results of the research in question (Habib and De Corbière, 2018). That said, we are part of an exploratory process insofar as we seek to understand the positive relationship between relationship marketing and territorial attractiveness. This relationship has not been studied before by other researchers. To further clarify our choice, the exploration in question is considered a hybrid.

Then another choice arises. This involves opting for either a quantitative, qualitative or even a mixed method. In fact, a distinction is traditionally made between the qualitative method and the quantitative method (Grawitz, 2000). The choice of the appropriate method is conditioned by the research objective (Dumez, 2016; Gaudet and Robert, 2018).

At the end of this modest reflection on research methodologies, we consider that the anchoring of our research work to an interpretive paradigm allows us to opt for qualitative study.

4.2. Research model

The objective of relationship marketing is to maintain fruitful and lasting relationships with customers in order to be able to retain them in a context marked by the frenzy of technology, an exacerbation of competition and the reversal of the balance of power in favor of clients. By extension, the strong competition between the territories on an international scale combined with a growing nomadism of companies and the fragmentation of the value chain of MNCs on a global scale pushes us to highlight the need for relational marketing with respect to FDI. The latter enables the host territory to establish lasting, fruitful and individualized relationships with the subsidiaries of established FMNs. If the objective of marketing is to retain the most profitable customers for the company, this marketing could allow the territory to retain foreign investors, increase their capital intensity and even participate in the attractiveness of the territory. To be able to do this, the players in the territory, responsible for this mission of attractiveness, could exploit the determining variables of relationship marketing.

An in-depth study of the marketing literature allows us to identify the fundamental variables of relationship marketing. The latter is based on four fundamental pillars (Gordon, 1998 in [Ambroise et al., 2009], Morgan and Hunt, 1994, Dwyer and Schurr, 1987; Levitt, 1980): trust, commitment, communication and satisfaction. These elements are qualified by Morgan and Hunt (1994) as “key mediating variables”.

• Satisfaction

Etymologically, the word satisfaction comes from the Latin “satis”, which means “enough”, and “facere”, “to do”. The term “satisfaction” would therefore mean “doing enough”. The importance of satisfaction is demonstrated by Kotler for whom marketing is the science and art of attracting and retaining customers while creating satisfaction. In the foreword to the marketing management book and from the 1992 edition (Kotler and Dubois, 1992), the authors emphasize two important themes, namely satisfaction and lasting relationships (Jolibert, 2016). Kotler adds that “companies that know how to satisfy their customers will win.”

Satisfaction, for Berry, is the pillar of relationship marketing with the objective of striving for customer loyalty (loyalty). Indeed, satisfaction is approached as being the fact of fulfilling and responding to customer expectations (Crosby et al. 1990). The analysis of satisfaction highlights two types of satisfaction, one cognitive and the other emotional (Dabholkar and Overby, 2005).

Like enterprises, territories seek to develop the cognitive and emotional satisfaction of foreign investors. This satisfaction can strengthen the longevity of the investment and even strengthen its intensity. Based on all these references and many others, we will try to exploit the satisfaction’s variable in the field of investment. Indeed, our research aims to demonstrate whether also, for foreign investors established in the national territory, their satisfaction is in favor of the longevity of the investor / implantation territory relationship. In other words, and as we have developed at the level of the literature review, we will seek to highlight the relationship between the satisfaction of the subsidiaries of MNCs established in Morocco and the attractiveness of the territory.

P1: The satisfaction of established foreign investors is in favor of the attractiveness of the territory.

• Trust

Trust is another essential pillar for building lasting business relationships (Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml, 1991). It is a fundamental factor for the

development of lasting and good quality relationships (Walter et al., 2003). For Berry (1996), trust is "*perhaps the most powerful relationship marketing tool a business can have*" (Palmatier et al., 2007, p. 84).

Trust is built over time and is long-term: it is the fruit of a long period of relationships, transactions or the frequency of meetings between the two partners (Palmer, 1997). Establishing relationships of trust is a strategic variable that could promote the competitiveness of companies in a context of openness, globalization of economies and diversification of competitor offers (Morgan and Hunt, 1994).

For Levi (1998), "*Trust is not one and not only one source: it takes many forms and has different causes*". The crucial role of the trust variable in the establishment of trade relations prompted Usunier (2000) to propose a typology of trust (Hetzel, 2004). Two major meanings, different but complementary, are to be distinguished: a process-based and dynamic approach to trust which develops and is built over time "to trust" or trust in English. A second more static approach (the state of trust: "to be in confidence" confidence in English).

Our research endeavors to study the contribution of this relationship marketing variable, which is trust, to the maintenance of long-term relationships with foreign investors. Thus, the following proposition emerges:

P2: Investor confidence promotes the attractiveness of the territory.

•Commitment

Like the trust variable, engagement is one of the most important variables for understanding business relationships and justifying their longevity and sustainability (Roberts-Lombard, 2012). This is an implicit or explicit agreement for the maintenance of an exchange relationship between partners. Commitment constitutes "*a kind of relational ideal between partners*" (Dwyer et al. 1987). Moreover, these authors consider that commitment is the most advanced stage of relational bonds insofar as it represents it as an implicit or explicit guarantee of the continuity of the relationship over time.

It is also the belief that a long-term business relationship is necessary to justify the investments of both partners to maintain it (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). In addition, the authors of commitment - trust theory consider commitment to be the main variable that can lay the foundation for a successful relationship. For Gustaffsson et al. 2006, there is a distinction to be made between calculated commitment (the relationship is essential and important for the customer because of the importance of the costs of breaking relationships with the supplier) and emotional commitment (the desire to be in relation).

In addition, two other dimensions of engagement are interesting. These are behavioral engagement and attitudinal engagement (Mowday et al., 1979). The first refers to actions carried out in favor of the relationship while the second focuses on the reasons for this behavior (Bahar et al. 2021). It remains to be clarified that these forms of engagement are complementary (Julienne, 2013; Bahar et al. 2021)

Our research work exploits the contributions of the commitment to maintaining the company / client relationship in an attempt to verify them for foreign investors considered to be "clients" for the territory of the establishment. Thus, the following proposition must be validated:

P3: Commitment to the territory is a determinant of the attractiveness of the territory.

• Communication

Communication is an essential key variable in the implementation of relationship marketing (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). It helps build trust in a business relationship (Kakeeto-Aelen et al.; 2011). We find this approach in Hunt and other authors who consider that

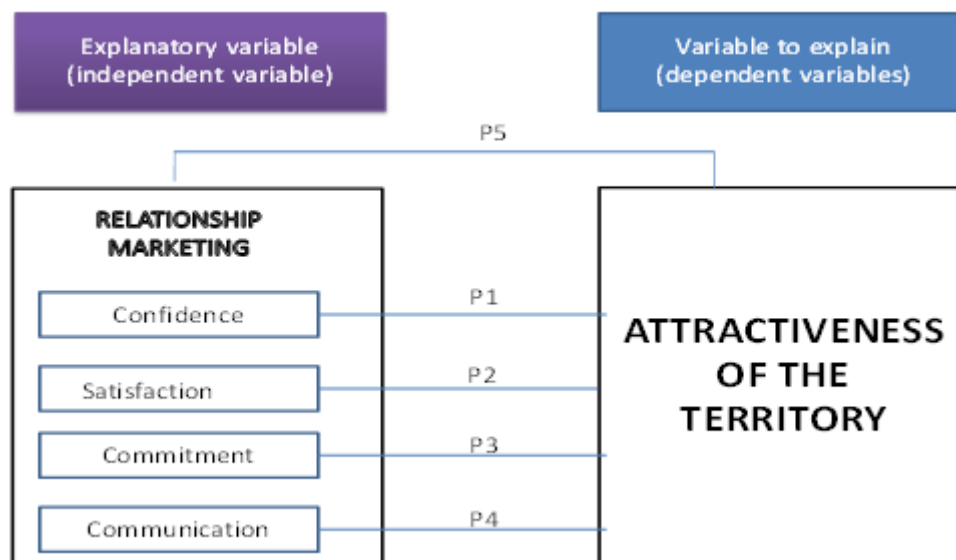
communication is an antecedent to trust (Cetina et al., 2015; Hunt, 1994; Palmer, 1997; Parasuraman and Berry, 1991). “Communication can be broadly defined as the formal and informal sharing of relevant and important information in a timely manner between companies” (Anderson and Narus 1990, in Morgan and hunt, 1994). It is also understood as the human activity that creates and maintains relationships between actors in the context of the exchange (Lages et al., 2005).

If communication is a prerequisite for the continuity of the exchange relationship between the company and its customers, what about investor relations and the territory of the establishment? Our research work aims to demonstrate the impact of communication between public stakeholders and subsidiaries of FMNs established on the attractiveness of the territory. That said, the following proposition deserves to be highlighted:

P4: Communication is in favor of the attractiveness of the territory

Starting from these propositions, we will present our research model as follows:

Figure: Personal design



Source: Auteurs

5. Conclusion

The attractiveness of the territory is a strategic objective targeted by public policies. This objective finds its reason in the participation of inward direct investments abroad (FDI) in the economic and even sustainable development of the host countries. Nevertheless, the frenzy of competition between territories on a global scale, the fragmentation of value chains, the rise of globalization and the growing nomadism of companies are all factors that make the factors of localization of foreign companies are no longer sufficient. It is also necessary to develop the factors of territorialization of foreign companies by maintaining lasting and fruitful relations with them, hence the importance of setting up relational territorial marketing.

In full, relationship marketing is a strategic approach aimed at maintaining lasting and profitable relationships with the company's customers. This customer-oriented marketing mobilizes various determining variables to achieve the expected objectives. This is the variable trust, satisfaction, commitment and communication. The latter are amply addressed by the literature which highlights their contribution to the development of quality relationships with customers in both B to B and B to C. This work aims to extend the scope of relational marketing to the territory by focusing on the need to adopt a relational approach,

through the implementation of relational marketing on the scale of the territory, to promote its economic attractiveness.

At the regional level, we question the ability of the key variables of marketing to establish lasting and fruitful relationships with FDI. For studying these interactions, we presented our conceptual model which highlights the explanatory variables of relational territorial marketing (namely trust, satisfaction, commitment and communication) and the economic attractiveness of the territory. The research model mentioned above is in line with our rather interpretive epistemological posture. In addition we will use a qualitative study by carrying out semi-structured interviews with a sample of subsidiaries of multinational firms established in Morocco.

Ipsa facto, we consider that a strategic approach based on the implementation of relational territorial marketing contributes to improving the economic attractiveness of the territory. This attractiveness is judiciously important in a context punctuated by the frenzy of competition between territories on a global scale.

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