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► **To cite this version:**

Nalini Rakotonandraina, Loïc Sauvée. Aligning Governance of Quality with Quality Management Systems in Territory-Based Agrifood Chains. Landscape Agronomy, Springer International Publishing, pp.183-206, 2022, 978-3-031-05263-7. <10.1007/978-3-031-05263-7_6>. <hal-04277551>

HAL Id: hal-04277551

<https://hal.science/hal-04277551v1>

Submitted on 9 Nov 2023

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Aligning governance of quality with Quality Management Systems in territory-based agrifood chains

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Abstract

This chapter explores the central question, for the organization agrifood chains, of alignment between governance of quality and Quality Management Systems (QMS) when these chains are rooted in different components of territorial dimensions (“territory-based agrifood chains”). Based on a literature review, we start with the core argument of alignment. Applied to the quality issue, a branch of this “alignment principle” explains that, for efficiency reasons, proper governance of quality agrifood chains must be chosen in accordance with the characteristics of product quality. Previous studies have established this point empirically by defining QMS as a managerial design to mitigate uncertainty in quality but also to enforce quality characteristics. Among these quality characteristics, one finds those rooted in territories, but studies on territory-based agrifood chains are rare; moreover, the alignment principle does not consider the territorial dimension per se. Thus, the issue explored in this chapter is to identify specific characteristics of these territorial dimensions, their complexity on the ground, and the characteristics of products necessary to fulfil the alignment principle. To do so, we developed a two-step approach. First, following theoretical studies on the alignment principle and its application to agrifood chains, we defined an analytical framework based upon an original dimensionalization of connections between territories and QMS, and between territories and governance of quality. It allowed us to extend the concept of alignment by considering simultaneously, in concrete case studies, the interplay between QMS and governance of quality when chain actors are embedded at multiple territorial levels. We conclude by emphasizing the importance of knowledge about the alignment principle when one wants to implement quality in territory-based agrifood chains successfully.

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Keywords: alignment, agrifood chains, governance, management system, quality, territory, territorial resources

1. Introduction: potential of territorial products and evolution of consumers' views

Since the food crisis in Europe in the 90s, and more generally because of uncertainty in the quality and origin of products, production conditions and environmental concerns, consumer behaviors and trends towards agrifood quality are more prone to consider aspects of quality related to territories. Consumers have become more selective and demanding (Dinis, 2004) about food information, especially its origin as well as product and ingredient characteristics, with the need for traceability systems. Consumers are increasingly concerned about quality, food safety and environmental issues. They are more sensitive about health and production practices (e.g. animal welfare, organic products, pesticide use, genetically modified organisms). In addition, consumers' environmental concerns have increased their preferences for regional and organic products.

Circuits of proximity (direct marketing) and consumption dynamics around local products are growing. In response, firms and actors have developed many Quality Management Systems (QMSs) to create value in these new niche markets. QMSs have two objectives: food safety and differentiation strategies (Henson and Humphrey, 2008). According to Wever et al. (2010), this rise of QMSs highlights the importance of adding value to products not only to meet consumer expectations but also for their territorial dimensions. These territorial dimensions have two challenges: economic/social aspects and environmental issues. Developing local resources helps conserve regional activities (e.g. local production, agritourism) and can create value for companies, and especially farmers, located in these areas. By bringing economic activities that are valuable for farmers, territorial dimensions also influence dynamics of farming systems as well, ensuring their stability or even expansion over time.

Thus the main questions are: How can territorial dimensions of agrifood products be promoted? How can sustainable value for these products be created? What connections exist between these territorial dimensions and governance of these agrifood chains? The main objective of this research was to focus on "territorial resources" (i.e. any resources that have relationships with territories) and to develop a conceptual framework for creating territorial value and governance mechanisms within chain actors and the institutional environment.

In this chapter, we first describe alignment and its relation to chain organization. Next, we summarize our findings in an analytical framework that emphasizes relevant criteria and then apply it to two case studies in France, followed by implications for farming systems and concluding comments.

2. The alignment principle: matching governance of quality with QMS

We first summarize the core argument of alignment and then emphasize application of the alignment approach specifically to the issue of quality and related QMSs. From this background, we develop an extension to the "alignment principle" in the context of QMS that is designed with territorial dimensions and components, specifically considering the diversity and specific characteristics of territory-based agrifood chains in this context.

2.1 The alignment principle and its extensions to quality issues

The “alignment principle” in new institutional economics literature provides key components of the approach (Gibbons and Roberts, 2013). According to Ménard (2005), while transactions have different characteristics (i.e. frequency, asset specificity and uncertainty), how does one identify connections between transactions and types of governance mechanisms? For Ménard (2005), the connection is made by reasoning that

“calculative agents operating in a competitive environment will adopt the mode of organization that fits comparatively better with the attributes of the transactions at stake. In doing so, Williamson provided a way for empirical studies to go around the difficulty of measuring directly transaction costs, making organizational form the dependent variable. If agents have incentives to reduce transaction costs so that these costs tend to be minimized, the attention then turns to the mode of organization chosen over alternatives in order to allow the development of contractual relationships that economize on bounded rationality while safeguarding against opportunism”. (p. 186).

This concept is often referred to as the “discrete alignment principle”, suggesting that organizations can choose among a few “organizational alternatives”. Complementary studies have extended this initial perspective considerably by identifying three archetypal forms: market, hybrid and hierarchy. In the market form, the main coordination mechanism is the price system, which has low uncertainty, limited asset specificity and high frequency of transactions. In contrast, the hierarchy form combines high uncertainty and asset specificity with a low frequency of transactions.

Between these two polar forms, the hybrid form has intermediate uncertainty, asset specificity and frequency of transactions. Important research on hybrid forms of organization has emerged, since they are by far the most common form of organization found, especially in agrifood sectors (e.g. Jolink and Niesten, 2012; Ménard, 2005; Ménard and Klein, 2004; Ménard, 2013). Hybrid forms appear to be the most diverse and heterogeneous forms, combining contracts, conventions and private ownership over specific assets (Raynaud et al., 2005, 2009). Hybrid forms are probably most common because actors try to create original ways to organize their transactions to simultaneously standardize and differentiate their products (Hatanaka et al., 2006; Henson and Humphrey, 2010).

Over time, researchers have focused analysis of transaction characteristics on uncertainty. Indeed, observation of actors’ choices shows that choices of possible alternatives are driven mainly by a desire to mitigate uncertainties (Brousseau and Fares, 2000). According to Brousseau and Fares (2000), actors prefer to choose incomplete contracts: by doing so, they are able to “design decision-making devices that ex post indicate the behavior required by

contractors to ensure (...) the most efficient coordination and guarantee the enforcement of mutual commitments” (p. 410).

The main reasons for this choice are the specific “double face” status of uncertainty in quality. Actors try at to mitigate the risks of uncertainty, for instance in food security. The objective is to reach a minimum standard of product quality at minimum cost. More importantly, however, quality specifications are also a way to differentiate products (Verbeke, 2005). The search for the “right” alignment principle, especially in agrifood sectors, as shown by many researchers (see Ménard (2012) for an overview), is the main rationale explaining choices of coordination mechanisms.

The concept of alignment, applied to agrifood sectors, has extended to a specific field of research to achieve effective value creation and competitive advantage: the choice of QMSs and their articulation with the governance of quality. Its purpose is to identify how appropriate design of the governance of quality can support a successful strategy of quality differentiation. In other words, actors aim to implement differentiation successfully by matching (i.e. aligning) the right governance of quality with quality-based management systems usually embedded and institutionalized in QMS.

2.2 QMS in agrifood chains: connections to governance, content and diversity

Agrifood chains must resolve problems of coordination in price, logistics, quantity and quality of products (Fernandez-Barcala et al., 2006). QMSs arose because of the emergence of institutional structures specialized in issues of quality, and thus devoted to improving coordination mechanisms for quality issues defined by product and/or process specifications, voluntary and/or mandatory schemes, incentives and control mechanisms. Consequently, the question of governance (i.e. the “institutional matrix within which the integrity of the exchange is done”, Williamson, 2005) centers around the central question of the governance of quality, which concerns the type of coordination mechanisms for the agrifood chains considered, seen as a whole and interdependent system. Thus, it is necessary to clarify the concept of governance of quality and of QMS, which differ mainly in their purpose.

In economic theory, governance of quality is an analytical approach that helps understand the choice of organizational and institutional architecture that players set up to mitigate hazards. Governance of quality is defined as a set of functions designed to solve any quality-coordination problem that arises in agrifood chains, such as measurement problems, opportunism control, rent sharing, search problems and quality definition. Governance of quality is based upon a set of functions that construct “a behavioral-driving mechanism aimed at defining the actions, and an incentive/coercion scheme; a supervision device and an arbitration mechanism that together ensure the self-enforcement of the contractual arrangement (that designed them)” (Brousseau and Fares, 2000, p. 412). Brousseau and Fares (2000) made an important distinction between governance functions and governance mechanisms:

1. the governance function of driving actions is expressed through authority

2. the governance function of ensuring enforcement is expressed through categories of coordination mechanisms (e.g. incentives, arbitration, supervision)

Applied to the topic of quality, these generic categories have been adapted and explained in the literature. According to Humphrey and Schmitz (2002), the question raised by the term “governance” is: How do firms set, measure and enforce parameters under which the actors in the chain operate? According to Gonzales-Diaz et al. (2003), governance mechanisms are essential to promote final product quality. Consequently, an organization must be established that offers both coordination and motivation mechanisms. Functions to be fulfilled by the governance of quality are:

1. Setting and defining quality standards
2. Ensuring compliance: monitoring, control and rules
3. Defining a level of decision
4. Creating rules through partnership (negotiation), contracts, trust or creation of incentives

Governance of quality is related to several institutional levels: quality policy at national and regional levels, quality conventions at the sector level and quality strategy at the player levels (Rakotonandraina and Sauvée, 2011; Williamson, 1996, Ponte and Gibbon, 2005).

The rise and development of QMSs is a key feature of modern economies, and QMSs have followed their own dynamics. The main consequence of this trend is the difficulty in clearly acknowledging the real governance functions that players fulfill: do QMSs truly mitigate risks effectively? Are there complementarities, redundancies or even differences among QMSs? We develop this specifically in the context of territory-based agrifood chains. QMS is a techno-managerial approach initially developed by management scientists (i.e. Luning and Marcellis, 2002) in line with the management quality literature. The objective of QMSs is to consider quality management mechanisms as a whole, as a complete “system” built around quality. Organizations use QMSs to direct and control implementation of quality policies and achievement of quality objectives (Luning and Marcellis, 2007).

In brief, QMSs are arrangements, conventions and procedures that can be defined by public entities (e.g. regulations, official signs), private or semipublic organizations (e.g. international standards, collective brands) or companies (e.g. private individual brands) and implemented by chain actors to achieve desired attributes or quality differentiation, or to comply with societal (consumer) demand for product characteristics or processes (quality, safety) (Rakotonandraina and Sauvée, 2011).

The rise and complexity of QMSs in agrifood chains constitute one of the key phenomena of the recent past. The reasons for this trend are well known: search for efficiency, competition among products at the consumer level and among chains at the industry level, a global rise in standards and food crises. Nonetheless, researchers rarely study consequences of the proliferation of QMSs on the organization of chains. This connection between QMSs and

chain governance is identified as the alignment principle: a “proper” alignment being the way to reach efficiency, in the sense of the theory of transaction cost (Williamson, 1985, 1991, 1996).

These descriptive dimensions are necessary steps to identify the diversity of QMSs. But debate among social scientists about the role of QMSs has increased the relevance of using other criteria to characterize QMSs. The classic viewpoint is to consider quality standards purely as “natural market lubricants” (Hatanaka, Bain and Busch, 2006; p. 39). In this view, the main roles of QMSs are thus to increase trust, diminish transaction costs and develop transparency within chains, thus emphasizing the standardization aspect of QMSs. Other researchers have challenged this viewpoint, stating that establishing quality standards is a way to differentiate products, reduce market access and create entry barriers, thus emphasizing the strategic and differentiation aspects of quality standards and QMSs, some of which are related to territories (Tregear et al., 2007). The role of retail companies in this trend has been particularly stressed (Reardon and Berdegúe, 2006), as has the importance of producers’ organizations (Sauvé, 1998; Requier-Desjardins, 2009, 2010; Sauvé and Valceschini, 2004; Raynaud et al., 2005, 2009).

Following these authors, we adopt the viewpoint that quality standards and third-party certification are not strategically neutral but instead socially mediated (Nadvi and Wältring, 2004). We added the situation of third-party certification to our analytical framework to grasp this strategic role. From a chain-governance viewpoint, QMSs can be categorized along three dimensions (Wever et al., 2009): the owner of (parts of) the system, scope of the system and scale of the system. According to Wever et al. (2009), the owner is distinguished on the basis of its status (private or public), scope refers to the extent to which the system is adopted along the stages (company-to-company system to an entire supply chain covering all transactions) and scale refers to the market penetration of the system, from small-scale (few actors have adopted it) to large-scale (all actors at all stages have adopted it).

2.3 The alignment principle when territories matter

Considering now the topic of territories, how should territories be defined in the context of alignment? How have researchers defined, adapted and included territorial dimensions in their analysis? Overall, how can a territorial component be introduced into the classic transaction-cost economics framework?

Consistent with our approach to the alignment principle between governance of quality and QMSs, we consider the territory as a concept through (i) governance functions and mechanisms and (ii) QMSs. For each of these two points we identify the main questions that must be identified and adapted, through territory lenses (Trienekens et al., 2009).

Considering governance functions, an approach to territories in the context of the alignment principle can be seen at multiple levels. First, players in agrifood chains, which function at different geographic scales, are themselves institutionally embedded in their socioeconomic milieu (Mazé et al., 2002). Their governance functions are performed by chain actors (private

or public, individual or collective), and can be related to achieving food safety or to differentiating products (Humphrey and Schmitz, 2008). Fundamentally, since the governance concept is a player-centered approach, the territory is a component of its environment. Territories matter to governance because governance influences two types of proximity between players: organized and geographic (Lamine et al., 2012; Torre and Rallet, 2005; Pecqueur, 2001). These authors show that these spatial dimensions, often ignored in spatial economics, have a large influence on coordination between players, thus influencing their coordination mechanisms. Organized and geographic proximities have different spatial roles. These same authors suggest, for instance, that organized proximity “offers powerful mechanisms of long-distance coordination”, while geographic proximity may “play a determining role in the development of tensions”. Regardless of the impacts, positive or negative, of these proximities on development of governance, it helps one understand the influence of a territory on the players which constitutes it. Another aspect of the importance of territory is the ownership of (territorial) resources. As soon as the location of resources generates income, it becomes necessary to consider the status of the owner(s), their situation in relation to the assets and the degree of territorial anchorage of these assets (Lauriol et al., 2008).

Considering QMSs, their territorial aspects are found mainly in the codification of resources and related to spatial /origin area aspects. When we consider territorial dimensions of quality-based products, the diversity of QMSs is also clear, although the situation can be summarized by a few key features (Ellebrecht et al., 2009). First, the European Union (EU) General Food Law of 2002 established a new framework of legal requirements known as the “Hygiene Package”. At the same time, several country-level systems were developed, generally oriented towards recognizing territorial aspects, such as the origin of products, an increase in transparency and traceability of agricultural production. These aspects are of particular importance since they provided information that consumers had ignored, thus creating the potential for producers and their organizations to market differentiation.

Besides QMSs at the country level, the main aspects to consider are the generic characteristics of territorial dimensions, including actors, environmental aspects (e.g. spatial level, geographic delimitation, product location, production basin) and territorial quality-based characteristics related to QMSs that are composed of intrinsic characteristics or quality attributes of a territorial product (e.g. wine, cheese), such as those under Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) or Protected Designation of Origin (PDO). Researchers have emphasized this aspect of the relationships between QMSs and territories. For instance, Tregear et al. (2007) suggest that regional foods “are conceptualized as a form of cultural capital with potential to leverage wider social and economic benefits to local rural areas” (p.12). They suggest that in this approach “a territorially based qualification or certification scheme, which defines standards of production and supply (be) signaled clearly to buyers by way of a mark or brand” (Tregear et al., 2002:12). There is a long history of quality schemes related to territories; in PDO and PGI specification sheets, “the qualified product’s character is tied to the physical (e.g. soils, climate) and/or cultural features (e.g. traditions of production and processing) of a local territory” (Tregear et al., 2007:13).

Ultimately, the purpose of QMSs is to objectify connections (usually through specification sheets) between quality, considered as a set of characteristics, and certain components of a territory, despite the diversity of concrete situations. In practical situations, tensions between actors may exist because of a scarcity of available resources (Lambert-Derbimka et al., 2011; Dansero and Putilli, 2014) or contradictory situations of actors (Bérard et al., 2005). However, the concept of territorial resources is considered to result from qualification processes since territorial resources appear in the formal procedures of QMSs.

3. Development of an analytical framework of alignment between governance of quality and QMSs in territory-based agrifood chains

We extend the dimensionalization of Wever et al. (2009) based on ownership, scope (in a sense of vertical penetration) and scale to the status and role of third-party certification and resources. The role of resources in QMSs has been acknowledged, mainly in the business marketing literature (Coulibaly and Sauvée, 2010; Håkansson et al., 2004; Mollard, 2001; Rakotonandraina and Sauvée, 2009). The idiosyncratic nature and characteristics of resources used in QMSs, as well as their embeddedness in networks of actors and institutions, must also be considered in the question of alignment.

To address alignment in territory-based agrifood chains, we first identify the concept of “remediableness” to explain why players must seek, and reach, alignment between the governance of quality and the QMSs they implement. We then discuss dimensionalization of territorial dimensions, with the basic question: how can alignment be put in practical terms in the variety of situations that have a territorial dimension? Finally, we describe the analytical framework, which is a heuristic analytical model that is necessary to break the concept of territory down into several different but interrelated aspects.

3.1 Remediableness: why players seek alignment between governance of quality and QMSs

This concept of remediableness helps understand not how but why actors modify governance and QMSs. For Williamson (2009), remediableness “holds that an extant practice or mode of organization for which (1) no *feasible* superior alternative can be described and (2) *implemented* with expected net gains is (3) *presumed* to be efficient.” (p. 153). As he explains, all three conditions are necessary to explain the choice of organizational form. For him, the “remediableness...thus both disallows pronouncements of inefficiency that rest on a comparison of an actual (hence flawed) practice with a hypothetical (ideal) alternative and asks the public policy analyst to be more respectful of the political process.” (Williamson, 2009:153). We thus consider remediableness to be the explaining variable of alignment, since actors’ decisions influence several transactional levels throughout the supply chain simultaneously.

First, it is important to extend these insights and understand what is aligned in the context of territory-based agrifood chains. Perito et al. (2017) describe choices that actors make to reach efficiency in the agrifood sector in Italy; they refer to the study of Ghosh and John (1999), which considered that “economizing calculus of transaction costs analysis should be replaced

by strategizing calculus, through including strategic choices (for example, quality strategies), specific investments, and modes of governance”.

Perito et al. (2017) illustrate three ways for farmers to meet the conditions of remediableness (i.e. find the best alignment between their resources and governance of quality). Farmers with limited resources have to choose “generic quality and generic supply chains, where the product is sold through wholesaler or informal food networks”. A second group of farmers develops a differentiation strategy using a local regional brand. In their case, a specific sheep breed is the key resource, and the role of the regional breeders’ association is crucial. Finally, a third group of farmers goes further and chooses a PGI.

In the context of alignment between governance of quality and QMSs, and in line with reasoning of Hatanaka et al. (2006), this targeted position can be oriented towards different modes of standardization or differentiation, or a combination of the two. Combination is considered here as situations in which firms have worked to standardize elements of differentiation of products or processes, or in contrast, to differentiate (mainly) products that are already standardized in the market. In the search for optimality, the governance of quality should match the QMS. Considering the strategic choices of the firms involved (i.e. differentiation of products), a specific match between governance of quality and QMS will reach a certain level of optimality. We now add dimensions of a territory to this general framework.

3.2 Dimensionalization of territorial dimensions

Territory as an organizational and institutional pattern

The main difficulties of this approach are the dimensionalization of a territory and the unit used to analyze alignment. How may the territory influence which transactions should be considered? Should one consider all the transactions, a set of interdependent transactions or the entire system of actors and their relevant resources? How should the specific characteristics of territorial quality-based agrifood chains be integrated, since the QMS developed will have to do so?

The literature (Wever and al. 2009; 2010; Provan and Kenis, 2007) defines three factors that describe the design of governance: the number of stages, the institutional structure and the form of network governance. Our approach suggests studying QMS alignment using the perspective of governance of quality for the types of governance functions performed by the QMS and its overall objectives, as well as the scope and scale of the system. However, specifications defined at the company level, thus with a small geographic scope, and found for instance in buyer-supplier relationships, would be considered “decentralized”, **vs** “centralized”. Of course, intermediate situations exist between these two polar forms, such as when a professional body establishes its definition of quality and mechanisms for guaranteeing it.

Territorial resources

Considering territorial resources when describing QMSs requires explaining the components of territorial dimensions. When designing governance, territorial dimensions include all social and interpersonal relationships that form the basis of coordination mechanisms. In agrifood chains, farmers, their organizations and their informal networks (e.g. peer groups, inter-individual collaborations) are particularly influential. In QMSs, the territorial dimension includes mainly local physical resources. As shown by studies in patrimonial economics (Requier-Desjardin, 2009), however, the boundary between physical and non-physical resources is tenuous. It is probably more relevant to consider territorial resources as a result of qualification processes and rules built socially (e.g. social control of farmers, cognitive content and learning mechanisms around qualification of physical resources) that will lead to specific resources. Interestingly, this approach opens perspectives of practical implications for farmers and farmer groups in their desire to differentiate themselves in the food market, as the recent exponential increase in initiatives of agricultural firms indicates.

Territories and coordination mechanisms

Coordination mechanisms established in the territory to guarantee product quality also have to be dimensionalized. Players usually define these mechanisms as monitoring or control/incentive mechanisms. We consider the status of these players and their connections to territories, such as through ownership of land or other assets. Researchers such as Angeon et al. (2006), however, have mentioned social-interaction mechanisms (e.g. social controls, emulation, mimicry) as central forces driving coordination mechanisms. Here, the territory is seen as a complementary mechanism of quality enforcement that can support or even strengthen classic economic mechanisms. This point is of particular importance since it demonstrates a specific feature of territory-based agrifood chains, in which a community of practices can also provide social mechanisms that generate information exchanges, cooperation and trust.

3.3 An analytical framework of the alignment principle in territory-based agrifood chains

It is necessary to disentangle the multiple dimensions of a territory to apply the alignment principle to territory-based agrifood chains. We developed a three-step approach to consider the territory in agrifood chains as the following (Table 1):

1. an institutional and organizational pattern
2. a depository of territorial resources
3. a support of coordination mechanisms

For each of these perspectives, the alignment principle has specific varieties, which we define and illustrate in two case studies. Despite differences in these perspectives, their common feature is scale. Territory introduces a central concept in which geographic spaces are also

socially constructed places, as developed by the “proximity” school (e.g. Requier-Desjardins, 2009, 2010; Tregear et al., 2007).

This idea shows the importance of alignment between the scale and scope of QMSs and the levels of the governance of quality. Given the need to operationalize these concepts, and following Gonzalez-Diaz and Raynaud (2007) and Barcala et al. (2007, 2010), we define three categories of scale – centralized, intermediate and decentralized – and apply them to the three perspectives.

Centralized situations have large scale and scope, such as at national or EU levels. For Gonzalez-Diaz and Raynaud (2007), this level has many players; thus, the principles are generic and pay little attention to specific local conditions. In contrast, decentralized situations have few players and likely a small geographic scope; thus, they have a much greater ability to consider local characteristics and features. Finally, Gonzalez-Diaz and Raynaud (2007) suggest considering “intermediate” situations: in many agrifood chains, professional bodies, frequently with the help of territorial public players, have set up institutional arrangements between micro- and macro-levels, such as inter-professional organizations, which have a strong influence on the structuring of quality standardization and differentiation.

Thus, we adapt and detail these three levels to operationalize the alignment principle for the territory as the following:

1. an organizational and institutional pattern: roles of players (e.g. companies, institutions) locally, regionally and nationally
2. a depository of territorial resources: alignment between creation and codification of specific resources (in QMS) and monitoring of resources by players
3. a support of coordination mechanisms: for enforcement (control and incentive mechanisms, alignment between third-party certification/reputation and actions of players) and for social mechanisms (alignment between social interactions within QMSs and social controls through emulation and mimicry)

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

4 Case studies of territorial quality-based agrifood chains: applications of the alignment principle

We present two case studies as applications of the alignment principle using the analytical framework: “Porcilin/Saveurs en’Or” and Bayonne ham. We then overview the alignment situations ‘cartography in both case studies (Yin, 2003).

4.1 The case studies: general presentation

Porcilin/Saveurs en’Or case study

“Le Porcilin” is a regional innovative brand, created in year 2004, based on a quality scheme in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region of France by a local pig producers’ association of the same name, which

manages the chain (Fig. 1). The Porcilin brand guarantees to consumers traditionally produced pork with higher quality (higher levels of omega-3 fatty acids, organoleptic characteristics) due to feeding pigs linseed and cereals. The Porcilin association comprises actors in the pig supply chain in Nord-Pas-de-Calais: two feed industries, a group of 30 pig producers, a slaughterhouse, an artisanal meat-processor and a large retailer (Auchan) (Figs. 1 & 2). Auchan has developed a strong strategy focused on regional products and a regional image (the “North”) through the collective brand “Saveurs en’Or” (“Golden Flavors”), created in 2004, which guarantees products that are produced in Nord-Pas de Calais with key ingredients from the region. The brand indicates the richness, expertise and know-how of Nord-Pas-de-Calais and the high quality of its food products. The Saveurs en’Or brand was created by a task force composed of many actors (food industries, craftspeople, traders, retailers, institutional bodies and farmers) and is owned by APASO (“Association Promoting Activities of Saveurs en’Or”), which pilots collective action of the Saveurs en’Or program.

INSERT FIG 1 HERE

INSERT FIG 2 HERE

PGI Bayonne ham case study

Bayonne ham is a famous regional product, a dry-cured ham with 1000 years of history, named after the Basque city of Bayonne, the export harbor for the ham. Bayonne ham is produced exclusively in southwestern France (Adour River basin) and operates under an EU PGI (the first one in France), a sign of quality and origin obtained in 1998 by the Pig Inter-profession of Aquitaine (INPAQ) and chain operators, which form part of the Bayonne Ham Consortium, which manages the chain (Figs. 3 & 4).

The PGI guarantees the geographic origin of the pigs and their meat, as well as the quality and reputation of authentic Bayonne ham. Ham is produced with traditional know-how under specific climate conditions of the region. Pig breeding areas, which supply the fresh ham, are located in 22 departments in southwestern France (in Aquitaine, Midi-Pyrénées, Charente-Poitou, and some departments bordering Aquitaine). Hams are cured in the Adour River basin using salt from the same basin. The curing process usually lasts 7-12 months under specific temperature and humidity conditions (a dry southern wind). Bayonne ham leads the French dry-cured ham market, providing 20% of national production. The main market channels are hypermarkets, supermarkets, self-service, food service, direct sales, butcher shops, wholesalers and retailers.

INSERT FIG 3 HERE

INSERT FIG 4 HERE

4.2 Results: alignment situations

This section highlights the three dimensions of the alignment principle for the two case studies following territorial dimensionalization, with a degree of alignment classified as high, medium, or low (Table 1). Findings (Tables 2, 3 and 4) illustrate the three situations of alignment principles as a function of territorial dimensions. The main findings are as follows:

1. The two case studies show two types of hybrid alignment in their governance of quality.

2. In both quality schemes, QMS definition and characteristics are aligned towards the territorial dimension.
3. The territory serves especially as a depository of territorial resources through the use of physical and social resources. Their connections to the territories can be summarized by delimiting players and resources geographically.
4. The coordination mechanisms involved all types of social and interpersonal relationships: individual farmers, farmers' groups, organizations and informal networks.
5. Public and private institutions cooperate strongly to enforce quality and foster learning (e.g. chain actors from existing sectors and local firms in the territory cooperating with territorial institutional bodies).

4.2.1 Alignment principle for the territory as an institutional and organizational pattern

Considering the territory as an institutional and organizational pattern, the alignment principle shows more consistency for Porcilin/Saveurs en'Or (high alignment) than for PGI Bayonne ham (low alignment) (Table 2). Porcilin/Saveurs en'Or displays a good match between the territoriality of the QMS scope and the actors' dimensions, which lie mainly at the regional level with a centralized institutional pattern. The alignment between the QMSs and territory attributes of the two case studies illustrates the degree of territorial anchorage and typicity of each product, highlighting the following:

1. Strong connection to a given territory: Nord-Pas-de-Calais for Porcilin/Saveurs en'Or and the southwest/Adour River basin for Bayonne ham. Specification sheets of both products define a geographic location for the origin of raw materials and their processing.
2. The territorial typicity (know-how, history, and intrinsic characteristics) seems stronger for Bayonne ham because of its PGI certification and historical aspect. Although the Porcilin brand has no specific attributes related to territories, it guarantees to consumers a wide variety of local products, seasonal recipes and a nutritional attribute (omega-3) in pork due to the inclusion of "traditional production" of locally produced linseed in the feed.

INSERT TABLE 2 HERE

4.2.2 -Alignment principle between governance and territoriality

Considering the alignment between governance of quality and territoriality, both case studies highlight high alignment in the choice of players and ownership over key territorial resources, due to the diversity and choice of chain actors in their roles and functions in quality governance (Table 3). The alignment seems stronger for Bayonne ham because of its PGI specifications, which makes the product more authentic and embedded in the territory due to

the guarantee that territorial and institutional public actors will enforce quality. For both case studies, actors come from a specific area. Porcilin emphasizes “proximity” more than Bayonne ham by having a small scope and a scale at the administrative region level for production, processing and distribution. Thus, ownership, monitoring, decision rights, codification and modification of specifications for Porcilin are private and performed collectively by committees of the Porcilin association, mainly an operational office and a board of directors (Fig. 2). Similarly, at the regional level, APASO owns and pilots collective action of the Saveurs en’Or program through its committees, composed of a board of directors and an office in charge of property rights and strategic decisions. For Bayonne ham, the PGI quality scheme is an official public label, so it belongs to the public. Creation and codification of specifications in France is ensured by INAO, the public entity in charge of quality and regulations. In addition, public authorities monitor the Bayonne ham scheme indirectly by giving agreements or mandates to the quality group, consortium or farms. Furthermore, the Bayonne Ham Consortium (Fig. 4), which groups several players of the chain (Fig. 3), has a right to use the label and thus plays a key role in governance of the chain by managing and implementing the Bayonne ham brand, defining additional private specifications and chain organization memberships.

INSERT TABLE 3 HERE

4.2.3 Alignment principle for the territory as a support of coordination mechanisms

Considering the territory as a support of coordination mechanisms highlights the network relationships and social interactions among players in both case studies for implementing quality enforcement mechanisms for territorial resources (Table 4). First, to build a reputation and guarantee standardization (compliance conformity), control mechanisms often include multiple steps and interactions that are composed of self-control (by the farmer, producer group) and external control, which involves a third party such as an independent certification body, public entity (e.g. veterinary department, to check for compliance with mandatory regulations) or private organization. Thus, the control bodies exchange with players during monitoring and control to enforce specifications. The information collected is exchanged and, in case of noncompliance, used for corrective measures.

Social interactions for different purposes can be observed in the case studies. Porcilin/Saveurs en’Or involved interaction with a regional network partnership and, at two levels, institutional exchange. First, the Porcilin association has a relationship with its members, including commitments about specifications, information, training and transactions (e.g. volume targets and incentive payments for farmers through contracts). Second, the Porcilin association has a large collaborative relationship with Saveurs en’Or to develop the chain. In comparison, Bayonne ham has more contracts and formal procedures than Porcilin. Indeed, Bayonne ham has many relationships along its chain (e.g. between the consortium and its members, between chain actors at each stage) that can be defined as economic relationships. Usually, the nature of contractual relationships is a client-supplier relationship that considers the quality specification of Bayonne ham. Each actor in the supply chain must be supplied by an officially approved actor. An inter-professional tripartite contract regarding financial incentives exists between pig farmers, slaughterhouses and processors. In addition, there is a

strong partnership with institutional organizations (e.g. public entities), which provide supervision and support. Furthermore, the consortium and its members exchange information about meeting planning, improving processes, developing the market, communication, and control mechanisms.

INSERT TABLE 4 HERE

5. Concluding comments

The Bayonne ham and Porcilin/Saveurs en'Or case studies show territorial embeddedness of governance structures, providing evidence of territorial dimensions of institutional structure in agrifood chains, but more strongly for Bayonne ham because of its PGI characteristics. Considering the connections between territories and governance of quality, Porcilin/Saveurs en'Or shows articulation of the territory at two levels: the producers' organization (Porcilin association) and the retailer (Auchan). For Bayonne ham, there is strong articulation between territories, with a wide variety of actors at multiple levels. The roles that each level of actors performs for each case study's QMS highlight how actors' interactions define quality and control mechanisms of each QMS to guarantee quality. The alignment typology of QMSs (related to risk management) and the subgroup (related to differentiation strategy) often strengthen each other, suggesting that the QMSs are complementary.

The objective of the chapter was to explore application of the alignment principle to agrifood chains that have territorial aspects, mainly through quality mechanisms based on territorial dimensions. Stemming from the concept of alignment in the paradigm of transaction cost economics, extended by strategic-management researchers and widely applied by agricultural economists and management scientists, we developed an original analytical framework in which the multiple dimensions of the territory, which we divided into three perspectives, appear to be crucial. Indeed, they are crucial for heuristic reasons: to identify the complexity of agrifood chains and their connections to territories as basic components, through the concept of territorial resources and local coordination mechanisms. Territory-based agrifood chains have many similarities in their scale, scope, ownership and organization of control, but their situations may differ widely according to this analytical framework. Territorial resources have both similarities and differences. Governance of quality has some differences, mainly in the roles of professional bodies, leading firms, institutions and farmers. Despite these differences, we have suggested combining (in terms of positive, i.e. efficient, alignment) governance of quality and QMS as the main unit of analysis. Some agrifood chains are both company- and consumer-oriented, and thus aim for some forms of differentiation, while others clearly position themselves as a company-to-company system without communication to end consumers. When considering agrifood sectors, territorial aspects must be included (Torre and Traversac, 2011) as an important step, which most usual approaches often lack.

One consequence of such an approach to territorial dimensions of alignment is its implication for governance of these agrifood chains. Misalignment may have negative consequences either at the firm level (sub-optimal resources) or the chain level (e.g. differences between actors, conflicts in objectives) and ultimately on dynamics of territories as a whole. As shown by Angeon et al. (2006), non-market relationships between actors, for instance in the socially

embedded definition of quality schemes, are complementary with objectives of local and sustainable development. This complementarity leads to better understanding of territorial dynamics. Sub-optimality could also occur in marketing (differentiation could be irrelevant or too costly) and standardization (it could lack efficient procedures and implementation). Thus, it is necessary to acknowledge that the alignment principle has consequences for economic reasons as well as organizational and strategic reasons. Despite these limitations, our research of alignment shows the utility of considering social and organizational components of territorial dimensions of territory-based agrifood chains.

Supplementary materials

Figure 1. Supply chain structure of Porcilin (Source: Rakotonandraina & Sauvée, 2011)

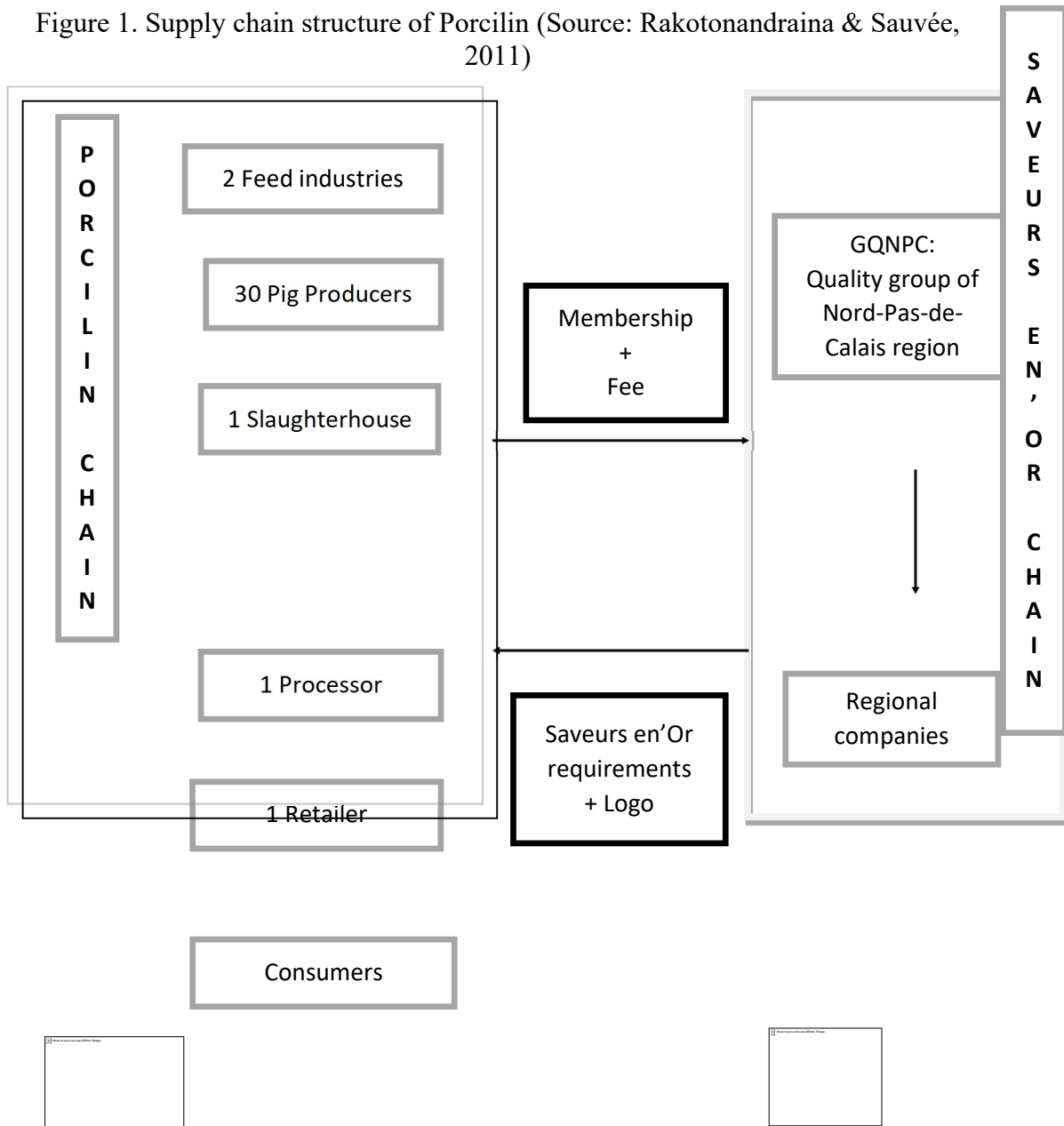


Figure 2. Organization of the Porcilin Association

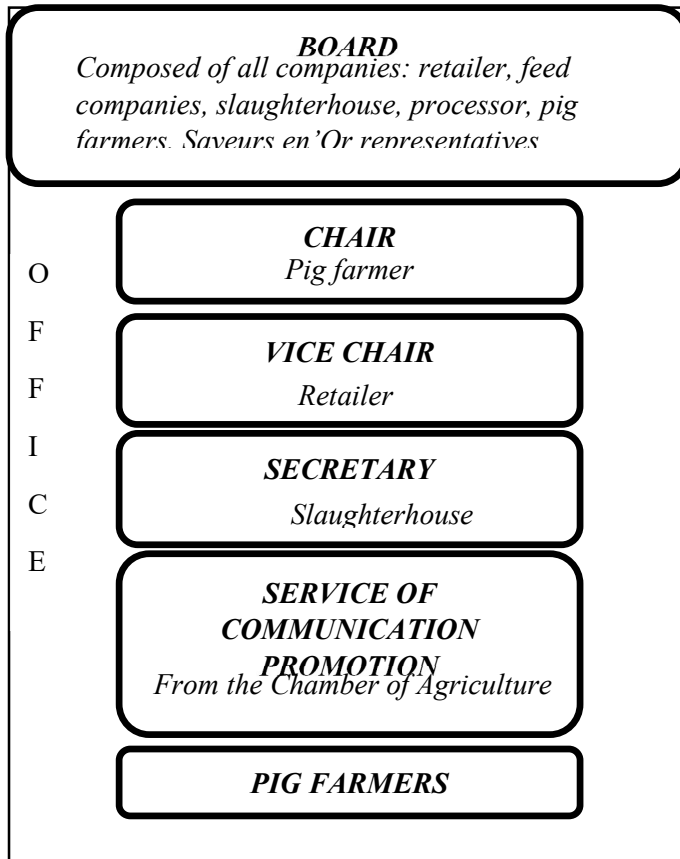


Figure 3. Supply chain structure of Bayonne ham (Source: Rakotonandraina & Sauvée, 2011)

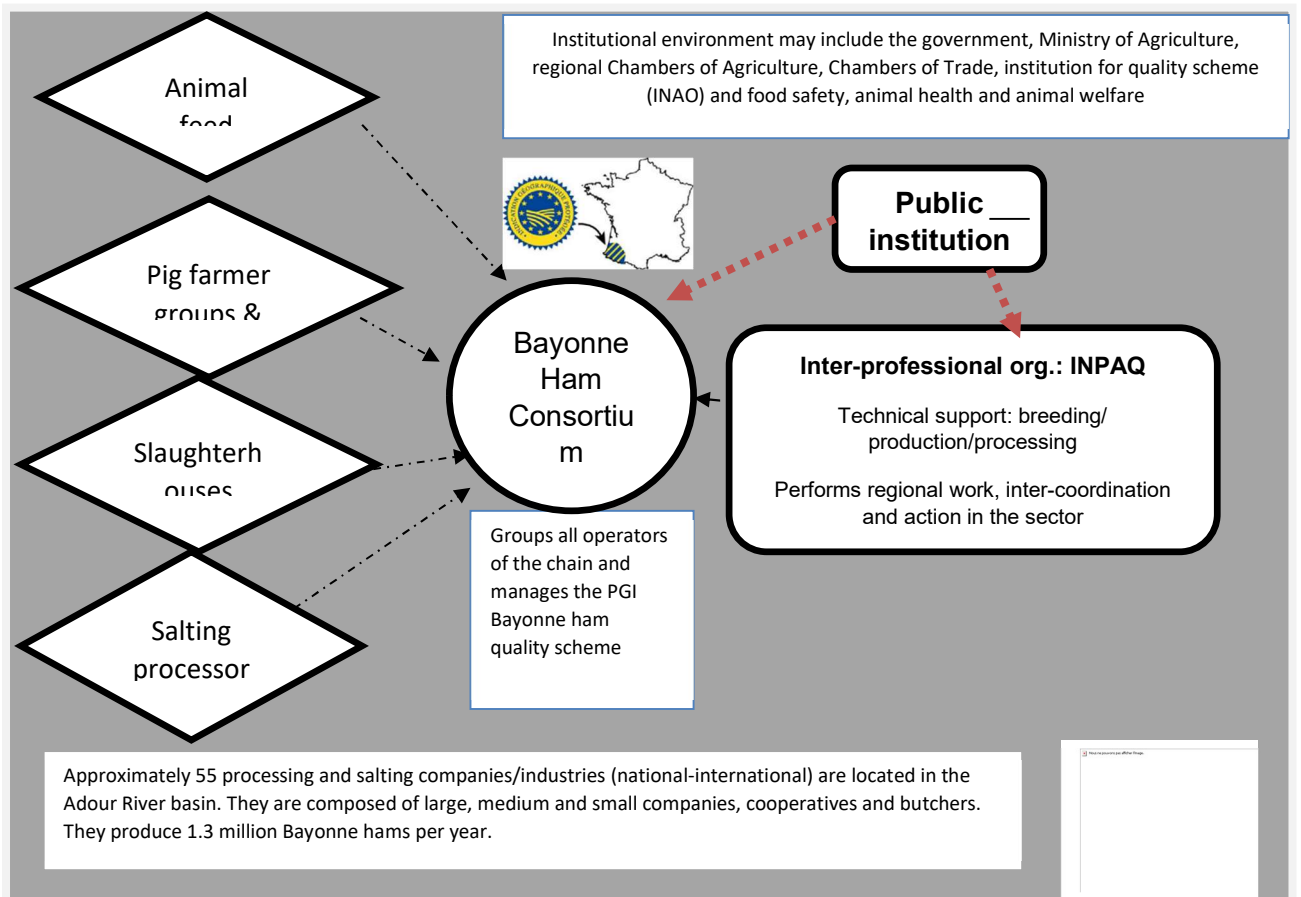
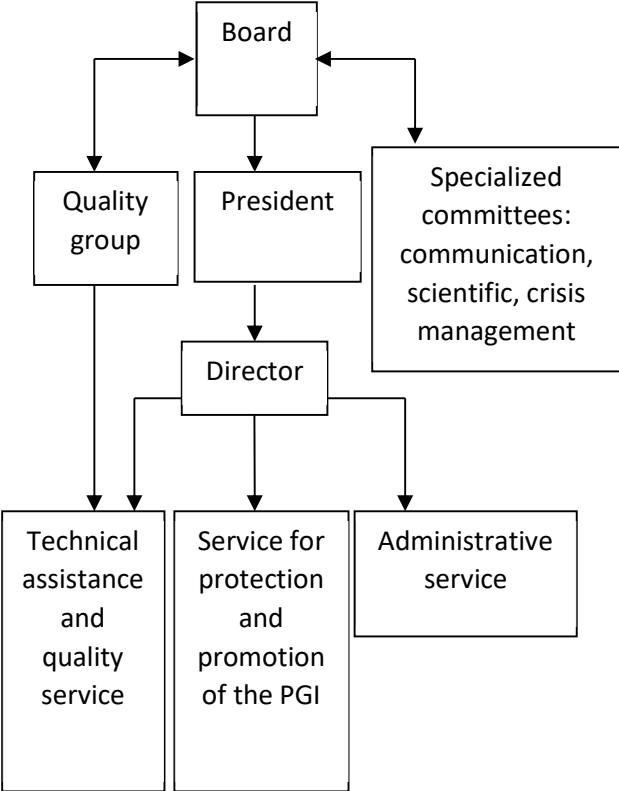


Figure 4. Organization of the Bayonne Ham Consortium



Source: Bayonne Ham Consortium general assembly, 29 June 2000

Table 1. Dimensionalization of the territory in the alignment principle

<i>Territory as</i>	<i>Situations</i>	<i>Governance of quality</i>	<i>Quality Management System (QMS)</i>	<i>Alignment principle</i>
<i>A geographic and institutional pattern</i>	Centralized Intermediate Decentralized	Level of generalization of global rules Level of strategic integration	Scale and scope of application of the QMSs	Match between the patterns: frontiers
<i>Territorial resources</i>	Centralized Intermediate Decentralized	Choice of strategic resources for competitive advantage Owner of the resources	Creation and codification of resources of the QMSs	Match between choice of players and ownership over key resources
<i>Support of coordination mechanisms</i>	Centralized Intermediate Decentralized	Control and enforcement through contractual clauses or conventions, or legal rules	Quality procedures	Match between contractual clauses and formal procedures

Table 2. Quality Management System (QMS) alignment through the governance of quality perspective of the territory as an institutional and organizational pattern

<i>Case study</i>	<i>Situation type</i>	<i>Governance of quality</i> <i>Level of generalization of global rules</i> <i>Level of strategic integration</i>	<i>QMS</i> <i>Scale and scope of application of the QMSs</i>	<i>Alignment principle</i> <i>Match between the patterns: frontiers</i>
Porcilin/ Saveurs en'Or	Centralized for Porcilin	Overall objective: Differentiation strategy (voluntary QMS through origin and omega-3 in the pork) Mandatory standardization (risk management, traceability, legal requirements)	Porcilin: small scale (2 feed industries, 30 pig farmers, 1 slaughterhouse, 1 retailer) and small scope (mainly for farmers)	high
	Intermediate for Saveurs en'Or	-Voluntary QMS: differentiation (through origin area and the process know-how of the territory) -Mandatory standardization (risk management, traceability, legal requirements)	Saveurs en'Or large scale and large scope (farming to distribution)	
Bayonne ham	Decentralized for the PGI (EU level), and also for official quality schemes ("Label Rouge" and "certification of product conformity" (CCP) at the French level) Intermediate for the Bayonne ham scheme	Overall objective: High differentiation strategy -Voluntary QMS for high differentiation (PGI combined with "Label Rouge" and/or CCP): related to the origin, typicity of territory anchorage and high quality of the product -Mandatory standardization within legal requirements (e.g. hygiene package, sanitary aspects)	Scale: large (51 feed industries, 1000 pig farmers, 33 pig-producer groups, 29 meat industries (slaughterhouses, cutting units), 55 ham processors, 2 salt producers) Scope : Large scope (entire vertical chain)	low

Table 3. Quality Management System (QMS) alignment through the governance of quality perspective of the territory as a depository of territorial resources

<i>Case study</i>	<i>Situation type</i>	<i>Governance of quality</i> <i>Choice of strategic resources for competitive advantage</i> <i>Owner of the resources</i>	<i>Quality Management System</i> <i>Creation and codification of resources of the QMSs</i>	<i>Alignment principle</i> <i>Match between choice of players and ownership over key resources</i>
Porcilin/ Saveurs en'Or	Centralized for Porcilin	-QMSs are private and owned by the Porcilin association and the Auchan retailer	The board of the Porcilin association (composed of pig producers and partners of the chain, such as processors and retailers) for specifications	medium
	Intermediate for Saveurs en'Or	-Private QMSs owned by the APASO association, which pilots the program -Legal requirements are public (e.g. animal welfare, environmental regulations) or legally mandated (e.g. French pork traceability scheme)	APASO committees for specifications with regional actors (business operators, institutional bodies, consumers)	
Bayonne ham	Decentralized for the PGI (EU level), and also for official quality schemes ("Label Rouge" and "certification of product conformity" (CCP) at the French level)	-Official signs such as PGI, "Label Rouge" and CCP are public and thus owned by public entities (European Commission and French Ministry of Agriculture) -An additional private specification belongs to the Bayonne Ham Consortium	-Public institutions: Ministry of Agriculture through the institution in charge of quality (INAO) -The consortium committee with a representative from each stakeholder (producers to processors),	high
	Intermediate for the Bayonne ham scheme	-ISO norms and "British Retail Consortium" certification for processors are private and legally mandated (e.g. Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point, code of good practice)	-Institutional organizations (for Iso standard & BRC ...)	

Table 4. Quality Management System (QMS) alignment through the governance of quality perspective of the territory as a support of coordination mechanisms

<i>Case study</i>	<i>Situation type</i>	<i>Governance of quality</i> <i>Control and enforcement through contractual clauses or conventions, or legal rules</i>	<i>Quality Management System</i> <i>Quality procedures</i>	<i>Alignment principle</i> <i>Match between contractual clauses and formal procedures</i>
Porcilin/ Saveurs en'OR	Centralized for Porcilin	Internal control Self-control by farmers	-Monitoring by the Porcilin committee and producer group	medium
	Intermediate for Saveurs en'Or	External control by an independent certification body		
Bayonne ham	Decentralized, Intermediate and Centralized	Three levels of control: -External control by an independent certification body -Internal control (consortium) -Self-control by producer groups and company	-Monitoring: mainly by the consortium for the PGI. Monitoring varies by the type of QMS and could be performed at the level of: -The public -Quality-group (consortium) -Farm/company	high

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