

Influence of Individualism or Communitarianism of Actors on Opportunism in a Coopetition



Ph.D. Pierre Daniel INDJENDJE NDALA

Teacher-Researcher, Institut Supérieur de Technologie (IST)

Laboratoire de recherche en sciences de l'informatique et de Gestion (LARSIG)

Gabon.

ABSTRACT: This paper attempts to show that opportunism in a cooperative market can be influenced not only by the individualism of the actors but also by communitarianism. Our theoretical anchor is the contract theory to explain the opportunism of the actors by communitarianism or individualism. We adopted a mixed methodology (quali-quantitative). The data used are primary, from the administration of a questionnaire to 207 claudos in a cooperative market in the alternative transport sector in Gabon. The multivariate qualitative comparative analysis technique (mvQCA) was used. The results indicate that opportunistic behavior in a cooperative market is explained mainly by national communitarianism (Gabonese), then transnational communitarianism (natives of Central Africa except nationals and natives of West Africa), under conditions specific to each community; Opportunism is subsidiarily explained by the individualism of the actors who paradoxically trust each other in a competitive cooperation but these dishonest actors are paradoxically not sanctioned.

KEYWORDS: Opportunism, Cooperative Market, Coopetitors, Individualism, Communitarianism

I. INTRODUCTION

The cooperative strategy, which is a cooperation of actors who are in competition, allows to benefit from undeniable advantages but presents a risk of opportunism of the coopetitors. Cooperative does not escape opportunism (Ngidjima Loleke Lotshangola, 2017). Opportunism is a complex behavior that arises in the interactions between economic agents. For Granovetter (2000), opportunism would be inscribed in human nature and is articulated around strictly personal interest, which can go as far as harming the other party. We retain the approach of Benjelloun & Balambo (2016), for whom opportunism is a destructive behavior of partnership relations. Partners are indeed opportunistic, that is, they always seek to make gains in transactions through lack of frankness and honesty, to the detriment of their contractual partners (Arnaud, 2008). There are several significant contributions on the subject of opportunism, the most recent of which are Yakovleva & al. (2016), Fernandez & Chiambaretto (2019), El Machhour (2021) and Indjendje Ndala (2024). But the subject has been insufficiently studied according to Seliverstova & al. (2016). We study the opportunism of coopetitors through the prism of communitarianism vs. individualism, even if opportunism has an individualistic and selfish connotation. Communitarianism appears to be a notion that is institutionally fought in a society or in the business world because it has negative consequences such as social segregation and antitrust strategy or discrimination between business partners. However, cooperative in a given cultural community should facilitate its functioning, smooth out several problems and reduce its risks thanks to the cooperation, trust, understanding, collaboration and solidarity that should reign between partners, because they share the same values (Doucet & Favreau, 1991). However, talking about communitarian opportunism seems to be an oxymoron. We position this research in the field of strategy at a micro level to capture opportunistic behavior in a communitarian vs. individualistic relational context between individual companies. Kaboré and Sane (2021) studied the role of the cultural context (collectivism) in the relationship between opportunism and the success of international development projects. They emphasize that understanding the implications of the cultural context remains a challenge. In our case, it is the relationship between communitarianism vs. individualism and opportunism. We then ask ourselves: "To what extent does communitarianism vs. individualism influence opportunism in a cooperative between individual companies?" The objective of this research is to show that communitarianism in a cooperative market has an unnatural influence on the opportunism of the actors. The major interest of this research is to bring new knowledge to the literature on the theory of cooperative based on

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counterintuitive results. To answer the research question, we present a conceptual and theoretical framework followed by the methodological approach, then the results, their discussions and the contributions of the research before concluding.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW: CONCEPTS AND THEORIES

We present communitarianism and individualism, theoretical anchoring and the opportunism of actors in a coopetition.

2.1. Communitarianism vs. individualism

Communitarianism or communalism is based on the belief that a person's social identity and personality are largely shaped by community relationships, but a small part remains for individualism. Although the community can be a simple family, communitarianism is generally understood, as a set of interactions, within a community of people in a given place or within a community that shares an interest or shares a history. According to a certain international opinion, communitarianism reflects the African conception of identity, humanism, dignity, respect and mutual trust for a meaningful life. However, communitarianism is not a characteristic specific to Africa, but a natural ideology that exists in the consciousness of each individual, regardless of their culture (Emedo, 2023). The communitarianism of the actors plays a vital role in defining perceived opportunities, as it strengthens social ties and influences cooperation or confrontation between them. Communitarians may be more inclined to seek opportunities that benefit the community as a whole. According to Poizat (2001), communitarian thought considers that the policy of equal dignity has the effect of standardizing society in an attempt at homogenization, since it denies individuals the recognition of their cultural identity. Communitarianism is generally opposed to forms of individualism. For example, communitarians have considered Rawls' work as a model of individualistic thought that is both forgetful and destructive of community ties (Guérard de Latour, 2016). The individualism of actors intervenes in the way they evaluate opportunities and make strategic decisions. Individualism is the tendency to assert oneself independently of others, not to be part of a group. It corresponds to a conception of life in society in which the individual constitutes the central value. This notion then emphasizes the freedom of the individual and their autonomy. Emedo (2023) established that individualism is an inherent trait of human beings, which is not specific to the West. Individualists will be more inclined to seize opportunities for the benefit of their own business. Individualists are the most opportunistic because they act for reasons of self-protection and only focus on their own interest, identity and have a low degree of moral obligation (Boukouyen, 2020, p. 116). It is thus easy to understand opportunism as the emanation or expression of individualism. However, opportunism can only be approached and understood in a community of practice. This is why opportunism is also an emanation of the communitarianism of the actors. Guérard de Latour (2016) emphasizes that the sense of community does not exclude the affirmation of individuality. The relationship between communitarianism and individualism is complex and multifaceted. It involves navigating the collective interests of a community while respecting the autonomy and aspirations of individual actors. Thus, recognizing and managing the interactions between communitarianism and individualism is necessary to meet the challenges and seize the opportunities of coopetition. This duality between communitarianism and individualism creates a breeding ground for opportunism, as actors are constantly seeking competitive advantages for their own interests, while seeking to maintain harmonious relationships within coopetition. It would therefore be possible to study this problem within an analytical framework mobilizing contract theory.

2.2. Theoretical anchoring: contract theory

We use contract theory to explain opportunistic behavior between actors in the same community of practice in a cooperative market. Contract theory models summarize the properties of the prevailing institutional framework through a "contract." The latter can be explicit, i.e., be the subject of a signed document. An explicit contract will generally be guaranteed by a "third party," such as a court or a conciliator, or simply by the desire of agents to maintain their good reputation. The contract can also be implicit, such as a system of behavioral norms whose violation is supposed to give rise to reprisals not necessarily codified in advance: a business leader can thus be ostracized by his peers if he adopts behavior deemed deviant or opportunistic behavior. The proper execution of such an implicit contract must then be perpetuated as a balance in the interaction between the parties. To understand the reasons why a priori opportunistic agents sign contracts that do not have the incentive characteristics of those of the normative theory, it must be admitted that one of the functionalities of contracts is to "symbolize" a commitment to cooperate. They thus establish a minimum trust that makes it possible to initiate a virtuous circle of speculations creating a mutual trust capable of generating cooperative behaviors even though the contractual system cannot eradicate opportunism (Brousseau, 1996). We specify that this contract is community-based. Indeed, it is an agreement between representative members of a community and a contracting authority. It can also be an agreement between communities or between different members of a community of practice. The contract implies the prior organization of the group concerned and, generally, legal recognition by statutes of the representative structure. The object of the contract must necessarily target a common interest, and the community

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plays a major role, either as an executor or as a client. It is the theory of the implicit contract that constitutes our framework of analysis to explain opportunism in a cultural community.

2.2.1. Opportunism of actors in a coopetition

Opportunism is manifested in the ability of actors to seize opportunities that arise, by adjusting their strategies according to their own interests and competitive dynamics. The issue of opportunism of partners in a relationship is highlighted and recognized in the literature, speaking of the problems related to the risk of loss or plundering of resources or divergence of interests and objectives specific to partners. Williamson (1985) defines opportunism as "pursuit of self-interest with subtlety" Luo & al. (2018) define opportunism as a behavior that takes advantage of asymmetry and knowledge outcomes by favoring agents with value and downgrades the value of other agents. As for Benjelloun & Balambo (2016), they define social and relational opportunism as: "The violation of social norms or formal or informal relationships established between partners either by agreement or expectations on previous actions between them and without any legal recourse. » They equate it with selfish behavior or the violation of an expected or established standard at the outset. We will retain the definition of Benjelloun & Balambo (2016) in this research. Yakovleva & al. (2016), Banoun & al. (2011) and Peillon (2001) propose two forms of opportunistic behavior, namely hold-up behavior and free rider behavior. Brousseau (1989) explains hold-up as: "an individual will respect the letter but not the spirit of his commitments if an opportunity to capture part of the surplus intended for his or her co-contractors arises." As for the behavior of the free rider or the shirker, Brousseau (1993) explains that it is linked to "the losses caused by an agent when he does not provide the counterpart expected by the other and the latter cannot accurately measure the harm he suffers. » Fernandez & Chiambaretto (2019) note the risk of the "free rider" which would be the main source of risk to which "coopetitors" are exposed, which comes from the temptation that companies may have to act opportunistically, that is to say to betray their partner. Opportunism has a variety of forms (Broda, 2009; Benjelloun & Balambo, 2016). It consists of the pursuit of personal interest with cunning, including lying, bad faith, theft and deception, cheating, deception, fabrication of forgeries, manipulation, bluffing, broken promises, breach of trust, violation of social and relational norms, distortion of information, selfishness, blackmail, reintroduction of competition, appropriation of value, underperformance, etc. Coopetition is not immune to opportunism. Roy (2010) defines coopetition as a relationship that reflects a situation where two or more companies are both competitors and partners. As for Dagnino & al. (2007), coopetition is a rapprochement of interests between complementaries when cooperation and competition occur simultaneously. The risk of opportunism is increased by competition simultaneously, occurring with the need to collaborate (Salvetat & Géraudel, 2011). Coopetition is a strategic relationship presented as fragile in the face of the presumed opportunism of partners (Assens, 2011; Salvetat & Géraudel, 2011). The sole criterion of effectiveness of institutions and organizations is to prevent people from cheating (Favereau, 2016). Opportunism leads to negative consequences, which concern both the respect of partners' commitments and the sharing of the rent created through cooperation. An opportunistic partner appropriates the rents of an alliance only in the short term, but will lose future rents from the specific alliance and from its own investments in the long term (Kumar, 2016). These problems constitute major obstacles to the coordination of partner firms (Banoun et al., 2011). Nevertheless, El Machhour (2021) shows that opportunism can be considered an opportunity and no longer a constraint. Opportunism does not have a significant negative impact on performance (Haq et al., 2019). Game theory and the famous prisoner's dilemma (Rappoport & Chammah, 1965) show that competing actors will prefer confrontation rather than cooperation because of the risk of opportunism of one of the actors. Salvetat & Géraudel (2011) emphasize that actors tend to prefer cooperation to opportunism since their relationships are long-term and actors are all winners. It then appears, for companies that are in competition, that it is the risk of opportunism of the competitor that is a brake on cooperation (Williamson, 1975). Indjendje Ndala (2024) emphasizes that balanced coopetition or cooperation with a more competitive tendency favors the opportunism of actors. From the above, we put forward hypothesis H1: "competitive coopetition between actors of the same community reduces opportunism."

2.2.2. Opportunism and trust

Trust is a belief based on the anticipation of others or on their ability to renounce opportunism (Bornarel, 2007). Trust is already underlying research on the determinants of opportunism (John, 1984). Donada & Nogatchewsky (2007) point out that trust carries within itself the roots of opportunism because it leads to a decrease in the vigilance and control of the one who trusts. To combat the risk of opportunism and promote the success of cooperation, it is necessary to introduce trust between the actors (Ngidjima Loleke Lotshangola, 2017). Shared values and the convergence of interests seem to limit the risk of opportunism and promote a strong community spirit marked by cohesion and stability (Allouche & Amann, 1999). To neutralize the motivations for opportunistic behavior, Seliverstova et al. (2016) suggest raising the level of trust in relationships and strengthening network ties between participants. The gift of trust, expressed through the acceptance of one's vulnerability to opportunism, leads to the establishment of informal steering mechanisms based on self-control (Aissaoui et al., 2017). Indjendje Ndala (2024) shows that an intermediary who arouses trust and mistrust of actors in coopetition explains opportunism. The relationship of trust and

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cooperation within a community is essential. A community can encourage the emergence of opportunistic behaviors, when trust and cooperation are impacted. The relationship between communitarianism and opportunism has an impact on trust and cooperation within the same community. When the sense of community belonging is compromised by opportunistic and deceptive behaviors, trust between members, which is the pillar of any harmonious relationship, is seriously shaken and gradually destroyed. This leads to reduced cooperation, as individuals become distrustful and reluctant to share resources or engage in collective activities. When trust is lacking, the consequences can lead to community fragmentation and weakened functioning. We then hypothesize H2: "Trust among coopetitors in the same community reduces opportunism."

2.2.3. Opportunism and sanction

Benghazala & al. (2017), Brousseau (2000) and Wu & Choi (2004) advocate mechanisms to limit opportunism and protect potential harmed parties. Luo & al. (2018) emphasize that it is important to eliminate such selfish behavior in multi-agent systems, because it has undesirable results for agents. The risk of opportunism can be moderated, among other things, by horizontal alliance (Das, 2006) and/or sanction. Coopetition networks are ecosystems where opportunists would be ejected (Soumaya & Rabeau, 2012). These authors argue that the ecosystem is no longer healthy when actors adopt opportunistic transactional behaviors. Soumaya and Rabeau (2012) argue that there are preventive and punitive measures for opportunistic behaviors. Thus, an economic agent must behave correctly and thus gain the trust of his peers. Opportunistic behavior is limited by the threat of exclusion from the project rather than by the threat of litigation (Luo et al., 2018). They note that with "shirkers," the possibility of excluding the partner from future business opportunities constitutes credible potential sanctions. They continue that the contract encourages the contracting parties to keep their promises and behave honestly. On the other hand, Indjendje Ndala (2024) argues that sanctioning dishonest coopetitors explains opportunism. We then infer hypothesis H3: "sanctioning between coopetitors in the same community reduces opportunism."

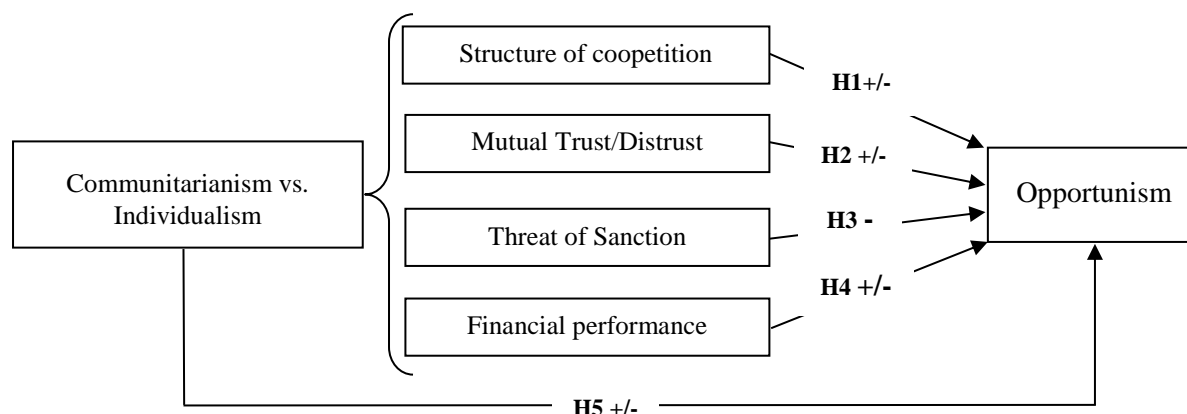
2.2.4. Opportunism and financial performance/revenues

Conflict between coopetitors is considered, among others, as opportunistic behavior by Benjelloun & Balambo (2016). However, studies analyzing the impact of conflict on performance nevertheless present contradictory results (Marza & al., 2020). Indjendje Ndala (2024) argues that increased financial performance explains the opportunism of actors in coopetition. We hypothesize H4: "the financial performance of coopetitors in the same community promotes opportunism."

2.3. Hypothetical model

Figure 1 suggests that individualism positively influences and communitarianism negatively influences the opportunistic behavior of actors. Communitarianism influences the structure of coopetition; it can create trust or mistrust between actors; when actors in a community brandish the threat of sanction or sanction their peers who do not respect the market operating rule such as the first-parking rule, then there is a reduction in opportunism. Communitarianism influences the increase or decrease in the financial performance of actors in a market, which can positively or negatively influence opportunism. Each variable has a positive, negative or mixed effect on the opportunistic behavior of actors in the same community.

Figure 1: Hypothetical model



Source : Author 2024

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

We successively present the methodology and sources of the study data, then the data processing technique.

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3.1. Research methodology

Our methodological approach is mixed quali-quantitative because it uses the qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) technique which is an innovative technique of empirical scientific work (Cronqvist & Berg-Schlösser, 2009; Roig-Tierno et al. 2017; Garreau & Romelaer, 2019). Indeed, it opens the way to a strategy that integrates the strengths of qualitative (case-oriented) and quantitative (variable-oriented) approaches. This method allows to establish causal relationships through systematic comparisons. The concordance and difference methods are particularly relevant (Roig-Tierno et al. 2017). According to the concordance method, if two or more cases of the phenomenon studied have a single circumstance in common, the circumstance common to these cases is the cause or effect of the given phenomenon. QCA analyzes empirical data for generalization of analyses by considering possible replication in subsequent studies and constructing logical propositions as a result of these studies.

3.2. Context and data used

We present the context of the research. An alternative transport activity between clandestine drivers in coopetition. The existence of under-integrated neighborhoods has offered an opportunity for artisans to launch into this recent suburban transport activity, the clandestine drivers, for about 20 years. The clandestine drivers are artisans or individual entrepreneurs who put their vehicles, often dilapidated, second, third or fourth hand, at the service of the populations living in these under-integrated neighborhoods that are difficult to access by conventional taxis that refuse to serve them. The reasons given are: the poor condition of the roads; the insecurity that reigns there; the untimely police checks; or the remoteness of these areas that are not profitable for conventional taxis. The activity often takes place in a place called "terminus" or "end of tar" or "clando", a place where ordinary taxis drop off customers and then the clandestine drivers take over to transport them to their homes. The operation of this activity is summed up by parking the different vehicles in order of arrival and in single file to load the customers. In an incremental process from the head of the line to the tail, the vehicles fill up gradually (4 to 5 customers). When all the places are occupied, the clando driver starts and the next one positions himself at the head to fill up, etc. The prices of the trips are from 100 to 300 FCFA depending on the distance and the hours. Beyond 9 p.m., the price doubles. These clando drivers cooperate in certain situations, for example to arrange the parking place or to perpetuate the activity. They have recently formed an association. They are simultaneously in competition, in particular on the practice of the rule of first position, on customers, on revenue, on working hours and the comfort of customers. We often observe cases of deviance on the part of clando drivers who from time to time violate the rule of first parking. They cheat, therefore they adopt opportunistic behavior. The data used are primary. They were collected by a questionnaire from 207 clandos in the parking areas. We briefly summarize the responses of the clandos in Table 1.

Table 1: Summaries of the Answers of the 207 clandos.

Answers	No. of clandos	%
All the clandos are in coopetition of which 65.2% believe that they are more in competition than in cooperation all the time	135	65,2
34.8% of clandos believe that they are more in cooperation than in competition occasionally.	12	5,8
29% of clandos believe that they are in balanced coopetition (where cooperation is at the same level as competition occasionally).	60	29
clandos are opportunistic and cheat on the first-time parking rules	114	55,1
The clandos believe that they distrust each other.	113	45,4
The clandos believe that they trust each other.	94	54,6
The clandos believe that their income is at the same level and therefore stable.	101	48,8
The clandos believe that their revenues are decreasing.	58	28,0
The clandos believe that their revenues are increasing.	48	23,2
The clandos let the clando cheats do it.	21	10,2
The clandos raise awareness and advise those who are dishonest.	45	21,7
The clandos reproach those who are dishonest.	49	23,7
The clandos impose sanctions on the unscrupulous (suspension or exclusion).	92	44,4
The clandos are nationals, Gabonese.	112	54,1
The clandos are nationals of Central Africa except the Gabonese.	35	16,9
The clandos are nationals of West Africa.	60	29

Source: Author 2024

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3.3. Variables, their measurements and processing technique

Seliverstova & al. (2016) emphasize that the cause-effect relationship between opportunistic behavior and the characteristics of contractual relationships requires additional evidence. Opportunistic behavior is among the main determining factors of the failure of partnership agreements, risking to interrupt and end exchange relationships (Benjelloun & Balambo, 2016). In our case, we retained the explained variable opportunistic behavior coded *OPPORTUNISM*{1} which represents the cheating of clandos in relation to the established rule of first parking. The explanatory conditions are: *ALLIANCE*{i} which represents the coopetition strategy in the market considered. *ALLIANCE*{0} is cooperative coopetition (actors are more in cooperation than in competition); *ALLIANCE*{1} represents balanced coopetition in which neither component dominates; *ALLIANCE*{2} represents competitive coopetition where actors are more in competition than in cooperation; *TRUST*{i} represents mutual trust/distrust between clandos. *TRUST*{0} is distrust between clandos and *TRUST*{1} is trust between them; *REVENUES*{i} represents the variation in daily income of clandos, *REVENUES*{0} the decreasing income, *REVENUES*{1} the income is at the same level (stable) and *REVENUES*{2} the income is increasing; *SANCTION*{i} represents the sanctions that clandos inflict on each other in case of cheating or any reprehensible behavior in this environment. *SANCTION*{0} is laissez-faire, no peer intervention, *SANCTION*{1} peers raise awareness by giving advice; *SANCTION*{2} peers reproach the person concerned, *SANCTION*{3} peers impose sanctions on the cheating person concerned, essentially, temporary suspension or exclusion from the market. *CULTURE*{i} represents the community of clandos; *CULTURE*{0} represents nationals (Gabonese); *CULTURE*{1} represents clandos from Central Africa except nationals (Gabonese); *CULTURE*{2} represents clandos from West Africa.

Table 2: Variables and operationalization

Variable	Modality	
<i>OPPORTUNISM</i> {i}	i=0 : Honesty, respect for the rule	i=1 : Opportunism or cheating
<i>ALLIANCE</i> {i}	i=0 : Cooperative Coopetition	i=1 : Balanced coopetition
	i=2 : Competitive coopetition	
<i>CULTURE</i> {i}	i=0 : Nationals (Gabonese)	i=1 : National of Central Africa except Gabonese
	i=2 : West African national	
<i>TRUST</i> {i}	i=0 : Mistrust	i=1 : Trust
<i>REVENUES</i> {i}	i=0 : Reduction in revenue	i=1 : Same level of revenue
	i=2 : Increase in revenue	
<i>SANCTION</i> {i}	i=0 : Permissive	i=1 : Advice
	i=2 : Reproaches	i=3 : Suspension or Exclusion

Source : Author 2024

The processing technique we adopt is qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) in its multivariate version, mvQCA by Haesebrouck (2016). Indeed, other QCA variants are limited and use dichotomized conditions, but mvQCA offers potential advantages of using multi-valued conditions. Its implementation is practical and follows a standard procedure in four steps. The Tosmana v.1.6.1 software implemented the mvQCA technique (Cronqvist, 2019). We used it for computerized data processing.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

We present the results and their interpretations, then we discuss these results. Finally, we present the managerial implications that arise from them.

4.1. Results: formula, interpretations and decisions on hypotheses

$$ALLIANCE\{0\} * CULTURE\{0\} + CULTURE\{1\} * TRUST\{1\} * REVENUES\{0\} + CULTURE\{2\} * [TRUST\{0\} * REVENUES\{2\} + TRUST\{1\} * REVENUES\{0\}] + ALLIANCE\{2\} * TRUST\{1\} * SANCTION\{1\} == OPPORTUNISM \{1\}$$

We interpret the formula of opportunism which is explained:

- by national actors (Gabonese) under the condition of cooperative coopetition
- (OR) by Central African nationals except Gabonese, under the condition that they trust each other and that they have decreasing revenues.
- (OR) by West African nationals:

Either, under the condition that they distrust each other and that they have increasing revenues;

(OR), under the condition that they trust each other and that they have decreasing revenues.

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- (OR) by all actors in community diversity, under the condition of competitive coopetition, that they trust each other and that they are made aware by advice from their peers in the event of cheating.

Our research results show that trust and declining financial performance or distrust and increasing financial performance in the same transnational community explain opportunism. So transnational communitarianism catalyzes opportunism, each time, under two conditions. On the other hand, national communitarianism favors opportunism under the condition of cooperative coopetition. However, confidence in competitive coopetition without sanctioning unscrupulous actors also explains opportunism but in an individualistic approach. So individualism favors opportunism under three conditions.

Table 3: Decision on assumptions

Hypothèses	Décisions
H1: "competitive coopetition of actors from the same community reduces opportunism."	Invalidated
H2: "trust between coopetitors of the same community reduces opportunism."	Invalidated
H3: "sanctioning between coopetitors of the same community reduces opportunism."	Invalidated
H4: "the financial performance of coopetitors in the same community promotes opportunism."	Invalidated

Source : Author 2024

4.2. Discussion of results

We discuss the previous results by retaining two main orientations. Indeed, the opportunistic behavior of coopetitors is explained by a national or transnational communitarianism of the actors on the one hand, and by the individualism of the actors on the other hand.

The first orientation is that the opportunism explained by national or transnational communitarianism is a paradox that is explained, nevertheless, by:

- the rivalry or competition that dominates in coopetition between actors. Indeed, actors from the same community from the same country or from a foreign country develop a competitive coopetition. This result is in line with Salvetat & Géraudel (2011), Indjendje Ndala (2024). It contradicts the ideas of Rappoport & Chammah (1965) and Assens (2011).

- the suspicion, the mistrust that can exist between actors of coopetition. The latter in coopetition, consider that the business world is a space without concession where solidarity and common values are temporarily put on hold. Thus, during this period of time, all blows are allowed between partners and members of the same national community or of the same community beyond the national territory. This result is in contradiction with Bornarel (2007), Ngidjima Loleke Lotshangola (2017), Allouche & Amann (1999), Seliverstova & al. (2016), concerning trust. But it confirms that of Donada & Nogatchewsky (2007) and Indjendje Ndala (2024) with the help of an intermediary who encourages trust. We point out that opportunism in turn influences trust. Which allows us to say that there is a negative reciprocal relationship between opportunism and trust, contradicting Kaboré and Sané (2021). - The sanction established in the community which paradoxically does not reduce the propensity for opportunism of the actors. This result is in disagreement with Soumaya & Rabeau (2012) and Luo & al. (2018) but confirms the result of Indjendje Ndala (2024). We can therefore retain that the effect of communitarianism annihilates "the fear of the policeman". The actors are not afraid of the sanction of their peers.

The second orientation is that opportunism in a coopetition is explained by the individualism of the actors. This result is trivial because individualism is the essence of opportunism. Indeed, Luo & al. (2018) argues that opportunism is a selfish behavior that intentionally takes advantage of the asymmetry of relevant knowledge to obtain its own gain, regardless of the value of the other agents. This result confirms Williamson's definition of opportunism (1985), Granovetter's idea (2000) and it is in agreement with the forms of opportunism of Broda (2009) and Benjelloun & Balambo (2016). Finally, we discuss a counter-intuitive result of this research carried by the invalidation of hypothesis H4. The unbridled search for financial performance that can favor the opportunism of actors in coopetition, by greed, is paradoxically not an explanation of opportunism. Which is a counter-intuitive result. Therefore the effect of greed that can imply opportunism, is attenuated by the effect of communitarianism. This result finds a reality in religious communities or in the social economy.

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V. CONCLUSION

The relationship between opportunistic behavior and communitarianism in a coopetition is shown in this research seeking to answer the question "To what extent does communitarianism vs. individualism influence opportunism in a coopetition between individual companies?" We mobilized the contract theory to explain the opportunism of clandos in their respective community. Our methodological approach is mixed using the method of comparative qualitative analysis. The data are collected from a questionnaire administered to 207 clandos. The main results are that communitarianism does indeed explain opportunism under certain specific conditions. But individualism also explains opportunism. Indeed, in the community composed of nationals, they must be in a cooperative coopetition. In the community formed by nationals of Central Africa (except the Gabonese), they must trust each other and have decreasing revenues. Finally, in the community formed by West African nationals, they must: distrust each other and have increasing revenues on the one hand, trust each other and have decreasing revenues on the other hand. Incidentally, the individualism of the actors also explains opportunism under the conditions that coopetition is competitive, that the actors trust each other and that they are made aware by advice from their peers in the event of cheating. Therefore, the communitarianism of national actors and transnational actors explains opportunism, on the one hand, and the individualism of the actors in general also explains opportunism. These results allow us to refute all the hypotheses retained above. The contributions of this research are theoretical and managerial. Concerning the theoretical contributions, we integrate communitarianism into the theory of contracts as an element that paradoxically encourages opportunism, competitive coopetition and the intrepidity of the actors, instead of respectively, attenuating opportunism, encouraging cooperation and fearing the policeman. Concerning the managerial contributions, the results of this research make it possible to propose to practitioners such as managers, institutions and market regulatory bodies to control the effects of communitarianism in business relations that can push actors to opportunism. It is necessary to introduce an intermediary in markets that have a propensity for communitarianism, who would play the role of regulator or arbitrator to encourage actors to trust, who can sanction and reduce the perverse effects of communitarianism. For these practitioners, understanding the interaction between opportunism, communitarianism and individualism makes it possible to understand the challenges and opportunities presented by coopetition. Actors must recognize the influence of opportunism in cooperative relationships. While it may be tempting to seek short-term gains at the expense of the partner, it is necessary to maintain a long-term perspective and cultivate trust and collaboration. This requires a degree of transparency, integrity, and mutual respect to ensure the success of cooperative ventures. Furthermore, actors must find a balance between communitarianism and individualism. On the one hand, fostering a sense of community and shared goals can improve the effectiveness of cooperation. On the other hand, individual actors must also assert their own interests and capabilities to remain competitive in the cooperative environment. Thus, finding the right balance between these two forces will enable the success of coopetition. Therefore, coopetition practitioners must be aware of the implications of opportunism, communitarianism, and individualism in their interactions with their partners. By adopting transparency, integrity and a balance between collective and individual interests, actors can effectively exploit the opportunities offered by coopetition while mitigating its inherent challenges. The limitation of this research is mainly theoretical. Indeed, the lack of consideration of contextual factors specific to each community limits the practical applicability of a theory. In addition, some theoretical approaches may underestimate the complexity of interactions within a community, not allowing an in-depth analysis of the relationship between communitarianism and opportunism in real contexts. The limits of opportunism in coopetition can be exacerbated by factors such as communitarianism and individualism of actors. Cultural diversity, shared values and competing interests make it difficult to create sustainable cooperative relationships. In addition, concerns related to trust, transparency and risk management can limit the ability of actors to exploit coopetition opportunities. As perspectives, it would be interesting to explore in depth the moderating or mediating effects of communitarian culture on the relationship between financial performance and opportunism. This could include the analysis of mediation mechanisms, the establishment of community norms and adapted governance models. It would also be necessary to study the long-term effects of community dynamics on individual and collective behaviours, in order to identify levers of action to promote more harmonious and ethical interactions. The coexistence of communitarianism and individualism is inherent in any cooperative competition, and it is crucial to recognise and exploit the strengths of both. The future of coopetition lies in the acceptance of diversity, the promotion of collaboration, good communication and a culture of trust and ethical commitment. In this way, organisations can better position themselves to take advantage of opportunities and mitigate the impacts of opportunism. Finally, it would be wise to study in depth and specify the determinants and effects of the communitarianism of national culture and that of transnational culture on opportunism in coopetition.

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