

Integration of coopetition paradox by individuals A case study within the French banking industry

Special track: “Managing coopetition in business networks – a practice perspective”

Abstract: This study seeks to provide insights into the principle of “integration of coopetition paradox” considered as a managerial necessity to manage coopetition situations. Coopetition is a relationships filled with tensions related to the coexistence of two contradictory dimensions of cooperation and competition. To manage this situation, individuals need to integrate the cooperative paradox, that means to accept cognitively the paradox and to integrate both contradictory dimensions into their daily activities. The cognitive dimension of the integration principle and its consequences on managerial practices remain under investigated in previous literature. How do individuals perceive the coopetition paradox? What are the consequences of the integration principle on managerial practices? We aim to fill this gap by identifying how individuals are capable of integrating coopetition paradox and how do they deal with it in their daily management. Based on an in-depth study of an exemplar case of intra-firm coopetition we identify for the first time in the cooperative literature to show and discuss different capacities of integration of the coopetition paradox between managers. According to the integration principle at the individual level, individuals should cognitively accept the coopetition paradox and behave correspondingly to their cognitive perception, emphasizing on both dimensions of cooperation and competition. However, in this study, we show that managerial practices can be disconnected from a cognitive acceptance of the paradox. Moreover, depending on the level of the cognitive integration, we point out that managerial tools are insufficient to efficiently manage coopetition and that all manager are not capable of integrate the paradox and handle coopetition situations.

Key words: coopetition management, integration, perceptions, managerial practices

Paper: competitive paper

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INTRODUCTION

This study aims to go deeper in the understanding of the integration of the coopetition paradox by individuals. Coopetition relationships are filled with tensions related to the coexistence of two contradictory dimensions of cooperation and competition (Bengtsson and Kock, 2003; Fernandez et al., 2014; Gnyawali and Park, 2011; Raza-Ullah et al., 2014; Tidström, 2014). Because tensions can entail the initial performance objectives, firms need to manage them (Fernandez et al., 2014; Raza-Ullah et al., 2014; Tidström, 2014). To manage cooperative tensions two main principles have been highlighted at the organizational level: the separation principle (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000; Dowling et al., 1996; Herzog, 2010) and the integration principle (Chen, 2008; Das and Teng, 2000; Oshri and Weber, 2006). More recent studies show that both principles should be combined to efficiently manage coopetition. In these cases, individuals need to integrate of the paradox (Fernandez et al., 2014; Pellegrin-Boucher et al., 2013). Therefore, the integration of the paradox by individuals seems mandatory for coopetition success.

Previous research refer to the integration principle as a cognitive acceptance of paradoxes and define it as the individual's capacity to integrate coopetition duality into their daily activities (Fernandez et al., 2014; Pellegrin-Boucher et al., 2013). However, the literature still debates whether all individuals hold the capacity to integrate the paradox or not. While some scholars advocate that individuals are incapable of integrating the coopetition duality and behaving correspondingly (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000) others scholars show that individuals are actually capable of such integration and corresponding behavior (Das and Teng, 2000; Oshri and Weber, 2006; Chen, 2008; Herzog, 2010; Pellegrin *et al.*, 2013; Fernandez *et al.*, 2014). Moreover, previous scholars of coopetition management paid less attention to the stakes of the integration for individuals: how do individuals perceive the coopetition paradox? How does the integration principle reflect on managerial practices? How do managerial practices impact on the coopetition success? As Walley (2007) argued, firms have to hire particular manager profiles capable of integrating the cooperative paradox. The question remains what is the appropriate manager profile for paradox integration.

In order to fill this gap in the literature, we aim at answering the following research questions (a) How do individuals perceive the coopetition paradox? (b) What are the consequences of the integration principle on managerial practices? Our research aims to fill these gaps.

To provide relevant insights, we conducted an in-depth study of an exemplar case of intra-firm coopetition: coopetition between the Sector Directors of the regional French Bank CIC (“Crédit, Industriel et Commercial”) within the Languedoc-Roussillon area. This approach allows us, for the first time in the cooperative literature, to compare the capacity of managers to integrate coopetition paradox.

First, our findings reveal that all individuals are not able to integrate coopetition paradox. Second, we show major differences between the cognitive integration and the real integration in practice. Individuals who integrate coopetition paradox in practice do not necessarily integrate it cognitively. Third, we identify different levels of integration by individuals.

Finally, we find that, in the same competition context, a managerial tool can be used to stimulate cooperation, to stimulate competition, or both at the same time. The use of this tool will depend on the level of the manager’s cognitive integration. Thus, the organizational design is not sufficient to manage competition and the managers seem to play a critical role.

Our findings contribute to competition literature in several ways. First, according to Bengtsson et al. (2010) we develop case-based insights into the individuals’ capacity to integrate the competition paradox, allowing comparisons between individuals in a same context. Such empirical comparison seems to be new in competition literature. Second, we develop insights into the integration principle. In previous literature, the dominant question was whether individuals can integrate the paradox (Chen, 2008; Das and Teng, 2000; Fernandez et al., 2014; Herzog, 2010; Oshri and Weber, 2006; Pellegrin-Boucher et al., 2013) or not (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000). Insights from our case study show that the reality is more complex. We identify two levels of integration and three different types of integration (conscious, unconscious and hidden). We define the conscious integration of competition as the managerial capacity to perceive the necessity of both dimensions (cooperation and competition) at the same level. This definition goes further than the previous ones (Fernandez et al., 2014; Pellegrin-Boucher et al., 2013). The existence of an unconscious integration encourages scholars to pay more attention to the cognitive dimensions of competition. Finally, our study suggests a managerial implication; the management implemented will vary depending on the manager profile. Firms may need to hire managers able to integrate the paradox and able to behave correspondingly. This result seems in line with previous intuitions (Walley, 2007).

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Brandenburger and Nalebuff proposed a broad approach of competition as the interplays in a “value-net” between a focal firm, its customer, its suppliers and its complementors (Brandenburger and Nalebuff, 1996). Bengtsson and Kock defined more narrowly competition as a “*dyadic and paradoxical relationship that emerges when two firms cooperate in some activities, and at the same time compete with each other in other activities*” (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000, p. 412). Narrower definitions allow a better understanding of the concept and its implications (Gnyawali and Park, 2011). Based on a similar approach, and in order to focus on both the synchronic and the paradoxical dimension of competition, we define competition as a paradoxical relationship between two or more actors simultaneously involved in cooperative and competitive interactions (Bengtsson and Kock, 2014). A definition which is consistent with the most recent definitions of competition a relationship with a simultaneous pursuit of cooperation and competition (Gnyawali and Park, 2011).

If competition is a source of value, it also creates instability and tensions within the firm (Das and Teng, 2000; Bengtsson and Kock, 2003; Fernandez et al., 2014; Gnyawali and Park, 2011; Lacoste, 2014; Raza-Ullah et al., 2014). Tensions arise from the combination of two opposite dimensions of cooperation and competition. Tension is often multidimensional and multi-level, and dealing with tension requires an implicit recognition and management of the inherent contradictions (Murnighan and Conlon, 1991; Raza-Ullah et al., 2014). Fernandez and colleagues (2014) have distinguished sources of competitive tensions at three levels: inter-organizational, intra-organizational and inter-individual. And the outcomes of competition depend on how competitive tensions are managed (Tidström, 2014). The

management of cooperation becomes a critical link between the adoption of cooperation and the success of the relationship.

The management of cooperation

To understand the management of the simultaneous pursuit of cooperation and competition, we go through past contributions on intra and inter organizational cooperation.

The pioneers of cooperation management literature, consistent with the paradox solving approach through splitting, explained that “*individuals can not cooperate and compete with each other simultaneously, and therefore the two dimensions of interactions need to be separated*” (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000, p. 423). Thus, the management of cooperation and the management of competition should be split to manage cooperative tensions (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000; Dowling et al., 1996; Herzog, 2010). The separation can be functional, temporal or spatial. Partners can cooperate on one dimension of the value chain (i.e., R&D) while competing on another dimension (i.e., marketing activities).

However, other scholars note the limitations of this principle (Chen, 2008; Das and Teng, 2000; Oshri and Weber, 2006). The separation principle appears to be inefficient because it creates new internal tensions within the organization and integration issues for individuals. In the example cited above, a conflict can arise between both departments. One of the heads can be perceived as a “traitor” because he collaborates with “the enemy”. The separation principle stimulated the internal inter-individual competition. Thus, it becomes very important to look for other solutions to manage cooperation.

As noted by Wong and Tjosvold (2010), managers of competing organizations that have many personal connections avoid discussing their various conflicts in competitive win-lose ways. Thus, inter-individual relationships and personal interactions strongly contribute to cooperation management in a win-win way. To encourage these inter-individual relationships and personal interactions, an integration principle is highly recommended (Chen, 2008; Das and Teng, 2000; Oshri and Weber, 2006).

The integration principle is consistent with the acceptance of paradoxes (Lewis, 2000; Lüscher and Lewis, 2008; Murnighan and Conlon, 1991; Smith and Lewis, 2011), which allows individuals to understand their roles in a paradoxical context and to behave accordingly, following both dimensions simultaneously. Thus, the challenge for managers is to simultaneously manage cooperation and competition to optimize the benefits of cooperation (Luo, 2007). Instead of reducing competition or cooperation, firms would rather maintain them in a balance (Clarke-Hill et al., 2003). Relevant managerial tools are then required to reach this balance and to preserve it (Chen et al., 2007; Chen, 2008).

The literature review highlights two main but opposed principles to manage cooperative tensions. In the separation approach, individuals are unable to integrate the cooperation duality. Consequently, to address cooperative tensions, an appropriate organization design separates cooperation from competition. Conversely, in the integration approach, individuals can integrate cooperation duality into their daily activities. Thus, managing cooperation relies on the development of individuals’ capacity for paradox integration.

Recent studies highlight the possible combination of both principles to efficiently manage cooperative tensions (Fernandez et al., 2014; Pellegrin-Boucher et al., 2013). When the separation principle is used, it creates internal tensions within firms, specifically between employees who are in charge of cooperation and those in charge of competition. Such internal tensions threaten the organization stability. Thus, the integration principle at the individual level is required in addition to the separation principle. This integration principle relies on individuals' capabilities to understand each other roles. The understanding of the paradoxical dimension of cooperation limits the internal tensions within the firm and allows individuals to behave not too cooperatively or not too competitively with their competitors. Thus, separation and integration principles are not two options but rather complementary and simultaneous solutions.

Some scholars agreed on the importance of the integration of the cooperation paradox at the individual level. However, some authors advocate that individuals are incapable of integrating the cooperation duality and behaving correspondingly (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000). Though, the question remains how individuals can be able of to integrate such a paradox and how do they deal with it in their daily managerial activities.

The integration principle

Previous researches refer to the integration principle as a cognitive acceptance of paradoxes and define it as the individual's capacity to integrate cooperation duality into their daily activities (Fernandez et al., 2014; Pellegrin-Boucher et al., 2013). However, the literature still debates whether all individuals hold the capacity to integrate the paradox or not. While some scholars advocate that individuals are incapable of integrating the cooperation duality and behaving correspondingly (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000) and other scholars show that individuals are actually capable of such integration and corresponding behavior (Das and Teng, 2000; Oshri and Weber, 2006; Chen, 2008; Herzog, 2010; Pellegrin *et al.*, 2013; Fernandez *et al.*, 2014).

Paradoxical tensions elicit strong reactions as attending to inconsistencies increases individuals' ambivalence, and ultimately threatens their ego (Lewis, 2000). In this context, managers would develop mechanisms such as repressing, denying, or splitting tensions, which emphasize one aspect of the duality over the other (Smith and Lewis, 2012). On the contrary, the integration principle would lead to managers emphasizing both dimensions of cooperation, and behaving as a schizophrenic individual (Fernandez et al., 2014). As pointed out by Gnyawali and Park (2009), in a cooperative situations, managers are expected to have some specific behaviors and cognitive approaches of cooperation that lead to a more effective management of the cooperative dynamics.

The effective management of contradictions is rooted in paradoxical cognition—managerial frames and processes that recognize and embrace contradiction (Smith and Tushman, 2005). To integrate the cooperation paradox, we look at the cognitive frames that a manager needs to develop.

For previous scholars, individuals need to have a specific perception of cooperation paradox to integrate it (Fernandez et al., 2014). Such a perception would allow individuals to

simultaneously manage competition and cooperation without avoiding the paradox and the tensions (Fernandez and Le Roy, 2014).

As pointed out by the pioneers of coopetition, coopetitors need to have a complement mindset instead of a pure competitor mindset (Brandenburger and Nalebuff, 1996). This complement mindset would allow individuals to accept tensions between competition and cooperation and embraces related conflict, diversity and variety (Luo, 2007). The “coopetitive mindset” can refer to the paradoxical categorization (Keller et al., 2012) or to the ability to cognitively perceive and understand key issues and challenges in inter-firm relationships (analytical management capabilities) (Gnyawali et al., n.d.). Individuals can develop mindsets through past experiences of coopetition (Luo, 2007).

In this lowest form, the integration is conscious and aims at integrating and helps individuals to be conscious of the coopetitive situation and its advantages. Thanks to the coopetitive mindset, individuals understand the interdependence between competition and cooperation (Chen, 2002). In its extreme form, the integration is unconscious and aims at transcending the paradox. In this case, individuals do not perceive the tensions created by the paradoxical context. They do not see the combination of competition and cooperation as a paradoxical logic (Chen, 2008). In this extreme case of paradox transcending, the integration by individuals is fully unconscious.

Managers who have integrated the coopetition paradox would have to facilitate the integration at lowest level of the organization (Gnyawali and Park, 2009; Lado et al., 1997; Luo, 2007). Managers would contribute to implement a corporate culture that fosters a yin-yang philosophy (Lado et al., 1997; Luo, 2007). They would help other managers to also develop a coopetition mind-set (Gnyawali and Park, 2009).

Managers who have integrated the coopetition paradox would contribute to define clear boundaries for competition and for cooperation, which is critical since it determines the subsequent structure of coopetition (Luo, 2007). Moreover, individuals would be able to perceive competition opportunities (Gnyawali and Park, 2009), to keep tensions at a reasonable level and to create positive effects of felt tension on performance (Gnyawali et al., n.d.).

Literature gap and research questions

The literature on coopetition management insisted on the importance of the integration of the coopetition paradox by individuals. We explore such an integration principle.

We noticed that the integration can be conscious and leading to a simple form of acceptance of coopetition or can be unconscious and leading to an extreme form of transcendence. In the simplest form of integration, tensions are identified, accepted and managed. In the more complex form of integration, the manager has no conscious of the tensions. Is this situation better? Some firms look after tensions to create divergent thinking and transcending solution as they rise alertness and question routines (Gnyawali et al., n.d.). The situation of no tensions perceived can be far from ideal. Thus, it raises the question of which level of integration is the best to manage coopetition. But before answering this question, it is

essential to explore the different levels of integration. Consequently, our first research question is, how do individuals perceive the paradox of competition?

A few studies tried to detail the dimensions of the “right” cooperative behavior (Lado et al., 1997; Luo, 2007). However, the consequences of the integration principle on managerial practices remain under investigated. Further researches are required to explain and define the “cooperative behavior”. This leads to our second research question. What are the consequences of the integration principle on managerial practices?

These two research questions would contribute to link cognitive dimensions of competition with managerial practices.

METHOD AND EMPIRICAL SETTINGS

Research design

This research aims to understand how individuals perceive the paradox of competition and how these perceptions influence the management of competition relationships. Following Bengtsson and colleagues (2010) recommendations, we conducted a single case study to explore the perceptions of competition relationships. Case-based exploratory methods are appropriate for understanding poorly understood phenomenon (Eisenhardt, 1989) with multiple and complex elements (Dodgson et al., 2008) that evolve over time (Langley, 1999). In-depth studies are the best way to explore a multi-faceted and paradoxical phenomenon such as the perceptions of competition relationships (Dowling et al., 1996; Luo et al., 2006; Tsai, 2002). Accordingly, we conducted an in-depth study of an exemplar case of intra-firm competition to develop insights about the perceptions of competition relationships (Yin, 2003)

Case selection

We decided to focus our attention on the CIC (Crédit Industriel et Commercial – Industrial and Commercial Credit). It is the oldest French deposit bank created in 1859. Since then, the bank developed an internationalized strategy combined with a diversification strategy. The bank extended its activity portfolio to insurance business and to telecoms services. The CIC product portfolio currently includes: life insurance, leasing, factoring, third-party asset management business, salary savings and property.

In 1998, Crédit Mutuel took over CIC. In 2000, a new organization was implemented with a common Information System, a common social policy and the creation of new point-of-sales. The group CIC-Crédit Mutuel also modified the territorial organization of the activity. The new organization is structured around six centres of activity: CIC East (located in Strasbourg), CIC West (located in Nantes), CIC North (located in Lille), CIC South-East (located in Lyon), CIC Paris and CIC South-West (located in Bordeaux). Each regional headquarter is autonomous to decide how to achieve its goals and thus each regional bank has a proper commercial strategy. The national French CIC network is up to 2000 agencies, up to 20000 employees. In 2013, the revenue of the bank was about 232 million euros.

Due to a facilitated access to the data, we deeper investigate the case of CIC South-West. Still due to a facilitated access to the data, we decided to focus our attention on the

Languedoc-Roussillon province. The Languedoc-Roussillon province was composed of 11 sectors.

Data collection

We intentionally conducted a qualitative case study to avoid the constraints of a preliminary choice of analytic tools or data (Yin, 2003), making it possible to access heterogeneous data collected from a variety of sources (Langley and Royer, 2006). According to Raza-Ullah and colleagues (2014), we investigated perceptions of coopetition at the intra-organisational level. Data for this study were gathered by non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis. The collection of primary and secondary data enabled us to use triangulation techniques (Eisenhardt, 1989; Gibbert et al., 2008; Guba and Lincoln, 1994). We strived for the highest level of rigor in terms of internal and construct validity (Gibbert *et al.*, 2008).

We focused our attention on coopetition strategies within CIC South-West. Observations of Management Committee meetings, Executive Committee meetings and weekly steering committee meetings were recorded over a seven-month period from March 2014 to September 2014. In total, field notes were recorded for over 9 hours of meetings in the field. These notes were devoted to understanding the managerial structure of the banking network, the human resource policy, the set of objectives and the messages communicated to the different agencies. Dimensions observed during these meetings included: interactions between individuals, individuals’ behaviors, private jokes, personal ties, workspace, tone of messages, the use of collaborative or competitive lexical fields and leadership.

The data gathering also involved 11 semi-structured interviews (with the duration of interviews ranging from 53 to 134 minutes and averaging 87 minutes) conducted with all the Directors of Sectors of the Languedoc-Roussillon province. We have interviewed all the Directors of Sectors of the province. Thus, we obtained a 100% of representativeness.

Table 1. Distribution of the semi-structured interviews

Interview number	Localization	Interview duration	Observation
1	Carcassonne	107	
2	Millau	119	
3	Lattes	135	
4	Perpignan	67	
5	Perpignan	80	
6	Narbonne	102	
7	Montpellier Celleneuve	60	Non recorded
8	Clermont l’Hérault	102	
9	Montpellier comédie	52	
10	Agde	66	
11	Béziers	64	

All interviews were conducted face to face in their agency. The interviews were recorded (except one) and then transcribed as soon as possible to preserve the quality of the data (Gibbert et al., 2008). Following Gioia et al. (2012), the anonymity of interviewees would be preserved and their names would not be mentioned in verbatim.

Concerning secondary data, we used various sources, such as internal reports (e.g., management dashboards, indicators, performance scorecards, financial statements) and external documents (e.g., press reviews, banking reports, two hours film on the history of the bank).

The discussion below is based on the information collected from the primary and secondary data sources. Interviewees provided us information about different facets of their management. A Director of Sector DS manages his Sector but also his agency. In this article, we focused our attention on the perceptions and the managerial practices linked with the Sector. We provide quotes and related information in developing our insights.

The primary and secondary data were coded according to the recommendations of Miles and Huberman (1994). The reasoning for this method was abductive; thus, the phases of the empirical investigation were alternated with theoretical reviews. Two stages could be differentiated in the analysis process.

Coding process for the perceptions of coopetition paradox

The objective was to understand how individuals perceive and understand the key issues and challenges of being in a coopetitive situation. First, we identified in the managers’ discourse, key facts referring to a coopetition situation (table 2).

Table 2. Perceptions of cooperation and of competition

	Description	Importance of the dimension at the sector level	Limitations at the sector level	Summary of the discourse and perception of the management type
Cooperation				
Competition				

Second, we ordered the interviewees depending on the importance of cooperation and the importance of competition in their discourse (table 3). We obtained 3 different profiles of Directors of Sectors (“Cooperation +++ & Competition +”; “Cooperation +++ & Competition +++”; “Cooperation + & Competition +++”).

Table 3. Grouping and ordering of DS

	Director of Sector (DS) A	DS B	DS...	DS X
Discourse (emerging)				
Type of management (emerging)				
Quotes				

The next step consisted in moving from managerial discourses (1st order concepts) to themes (2nd order concepts). In Table 4, we present the example of the description of cooperation for the first category of DS. For these DS cooperation is very important (+++) and competition is relatively important (+).

Table 4. From 1st order to 2nd order concepts

First order concept		Second order concept		
Description of cooperation	Source	Grouping similar descriptions		
Argument 1	DS A	Argument 1	DS A	Theme 1

Argument 2	DS A	Argument 2	DS B	
Argument 1	DS B	Argument 1	DS B	Theme 2
Argument 2	DS B	Argument 4	DS X	
...	

Finally, we aggregated dimensions for each theme identified to highlight differences (Table 5).

Table 5. From Themes to Aggregated dimensions

Theme 1 (DS cooperation +++)	Aggregated dimensions
Theme 1 (DS cooperation +++ and competition +++)	

Coding process for managerial practices

First, we let emerged all the different managerial practices (Column 1, Table 6). From these practices, categories of managerial practices emerged. We grouped practices for each type of integration (identified in the discourse analysis). We also analyze each practice separately (latest line, Table 6). Each type of integration seems characterized by different managerial practices. And moreover, within each the type of integration, different managerial practices were found.

Table 6. Example of analysis of managerial practices

		A cooperative behavior from a Sector Director to an Agency Director			Practices to creates a cooperation between the agencies of the sector		
		<i>Inputs of advice, experiences, support to the DA of the sector</i>	<i>Give some clients or prospects to DA instead of his own agency</i>	<i>Attend business meetings to verify the management and communication</i>	<i>Encourage/Force the sharing of best practices between Agency Directors</i>	<i>Create a team spirit through formal meetings and demonstrations (output restaurant, exit bar...)</i>	<i>Play on agencies complementarity</i>
Coop +++ et Comp +	3 Sector Directors	YES	?	?	YES	YES	YES
	2 Sector Directors	YES	YES (for one sector director)	?	YES	YES	YES
Coop +++ et Comp +++	2 Sector Directors	YES	YES (for one sector director)	YES	YES	YES	?
	2 Sector Directors	YES	?	YES	YES	YES	?
Coop+ et Comp +++	1 Sector Director	YES	?	YES	?	?	NO
Results	For 10 of the 11 Sector Directors: for the last one we had not enough information	Accepting the cooperation DS to DA	No hierarchy of the practices of cooperation	Especially the competitive one (more control?)	Except the mainly competitive, the all encourage the cooperation between the agencies		Only mainly cooperative

Empirical settings

We investigated perceptions of cooptation paradox at the intra-organizational level, within the CIC South-West. The banking sector is *per se* a competitive sector due to the commercial characteristics of the banking activities. Rapid changes in financial services are threatening retail banks, which find themselves in a stronger competition with each other (Boot and Thakor, 2000). In France, CIC is competing against Crédit Agricole, Société Générale, Crédit Lyonnais etc. to win new clients and to increase its market share. Within the CIC group, cooperation is required by top managers to develop synergies, projects and to create value in order to better compete outside the boundaries of the group. cooperation contributes to increase the size of the pie for all the CIC members. Thus, at the group level, competition was governing the relationship between CIC and the other banks of the sector and cooperation was supposed to drive the relationships inside the group. However, the parent firm also ranked the regional banks according to the achievement of the objectives. Financial indicators, numbers and rates were used to stimulate the commercial competition between the six regional banks. At the group level, relationships between regional banks were simultaneously competitive and cooperation i.e. cooptative. Headquarters used cooperation to stimulate the resource creation while using simultaneously competition to stimulate the combativeness and the determination of sales forces.

At the intra-group level, the same cooptation context was created. Each regional bank reproduced the same managerial trend. To be leader of the national ranking, each regional bank managed its own network with competition in order to stimulate each region and with cooperation to benefit from synergies. More precisely, at the regional level (Languedoc-Roussillon) we also observed the same managerial strategy. The regional director was expecting to be leading the CIC South-West by obtaining the best financial results. But from his point of view, the only way to succeed was to create cooperation between the different sectors. The figure 1 represents the cooptative context of the study.

The message communicated to the Directors of Sectors was clearly based on the mutual support, the exchange of best practices, the exchange of strategic information, the exchange of commercial tips and the creation of a team spirit. But this collaborative impulse did not reduce the level of competition between sectors or between agencies. Competition in the banking sector is genetic. Bankers are trained and stimulated by competition. They want to win the race no matter what happens. The CIC tried to create a new managerial approach based on the simultaneity of competition and collaboration. They created Sectors inside the regions, governed by Directors of Sectors. This new category of managers had the mission to drive a group of four to eight agencies in order to help them to improve their performances. Unlike other sectors in France and in order to make an emphasis on the missing collaborative relationship, Languedoc-Roussillon decided to limit the number of agencies in a sector to maximum eight agencies

So, the Director of Sector was stimulating cooperation to share the best practices. When an agency faces difficulties to achieve an objective related to specific item (financial, legislative or risk items), these difficulties will be compensated by the over performance of another

agency. The objective of the Director of Sector is to communicate the best-aggregated indicators to his boss (i.e. the head of the Region Languedoc-Roussillon).

However, the Director of Sector is also the Director of an Agency. In this position, he also has to fight for its own Agency. Its Agency should lead by example the Sector for all the items. Even if the Director of Sector aims to promote the Sector, he also expects its Agency to be leading the Sector. A leading which is needed to be legitimate to give advices, to expected a future promotion, to be autonomous in his management.

Directors of Sector are dealing with a cooperative context. They are simultaneously in cooperation and in competition relationships with the other Agencies directors of their sector. Thus, Director of Sector, appeared to be a key position to investigate how individuals perceive the paradox of cooperation and behave correspondingly. Moreover, Directors of Sector are free to choose their managerial practices as long as they perform. For us, it represents an opportunity to understand how the perceptions of the cooperation paradox influence managerial practices.

The interviews of all the Directors of Sector of the Languedoc-Roussillon region, combined with other data gathered from primary and secondary sources – provided interesting insights into the perceptions of the cooperation paradox and the influence of these perceptions on management practices.

MAIN FINDINGS

Individuals perceptions and understandings of a similar cooperative situation

First of all, our findings confirm differences of perceptions of cooperation paradox in a similar context. Some Directors of Sector (DS) are capable of integrating the cooperation paradox while others cannot. Our findings reveal three profiles of managers, with different perceptions and understandings of the cooperative relationship they manage.

Profile 1 “cooperation +++ and competition +”: emphasis on cooperation

Six DS perceive the interest of both competition and cooperation but consider they have to focus on a single dimension: the cooperation. The discourse of these managers was characterized by (1) an affirmation for the need for cooperation (experience and knowledge sharing ; complementarities etc.) which is healthy for the sector performance and naturally inexistent, (2) a denial of the need for competition for managing a sector even if they think that competition is generally healthy.

These DS are conscious of the competitive dimension between the agencies due to the commercial characteristics of the banking activities. Most of them perceive the competition positively as long as it stays informal. For, them, competition encourages DS to succeed and to feel satisfaction in the achievement of their objectives. However, for these DS competition is not necessary for their management. The primary reason is that competition suffers from limits and bias. The second reason is that they want to benefit from the advantages of cooperation, and competition can cancel out some of them.

We describe the perceptions of the opportunities created by cooperation and then the perceptions of the limits of competition.

Perceptions of opportunities from cooperation : When Sector Directors explained why there is a need to behave according to the cooperative dimension, they used three main arguments. First, cooperation is considered by DS as a more efficient tool to benefit from synergies. Synergies come from the sharing of best practices as soon as possible within the sector. DS are aware that such a sharing is not natural and they cannot force it. DS need to develop team spirit that stimulates the transfer of best practice not only between the DS and his Directors of Agencies but also directly between Directors of Agencies. Emphasizing the management on the cooperative dimension allows that kind of sharing atmosphere (verbatim 1, appendix). Second, DS use complementarities in terms of agencies' competencies in their sector to achieve the sector's objectives (the items). Agencies are encouraged to cooperate. When an agency faces difficulties to achieve its objectives, they will be compensated by the over-performance of other agencies. Such cooperation is only motivated by the cooperative team spirit (verbatim 2, appendix). Without this cooperation, the sector could not reach its objectives. The DS could not achieve the objectives of the sector alone. Thus, cooperation seems essential for the sector (verbatim 3, appendix). Third, cooperation consists in creating a team spirit that makes the Agencies Directors more involved in the sector objectives. A DS told us “We are all in the same boat.” Cooperation creates a team spirit that encourages the challengers to follow the leader and to achieve their objectives (verbatim 4, appendix). DS consider that the success of the sector relies on the benefits from the cooperation. They focus their attention only on cooperation and forget about the *per se* competition within the sector. Some DS do not perceive any competition with the other sectors.

Limits of competition: The extreme choice of focusing on only on cooperation is also justified by the perception of the limits of competition. First, competition creates a quality issue. Internal challenges with a reward are organized inside the bank. The objective is to stimulate the most competitive individuals thrive and to make up an item delay. It consists in creating a race between agencies for a number of action over a short period time (example: open 6 accounts for people who are less than 25 years in a month) knowing that a commercial offer helps to make the action (example: some money for the opening of those accounts). However, this challenge encourages the quantity and not the quality. Agencies that win can be the last in terms of stock because most of those accounts have been closed after the end of the challenge. Competition faces some limits in the long-term performance. DS refuse to focus their management on competition because they consider the long-term performance as important as the short-term performance (verbatim 5, appendix). Second, competition may be harmful to some individuals. Competition is not always appropriate and turns into being counterproductive. The agent is going to put so much pressure on the success that he will fail and loose all motivation to work (verbatim 6, appendix). Moreover, some DS consider that Directors of Agencies are already competitive and aware of their ranking, it is not necessary to empower this competition. DS do not encourage competition because it can go against the cooperation benefits (verbatim 7, appendix). Instead of encouraging the achievement of collective objectives, competition can interfere with the good functioning of other agencies. The results of an agency can improve at the expense of the others. This could be counterproductive at the sector level. Agencies focused on competition will choose the wrong "fight". To be the leader, they will try to take clients to another agency while the real competition is against other banks. The behavior generated by competition is thus negative

for the sector. This is why DS refuse to encourage competition (verbatim 8, appendix). To conclude, DS do not encourage competition because they perceive the negative effects of it. They go against the benefits expected from cooperation.

Profile 2 “Perceptions of cooperation +++ and competition +++”: emphasis on both cooperation and competition

Four DS perceive the interest of both competition and cooperation. They consider the necessity to emphasize both dimensions in their management. They had a specific perception and understanding of the key issues of the cooperation context. They argue that both competition and cooperation represent opportunities to increase their performance, but both have limits. It is the reason they are using both simultaneously. They use the same arguments as DS from profile 1 to explain the need for cooperation and the limits for competition. But they add arguments about the limits of cooperation and the benefits of competition. On the contrary to the other DS, they stated their determination to be the leader of the sector and the importance to compete with the other agencies to motivate themselves. DS who integrate both dimensions have additional arguments regarding the opportunities offered by cooperation. Cooperation in the context of competition creates extra satisfaction (to win together) and reinforces the team feeling. Without the comparison with other teams, they will not enjoy the cooperation emulation. DS are conscious that the creation of a team spirit takes time (verbatim 9, appendix). Cooperation is useful but not sufficient to stimulate individuals. A competition context is required to benefit from cooperation. DS perceive the competition with the Directors of Agencies within the sector and with other sectors. They accept the competition and encourage it in their management (verbatim 10, appendix). Competition creates an emulation that contributes to enhance the performance. In a high-competition context, agencies will try to be more successful to lead the sector (verbatim 11, appendix). However, these DS are aware of the limits of competition. Same arguments as in Profile 1 are presented. Profile 2 adds one limit: competition is possible only when the rules are well defined (verbatim 12, appendix). Profile 2 preaches the two contradictory dimensions without feeling the paradox. They have fully integrated the need for both (verbatim 13, appendix). To conclude, Profile 2 emphasizes both dimensions. These DS go further than Profile 1 highlighting more advantages and limits of both dimensions. Considering advantages and limits of both dimensions, these DS perceive the interdependencies between cooperation and competition.

Profile 3 “Perception of “cooperation + and competition +++” : emphasis on competition

One DS perceive the interest of both competition and cooperation but consider they have to focus on a single dimension: the competition. The Bank decided to cancel individual bonuses. The extinction of financial incentives encouraged this DS to use competition as a managerial tool to replace financial incentives. He developed a team spirit based on cooperation in each agency and developed competition at the sector level. At the sector level, the DS emphasized on competition (verbatim 14, appendix). This DS is an ultra-competitive individual, and competition motivates him (verbatim 15, appendix). To conclude, even if this profile 3 only concerns one DS, there is a third way to perceive and understand cooperative relationship with an emphasizing on competition.

Impact of integration on managerial practices

Our findings show that the individual’s integration capacity depends on the perception and the understanding of each individual. What are the consequences of such integration? What are the impacts on the management of the cooperative situation? We investigate the managerial practices of each profile of individuals. We found that a same managerial tool can be used to stimulate cooperation or to encourage competition depending on individual integration. Moreover, we discover differences between discourse and practices, opening the road to a conscious and unconscious integration. And finally, we found no impact of the integration on the degree of practice in cooperation, proving that there is no continuum of cooperation intensity between the different integrations.

Same tools for cooperation and competition depending on the integration

Managerial tools are used differently by DS. Depending on their integration a tool can be used to foster one dimension and reduce the other or to encourage both. The use of three managerial tools is impacted by the individual integration: the main ranking agencies system, the challenges, and agencies complementarities to achieve the objectives.

The main ranking agencies system of the bank: A common database (an excel table), completely open and accessible by every employee of CIC, indicates the results of each agency's southwestern CIC. For each agency, it is possible to know how many of the 18 existing items/objectives have been achieved and the percentage of progress on each item. Every Monday, the head of the CIC Languedoc-Roussillon sends an email to the 11 DS with the table detailing the results of each agency and the ranking of all the sectors. DS are free to use this table and to communicate the results in their sector, as they want. Each profile used it differently. Profile 1 (more cooperative) did not use the table to rank individuals but they highlighted the best performance (verbatim 16, appendix). Profile 2 (integration of both) and 3 (more competitive) used the table in a competitive way. They ranked the agencies of the sector to create emulation (verbatim 17, appendix).

Internal challenge between agencies: The bank organizes an annual challenge that ranks all the agencies of CIC Southwest. The best agency wins a several-day trip in France for all the agency employees. Besides, there are temporary challenges accompanied by a national advertising and a particular offer. In this particular case, earnings are much lower and less attractive but recognized as being inspiring for the most competitive employees. Eventually, there are personal challenges used by Director of Agencies to challenge his agency or his sector on some items. Based on the integration, the use of challenges varies greatly. For Profile 1 (more cooperative), challenges are levers to ensure the success of the objectives of their agency and not the first place (verbatim 18, appendix). Profile 2 (integration of both) and 3 (more competitive) challenges are levers for success but especially to be the first agency (verbatim 19, appendix).

Agencies complementarities to achieve the objectives: To reach the objectives of the sector when an agency fails on an item, the DS can ask another agency to outperform. This practice only appeared in the profile 1 (more cooperative). They called this practice “play on the complementarity” (verbatim 20, appendix).

Differences between discourses and practices

All DS encourage some competition when they congratulate personally and in front of everybody else, the most efficient agencies of their sector. However, for the six DS of Profile 1 (more cooperation) a focus on cooperative practices was expected. It was the case for four of them. For two DS, behind a cooperative discourse, they used strong competitive practices. By pointing out the good and the bad performances of the agencies, they created an informal ranking based on the contribution of the agencies to the sector objectives. The agencies compete to be pointed out as an agency that contribute the most to “the team” (the sector) and not as an agency that make the team fail. This competition contributes to the team’s performance. But, these two DS used cooperation and competition in spite of a cooperative discourse (verbatim 21, appendix).

A non-hierarchical cooperation between different integrations

Regardless their profile, all the DS cooperate with their Directors of Agencies. cooperation consisted in supporting them (sharing technical advice, human resources, support during an appointment or a contribution of solutions) (verbatim 22, appendix).

However, we could expect Profile 1 to be the most cooperative Profile since the discourse of these managers was emphasized on cooperation. Similarly, we could expect Profile 2 to be more cooperative than profile 3. Does this continuum of cooperative practices exist between the profiles? To answer this question, we look at two dimensions representing two strong cooperation practices: “folder/prospect contribution” and the “organization of social events at the sector level”.

1st dimension: “folder/prospect contribution”: The folders and prospects are the real sources of value creation of an agency. When a DS gives a folder or a prospect to one of his agencies, he encourages the sector at the expense of his own agency. For example, the DS convinced a new prospect, instead of keeping it for his agency, he will transfer it to another one. This practice was used by some of DS in profile 2 but not by all DS in profile 1.

2nd dimension: “the organization of social events”: Informal social events organized by a DS with his Directors of Agencies (beer after work, informal dinner) aim at developing a team spirit. We found that some of the DS with profile 2 emphasized more on informal social events than some DS with profile 1 (verbatim 23, appendix).

DS from profile 2 seem to be more cooperative in practice than some DS from profile 1. Thus, it seems to have no impact of the integration on the degree of practice in cooperation. This result evidences that there is no continuum of cooperation intensity between the different integrations.

Managerial practices depending on the integration profile

Our findings suggest different types of management depending on the integration of the cooperation paradox. In Profile 1 (more cooperative) we observed two types of management: the “locomotive management” and the “best team partner management”. In Profile 2, we distinguished two types of management: the “level separation management” and the “balance management”. In Profile 3, we identified the “aggressive management”.

The “locomotive management”

The locomotive management assimilates the sector to a train in which each wagon represents an agency. The train symbolizes the sector and shapes the team. It should advance and reach its destination on time. Only practices that foster cooperation are implemented (practices that aim to hang up the wagons all together and especially to not let one wagon go off). The Director of Sector is supposed to be the locomotive. He is expected to make the train go as fast as possible. He needs to achieve his objectives faster than his agencies to create a positive dynamic. Thus, competition between the DS and his agencies is informal.

The “best team partner management”

The “best team partner management” mainly uses cooperation. In fact, competition is also used to encourage involvement in the team. Directors of sectors pointed out agencies with good and bad performance. The objective was to put team pressure on agencies to be the best contributors of the sector. While, in the discourse of these DS competition was low, in practice, competition is a key tool in their management. Even if competition seems more informal it is as present as cooperation. This difference confirms the gap between discourse and practices previously identified in our findings. The manager seems to have integrated the paradox, but in his speech he refuses it.

The “level separation management”

The “level separation management” splits the activities between activities “inside the sector” level and activities “between sectors”. Competition appears within the sector, but agencies of a same sector cooperate to compete with other sectors. This management gives an impression of separation. However, agencies compete and cooperate at the same time. The Director of Sector asked their Directors of Agencies to adopt “schizophrenic” behaviors depending on the level of the action: “inside” the sector they have to cooperate but “outside” the sector they have to compete with other agencies. DS using this type of management are conscious of using simultaneously cooperation and competition. The boundary between inside/outside the sector hides the tensions generated by the integration of the competition paradox.

The “balanced management”

The “balanced management” uses both dimensions of cooperation and competition at the same time and at the same level. DS want to benefit simultaneously from the opportunities created by both dimensions. From their perspective, cooperation does not impact negatively competition and reciprocally. cooperation limits the bias of competition and reciprocally. In these cases, DS do not use comparisons with other sectors. They manage their sector independently from the bank, using cooperation and competition when necessary.

The “aggressive management”

The DS understood his mission to foster cooperation within the sector, providing agencies the support and the solutions they need. However, his management is mainly competitive. He only encourages competition between the Agency Directors in his sector. This competition goes beyond the scope of the Bank and becomes a parochialism war for the city where the agency is located.

DISCUSSION

In this research, we have drawn on the principle of integration of the competition paradox in order to deepen our understanding on it.

First, our empirical study of 11 managers dealing with the same competition context offers, for the first time in competition literature, an interesting perspective to compare the individual's capacity of integration of the competition paradox. Our findings show differences in terms of integration. In line with previous studies (Das and Teng, 2000; Oshri and Weber, 2006; Chen, 2008), we evidenced that only some individuals are capable of integration. Our results seem contradictory with Bengtsson and Kock (2000) theory advocating that individuals are incapable of integrating the competition duality and behaving correspondingly. Our results go far beyond Fernandez and colleagues (2014) and Pellegrin and colleagues (2013). While these previous studies recommended an integration principle combined with a separation one, this research provides details and insights into the meaning of integration. Integration can be a cognition and behavior. Cognition and behavior are not always connected. Only four of the eleven Directors of Sectors interviews seemed to integrate cognitively the competitive situation. All managers are not capable of perceiving the competition situation. Managers who perfectly integrate the competition paradox perceive the interdependencies between cooperation and competition. They refuse to choose between cooperation and competition neither to reduce one dimension at the expense of the other. On the contrary, the manager who did not integrate the competition paradox considered that competition would reduce the benefits obtained from cooperation.

Second, we highlighted differences between managerial discourses and managerial practices. Figure 1 provides an illustrated perspective of the 5 different types of management detailed in our findings. This matrix presents the different types of competition management depending on the integration of the competition paradox. The matrix illustrates two major contributions. First, all managers do not integrate the paradox (for example the sector director that emphasizes only partially the paradox and use a locomotive or aggressive management). Second, integration is a generic term that refers to, at least, three different types of integration: conscious, unconscious and hidden integration.

Some managers deny the paradox cognitively but adopt an ambidexter management in practice. The integration is thus unconscious. The paradox is denied by managers to preserve their logic and their ego according to Lewis (2000). However, on the contrary to paradox literature (Smith and Lewis, 2012)(Smith and Lewis, 2012), even if these individuals deny cognitively the paradox they adopt an ambivalent management based on both logics simultaneously. They do not choose one dimension at the expense of the other. A discrepancy between the perception of the competitive situation and the managerial practices appears. Our findings are consistent with the “the right behavior and the right cognitive perception” pointed out by Gnyawali and Park (2009) to efficiently manage a competition situation. We go further by providing evidence that it exists an unconscious integration that leads to deny the competition paradox integration.

Managers who have integrated the paradox can hide it in practice, using collaboration and competition at different levels. This spatial separation is illusory. Agencies are simultaneously cooperating and competing with each other. Tensions due to this paradoxical context are not solved. To integrate the paradox in their practices, managers trap themselves

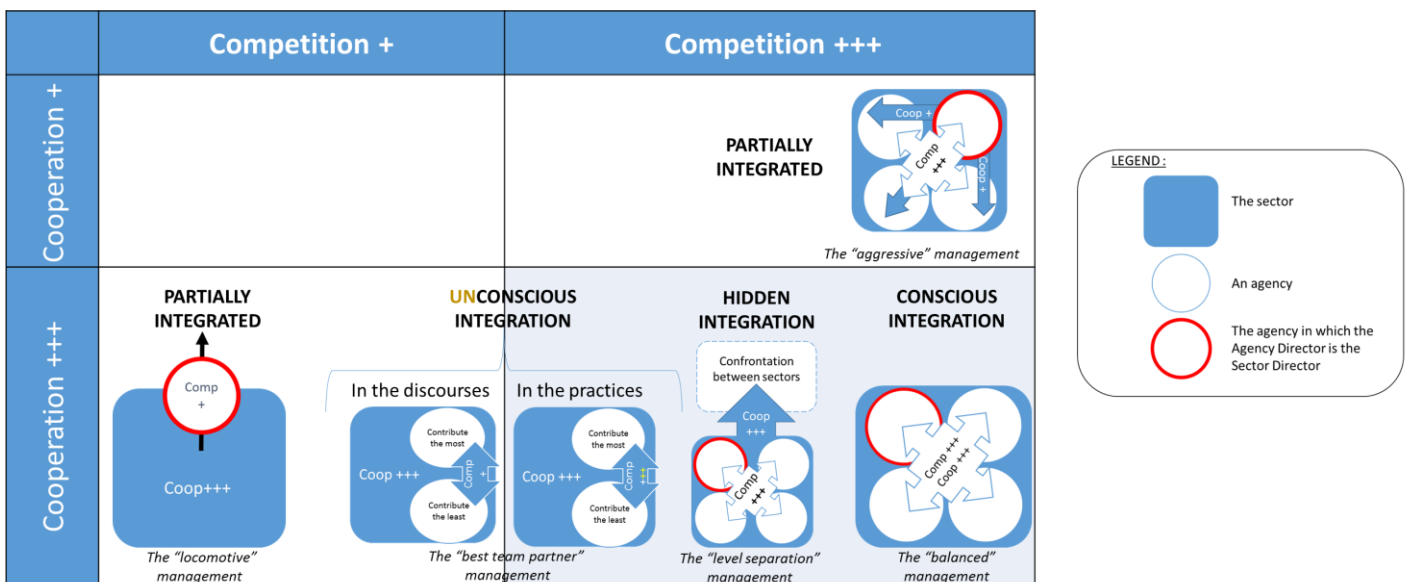
cognitively. They convince themselves that there is not paradox. Thus, it exists a conscious integration that lead to deny or yo hide the paradox.

Finally, our results highlight five types of management of coepetition paradox based on different levels of integration. The management implemented does not only depend on tools and structures but more on how managers perceive the coepetition paradox. In the case studied, the ranking of agencies on the different items achieved communicated every Monday appears as the perfect tool to balance both logics, cooperation and competition. However, managers who did not cognitively integrate the coepetition paradox only used this tool to stimulate cooperation or competition. Even if relevant managerial tools are required to reach a balance between cooperation and competition and to preserve it (Chen *et al.*, 2007; Chen, 2008), we show that the use of these tools will depend on the cognitive integration of the manager. Thus, in line with previous studies, the selection of managers with abilities to perceive and understand easier the paradox of coepetition seems essential to efficiently manage a coepetition relationship (Walley 2007; Gnyawali & Park, 2009).

Who is the manager able to cognitively integrate the coepetition paradox? Our findings suggested some perspectives. Directors of Sectors who are able to integrate the coepetition paradox seem very experienced. They seem to be competitive individuals with collective values coming from the practice of team sports (rugby or volley-ball).

Our findings have a strong managerial implication. In a competition context, our findings encourage firm to look for individuals aware of the interdependencies between cooperation and competition instead of perceiving them as extremes of one continuum. Firms should hire managers able to integrate the coepetition paradox. The cognitive integration could be become a basis for managerial training to integrate duality.

Figure 1. Integration and managerial practices in a coepetitive context



CONCLUSION

While the integration principle seems essential to manage a cooperation relationship, we go deeper on the exploration of such principle. We investigated the perceptions of the cooperation paradox and the consequences of the integration on managerial practices.

Our findings suggest three different levels of integration detailed in Profile 1, 2 and 3. We confirm that all individuals do not integrate the cooperation paradox in the same way. The integration of the cooperation paradox is a critical issue because it impacts the managerial practices and eventually the performance. Thus, we highlighted 5 different types of management: two corresponding to Profile 1, two corresponding to Profile 2 and one corresponding to Profile 3.

Previous literature used to define the integration principle as the cognitive capacity to understand the cooperative situation and to emphasize on both dimensions of cooperation and competition in practice. Our results show that the integration can consist in emphasizing on both dimensions in practice without any cognitive integration of the paradox. Managers can integrate the cooperation paradox in practice while they deny it cognitively. This result allows distinguishing between three types of integration: conscious, unconscious and hidden integration.

From a methodological point of view, we encourage future researches to split their attention between cognition and practices. Our findings are based on a case of intra-cooperation context (to allow comparisons in a same context). It would be interesting to extend this research with a case of inter-organizational cooperation where competition must be more important. Finally, from a managerial point of view, the highlight of different profiles of managers with different levels of integration, suggest firms to hire “masters of cooperation”, i.e. managers able to cognitively integrate the cooperation paradox and able to manage their team with both dimensions: cooperation and competition.

Our study suffers from limits that create interesting perspectives for future research. We distinguished between different types of integration. It could be interesting to explore what kind of integration is better to manage cooperative tensions. Is a type of integration better for a specific tension? Is integration a source of new tensions? We can wonder what level of integration lead to the best performance? What is the profile of the “master of cooperation”? Only future research would shed light on these questions.

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Appendix

N°	Quotes
1	<p>“Unfortunately, someone, today, has more interest in making his job in his “own corner” that ... I mean, than sharing its expertise with others. Because, it's not a waste of time, but it... therefore a decrease in availability, ... it is time that is dedicated to... I mean, to advance his colleagues.”</p> <p>“Never competition between employees. On the other hand, I do everything to encourage the second to learn from the first.”</p>
2	<p>“You know, I had, last year, in September, I had agencies, who had finished their annual lines, such line, line A, for example, was done. Well, they still did a little more to compensate an agency that had not finished it and which would not. “</p> <p>“But I think that team spirit, that is, it comes from... There are maybe people who know each other well, etc., but I think that if it is not naturally, it must come from the team leader.”</p>
3	<p>”You understand that I'm very team guy. No, but I do not see otherwise. You know, we do not win alone. It is necessary; it is true, to have a locomotive. But... If behind they do not follow, and always turn to see if they follow, especially because... So an alone locomotive, [it is not good] neither, because there is nobody; they stalled. So it is also always permanently check that everything is understood, everything works well, everything.”</p>
4	<p>“It would not be possible to have today 13 items [a very impressive number of items succeed] if it has only been an agency that advances or two. That means that we have a group shot. And so automatically it pulls others upwards [...] [It creates] a dynamic.”</p>
5	<p>“Finally, this is it. So... after, one can feel himself better than another... at several levels. I mean, it is a matter of appreciation, so... here, you can watch for example... we can focus on the commercial results and say 'that one, it is good, you see, it is better than you', and then, on the other hand, we will notice that his production is bad.. It's not good quality.”</p> <p>“[There are] bias in “strong time” management [a internal challenge on a short period of time and on one financial item]: we can win it and at least be last in terms of stock: opening of 5 (target achieved) but 4 locking.”</p>
6	<p>“There's one that goes every day look the ranking, him, if we feed him not with competition, he is... he is less good. So after, well, you should know... actually, we have to put the level... a level that is achievable. I think [...]After, there are people who do not support it, I mean, ... If we do not leave them time..., let's say, to move forward, to make their journey, they will get a terrible pressure, and it's going to be counterproductive, they will do anything at all.”</p>

7	<p>“I, I do not need to put people in competition, because at most it can... it maybe go against team spirit. It can, perhaps, I don't know. But it is because of that I do not use it if that's the issue. I have; I try instead to make the maximum of people move forward together.”</p>
8	<p>“Because we are here to develop the Bank, we are not going to steal customers [from another agency], it is useless. We're here to pick up new customers.”</p>
9	<p>“I almost did only team sports, very few individual sport, so I can't compare, but what I liked in the team sport it was to share the victories. I played very long volleyball, at some point, you need everyone.”</p> <p>“Because, I do, I do a lot of rugby, so I know these, these feelings, of... by, team, to play together, to win together, to suffers, to lose together, to be... Here, these joys, these sentences, victories, defeats... When you have a colleague who is in difficulty, uh... uh... well, uh, it is argued, because... And the next day it will be me that will be in trouble, we'll come and support me.”</p> <p>“It is the sum of individuals, I mean, so I'll seem heavy with my rugby, anyway, we are stronger when we are two than alone, and even stronger when three than two... We are also less dumb. I mean... No, but it is less stupid when we are several. Therefore, it is the sum of the forces. It is the sum of the forces.”</p>
10	<p>“Already me clearly I wanted to be the first in the sector, and I wanted the sector to be the first. UH... And there are fire power that is...”</p> <p>“After the competition, obviously we all want to win, when we're here, we are sensitive when the results are there, obviously. We always wanted to be the best possible, that seems obvious.”</p>
11	<p>“Me, I'm more for... create an emulation by a competition in the strict meaning of the term, er... spirit of the killer, that is.””</p> <p>“Yes. And then I am little forced [to use competition], since I finally try to pull up [the team]. So... uh... here. After, so yes, they want. Valerie is a competitor. Yes, Yes, I have competitors [as Agency Directors], [...] they want to be first, but they cannot, it is me [who is first]. Well, not this year...”</p>
12	<p>“But after the competition, of course, it is very healthy, there's nothing wrong on it. When in addition the data are public, you have access to all databases; everything is clear that the rules of the game are identified, there is nothing to say about the competition.”</p>
13	<p>“We meet at least once a month, like uh... we are between us, that I told you of equality, finally freedom between us, there are... it is, is... There is competition, but uh... And we are exchanging on our success, our failures.”</p> <p>"Do you think that there is a tension to encourage simultaneously the competition and the team spirit? Why?"</p>

	<p>No, at the moment the competition is done at the level of the team.”</p> <p>“There is a team with a team spirit, to go and fight, to attend the competition “</p>
14	<p>“And with two other agencies, actually we are three experienced directors. So, it is really in cooperation, in the exchange of ideas, but each tenaciously defends his turf anyway, and likes to be ahead of others still. There is full inside.”</p>
15	<p>“I, I'm in super competition with one of my agency directors. [...] I know, he says that NO [he is not in competition], but I tell him that me YES, I am ! Because first, because I need it for me. It is a matter of exemplarity, so I must be... there are times when I need to show that I know what I'm talking about, and I need to prove that I know what I am talking about. But I the same times we are working together. I'm not jealous of his success, not at all.”</p>
16	<p>“Yes and no. Challenging, Yes. Because, when I make the sum up of the sector, in my meetings, I voluntarily talk about the overall plan for the sector, but I underline good performance. Thus, this indirectly favors the dynamics. In my meetings, I do not like to put forward, systematically, by saying: «Agency X: 1st, Agency Y: 2nd, Agency Z: 3rd. I do it differently, trying to highlight good practices and achievements of employees through their agencies.”</p>
17	<p>“So sometimes, I'm going to communicate every day. And uh... with, actually, where I put, I class the agencies in the sector in order of rate, and it's never nice when one agency has only 10%, and his buddies... it pisses. Therefore, it is a form of managing... I manage, after I, I won't tell him, I say not: "it is well, it's good," [instead] I make a ranking. The ranking, it speaks for itself, but they know the ranking. Well. After, I am going to speak, I will support the agency director who will not succeed to deal with the problem, I already know that he tries, I won't tell him his input... And then we will try to look for solutions together. That is, a little.”</p>
18	<p>“I do not say that it is good or evil, but I think that some colleagues are very attached to this challenge and this is part of their management style: "I'll be the 1st sector of, I'll be the 2nd, I will not be the last, I want to be 1-this operation. Personally, I'd be the first and the last, but in my everyday life, I am not a fixation. But it's more satisfying for some teams when it is cited. However, under the pretext of being the first, do not do anything you want. Clearly, I am more for clean work and for the quality, than for the quantity, although we also do the quantity because it is making progress.”</p>
19	<p>“It is difficult to remove the CAP. It is the same. But, when we compare each other's, we are engage in a small race as ones say, comparing all the Agencies Directors of the sector, I am no longer the Sector Director, it is normal.”</p>
20	<p>“So from there, from September, the fact that in September, on the last straight line, finally, that, it's me who put that in place, anyway, we play the complementarity between us, that means we divide a little what the other will not finish, we know that he is not going to finish. We attempt [and say]: "Okay, let's go, we'll help you." It, it's great. [...]You have 100 to make, so you arrive in</p>

	September, you get to September, you have only 50. It is clear, when you did 50 in eight months, you may find it difficult to make 50 in four months.”
21	“When there was one that was a little out of the objective, it was "oh, you make the team fall, there.” But that I find that It is great, because it is to say ' here, what you do, in fact, if you are not in the shot,... it is not what you do yourself that is very well but who really cares, is that behind you the Agency it is going to ... the Agency, it is not in the succeed because of you. So that is what happens now? I mean, you need to motivate yourself” And like that, you manage to have uniformity. The idea of the colors [in the ranking of the employees of the agency], is this. It is to have a homogeneous production between [them].” A Sector manager who emphasizes en cooperation in his discourse. Remarks this comments are available for the management of the sector because he uses the same color management when he ranks the agencies of the sectors.”
22	“My role is not to leave the agency, an employee or Director without a practical solution or an agency without Exchange of experience.” The Sector Director, who is mainly competitive.”
23	“We are not going to be in competition. I won't put myself in competition with my sector agencies. That is, clearly, we work extensively by regulations and recommendations. If I have a folder that must be near one of the agencies of my sector, I will receive the prescriber, look at the record and I'm going to give it to the Agency” One of the Sector Director who emphasizes both dimensions of cooperation and competition.”