



THE DARK SIDE OF COOPETITION? INFORMAL ENTREPRENEURIAL NETWORKS IN PARALLEL CURRENCY MARKETS

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Abstract

This study investigates the existence and nature of coopetitive practices among entrepreneurs operating in the informal sector. By definition, coopetition combines two contradictory and antagonistic strategic interaction modes: competition and cooperation. While coopetition has been widely studied in formal organizational settings, little is known about how such paradoxical strategies unfold in informal economies characterized by weak institutional frameworks and high uncertainty. Drawing on a qualitative field study conducted among informal entrepreneurs operating in parallel currency exchange markets, this research provides both theoretical and empirical insights into coopetition within informal entrepreneurial networks. Based on systematic non-participant observation and repeated interactions with market actors, the findings reveal the presence of network-based coopetition practices, both vertical and horizontal in nature. Entrepreneurs simultaneously compete and cooperate to access resources, share information, manage uncertainty, and sustain their market positions. The analysis identifies three key determinants of coopetitive practices in informal settings: goal alignment, the pursuit of synergies through resource and knowledge sharing, and risk sharing. By highlighting the dark and paradoxical side of coopetition in parallel currency markets, this study extends the

coopetition literature beyond formal organizational contexts and contributes to a deeper understanding of strategic behavior in informal economies.

Keywords: Coopetition; informal economy; entrepreneurial networks; competition; cooperation; parallel currency markets

INTRODUCTION

By its very nature, coopetition involves two contradictory and antagonistic strategic interaction modes: competition and cooperation. Firms and economic actors adopt cooperative strategies to cope with environmental complexity (Bonel & Rocco, 2007), institutional pressures (Huault, 2008), and resource constraints, as well as to create and share resources and capabilities (Quintana-García & Benavides-Velasco, 2004), foster innovation (Le Roy et al., 2016), and ultimately generate value (Czakon et al., 2016).

Although coopetition is often portrayed as one of the most advantageous and value-creating strategic options (Bengtsson & Kock, 2000; Bouncken, 2020), it is also considered among the most risky and tension-laden strategies for the actors involved (Walley, 2007; Chen, 2008; Gnyawali & Park, 2011; Fernandez et al., 2014, 2018). These tensions stem from the paradoxical and counterintuitive nature of coopetition (Raza-Ullah, 2020) and may lead to unexpected outcomes (Le Roy & Czakon, 2016), hinder strategic success (Ritala, 2012), or even cause cooperative arrangements to fail (Bonel et al., 2008).

While the coopetition literature has grown significantly over the past two decades, it has largely focused on formal organizations operating within regulated industries and institutionalized markets. In contrast, far less attention has been paid to coopetition in informal economic contexts, where transactions occur outside legal, fiscal, and regulatory frameworks. Yet, informal economies are not devoid of structure. They are often organized around dense entrepreneurial networks in which actors simultaneously compete and cooperate to survive and prosper under conditions of institutional uncertainty.

Entrepreneurial networks in the informal sector may take the form of competitive networks, cooperative networks, or a combination of both, that is, cooperative networks. The ties developed among network members can be grounded in rivalry (Porter, 1982) while simultaneously relying on cooperation (Dyer & Singh, 1998). Within such networks, actors may engage in aggressive or even hyper-competitive behaviors (Le Roy, 2003), including predatory practices aimed at destabilizing rivals or forcing them out of the market. Competitive advantage, in the Porterian sense (Porter, 1980), depends on the intensity of rivalry, the speed of

competitive actions (Young et al., 1996), and the ability to destabilize competitors (Le Roy, 2003).

At the same time, cooperative ties may emerge among competing actors, enabling the exchange of resources, particularly informational resources, through weak ties (Granovetter, 1973). In informal settings, an actor's survival often depends on their capacity to establish and maintain cooperative relationships within the network. Such ties facilitate access to critical resources and information that would otherwise remain unavailable in highly uncertain environments.

Against this backdrop, this study seeks to address the following research question: *Do informal entrepreneurial networks exhibit coopetitive practices, and if so, what are their key characteristics and determinants?*

To answer this question, we draw on an empirical investigation conducted among informal entrepreneurs operating in parallel currency exchange markets. This context is particularly relevant, as parallel currency markets operate at the intersection of formal and informal economies and are characterized by high levels of uncertainty, risk, and interdependence among actors.

The contribution of this study is threefold. First, it extends the coopetition literature to informal economic contexts, thereby responding to recent calls for a broader understanding of coopetition beyond formal organizational settings. Second, it highlights the existence of network-based coopetition, both vertical and horizontal, among informal entrepreneurs. Third, it identifies key determinants that drive coopetitive behavior in informal markets, namely goal alignment, synergy seeking, and risk sharing.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. The next section reviews the theoretical foundations of coopetition and informal entrepreneurial networks. Section 3 presents the research methodology. Section 4 discusses the main empirical findings. The final section concludes with a discussion of the theoretical implications, limitations, and avenues for future research.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Coopetition as a paradoxical strategic relationship

Coopetition is a neologism combining two contradictory and antagonistic modes of strategic interaction: competition and cooperation. Since the seminal work of Brandenburger and Nalebuff (1996), coopetition has been conceptualized as a relational strategy through which actors simultaneously create and appropriate value. Rather than positioning competition and

cooperation as mutually exclusive, coopetition emphasizes their coexistence within the same interorganizational relationship.

From a strategic perspective, coopetition allows actors to benefit simultaneously from the disciplining effects of competition and the value-enhancing effects of cooperation (Lado et al., 1997; Bengtsson & Kock, 2000; Le Roy & Fernandez, 2015). Competitive interactions encourage efficiency, innovation, and strategic differentiation, whereas cooperative interactions facilitate access to complementary resources, knowledge sharing, and collective problem-solving (Dyer & Singh, 1998; Gulati, 1998).

The literature identifies several motivations for engaging in coopetition. Actors adopt coopetitive strategies to cope with environmental complexity (Bonel & Rocco, 2007), institutional pressures (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Huault, 2008), and resource constraints, as well as to foster innovation (Le Roy et al., 2016; Chiambaretto et al., 2020) and enhance value creation (Czaron et al., 2016; Bouncken et al., 2020). These motivations operate at multiple levels, including the industry, organizational, and individual levels (Czaron et al., 2020).

At the industry level, market structure and competitive intensity influence the emergence of coopetitive relationships (Porter, 1980; Bonel & Rocco, 2007). In contexts characterized by high uncertainty, institutional voids, or economic decline, rival actors may be incentivized to cooperate in order to survive, stabilize markets, or counter external threats (Tidström & Åhman, 2006; Bengtsson & Kock, 1999). Institutional pressures may further encourage cooperation among competitors by shaping shared norms, expectations, and cognitive frames (Scott, 1995).

At the organizational level, coopetition reflects a strategic choice aimed at combining the benefits of competition and cooperation in a win–win logic (Axelrod, 1984; Bengtsson & Kock, 2000). Resource pooling, joint exploration, and knowledge sharing among rival actors are frequently identified as key drivers of coopetition (Quintana-García & Benavides-Velasco, 2004). Through coopetition, organizations may enhance learning, develop dynamic capabilities, and access resources that would be difficult to obtain independently.

At the individual level, coopetition is influenced by actors' cognitive, affective, and perceptual dimensions (Ingram & Yue, 2008). Individual orientations toward cooperation (Bouncken & Fredrich, 2016), prior collaborative experiences with competitors (Gnyawali et al., 2016), and interpersonal trust (Quintana-García & Benavides-Velasco, 2004) play a crucial role in shaping coopetitive behavior.

Despite its potential benefits, coopetition is inherently paradoxical and fraught with tensions (Raza-Ullah, 2020). The simultaneous pursuit of cooperation and competition exposes actors to risks such as opportunistic behavior, knowledge leakage, and the misappropriation of resources and capabilities (Fernandez et al., 2014; Pellegrin-Boucher et al., 2013). These

tensions may lead to unintended outcomes (Le Roy & Czakon, 2016), hinder performance (Ritala, 2012), or result in the failure of cooperative arrangements (Bonel et al., 2008). As a result, managing cooperation requires actors to continuously navigate and balance contradictory logics.

Informal entrepreneurial networks as potential arenas for cooperation

Entrepreneurial networks in the informal sector constitute a particularly relevant yet underexplored context for examining cooperation. Although informal economies operate outside formal regulatory and legal frameworks, they are often structured around dense relational networks that govern access to resources, information, and market opportunities.

Network configurations are commonly described along three key dimensions: the content and strength of ties (Granovetter, 1973), the attributes of network members (Lin, 2001), and the overall network structure (Burt, 1992). This study focuses primarily on the strength and nature of ties, as these elements are central to understanding how competition and cooperation coexist in informal settings.

Granovetter's (1973) seminal work on the strength of weak ties highlights the importance of relational intensity, emotional closeness, trust, and reciprocity in shaping network dynamics. Weak ties act as bridges between otherwise disconnected actors or groups, facilitating access to novel information and opportunities. In contrast, strong ties are characterized by frequent interactions, emotional intensity, and high levels of trust, making them particularly valuable for resource exchange and mutual support, especially in contexts of vulnerability and uncertainty (Granovetter, 1983; Berrou & Combarrous, 2012).

In informal entrepreneurial networks, competition and cooperation often coexist within the same relational space. On the one hand, ties among informal entrepreneurs may be grounded in rivalry, aggressive competition, and even predatory practices aimed at destabilizing competitors or forcing them out of the market (Porter, 1982; Le Roy, 2003). Competitive advantage in such networks depends on the intensity of rivalry, the speed of competitive actions (Young et al., 1996), and actors' capacity to disrupt competitors' positions.

On the other hand, cooperative ties are essential for survival in informal economies. Cooperation enables entrepreneurs to access critical resources, particularly intangible and informational resources, through trust-based relationships and reciprocal exchanges (Dyer & Singh, 1998). In contexts characterized by institutional uncertainty and legal ambiguity, relational embeddedness plays a central role in mitigating risk and facilitating economic action (Granovetter, 1985).

Between pure competition and pure cooperation lies a third mode of interaction : coopeition. In informal entrepreneurial networks, coopeition may take the form of network-based or “reticular” coopeition, in which actors simultaneously compete and cooperate within the same network, as well as more global forms of coopeition between interconnected networks. Such dual behavior allows entrepreneurs to combine the innovative and disciplinary effects of competition with the stabilizing and resource-enhancing effects of cooperation.

From this perspective, informal entrepreneurial networks can be viewed as natural laboratories for examining the paradoxical dynamics of coopeition. The coexistence of rivalry and collaboration, combined with high levels of uncertainty and risk, makes these networks particularly conducive to the emergence of coopeitive practices. This theoretical framework therefore provides a foundation for empirically investigating how coopeition unfolds in informal contexts and what drives actors to engage in such paradoxical relationships.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This study adopts a qualitative research design aimed at exploring coopeitive practices among entrepreneurs operating in the informal sector. Given the exploratory nature of the research question and the limited existing knowledge on coopeition in informal economic contexts, a qualitative approach is particularly appropriate (Wacheux, 1996). Qualitative methods allow for an in-depth understanding of actors’ behaviors, interactions, and perceptions, especially in settings characterized by uncertainty, opacity, and limited formal documentation.

The empirical investigation focuses on entrepreneurs involved in parallel currency exchange markets. This context offers a particularly relevant empirical setting, as parallel currency markets operate at the intersection of formal and informal economies and involve high levels of risk, interdependence, and relational embeddedness. These characteristics make them well suited for examining the paradoxical coexistence of competition and cooperation.

Data collection

The empirical material, characterized by its heterogeneity, was constructed through a combination of non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentary analysis. This multi-source data collection strategy enhances the richness and credibility of the empirical material (Thiétart et al., 2007).

The primary data collection process relied on non-participant observation conducted over a two-year period across several municipalities in the city of Tunis. The researcher adopted an external observational stance in order to capture naturally occurring behaviors, interactions, and practices among informal entrepreneurs without directly influencing their actions. Systematic observation was guided by a predefined observation protocol designed to ensure methodological rigor and consistency. The protocol included three key components: (1) an observation system specifying the phenomena of interest, (2) an observation grid identifying relevant behavioral and relational indicators, and (3) observation instruments used to record empirical material. Particular attention was paid to competitive actions, cooperative exchanges, information sharing, and relational dynamics among actors operating within and across networks.

In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key actors involved in parallel currency exchange activities, including informal entrepreneurs, bankers, and managers of exchange offices. A total of 18 interviews were carried out, recorded, coded, and analyzed. Given the hidden and sensitive nature of this population, access to participants relied partly on informal contacts and trust-based interactions.

Documentary analysis also complemented the empirical material, drawing on specialized publications from the Tunisian Customs administration, foreign exchange regulations in Tunisia, and the Customs Code. This combination of multiple data sources contributed to data triangulation and strengthened the robustness of the findings.

Data analysis

Data analysis followed an iterative and inductive process, consistent with qualitative research principles. Observational notes and field materials were progressively coded to identify recurring patterns of interaction related to competition, cooperation, and their coexistence. Initial open coding was used to capture emergent themes, which were subsequently refined into more abstract categories through axial coding.

The analysis focused on identifying (1) the forms of competitive and cooperative interactions among informal entrepreneurs, (2) the conditions under which these interactions coexist, and (3) the determinants that encourage actors to engage in cooperative practices. Particular attention was paid to the relational and network-based dimensions of these interactions, as well as to the role of trust, reciprocity, and risk.

Throughout the analytical process, constant comparison between empirical observations and existing theoretical frameworks on competition and entrepreneurial networks was conducted. This abductive approach enabled the refinement of theoretical insights while remaining grounded in empirical evidence.

Research context and ethical considerations

Studying informal and legally sensitive economic activities raises specific ethical and methodological challenges. To address these issues, the research ensured anonymity and confidentiality for all participants and avoided the collection of personally identifiable information. Data were reported at an aggregate level to prevent the identification of individuals or specific network configurations.

The researcher's positionality and access to the field were carefully considered throughout the research process. Maintaining a non-intrusive observational stance helped minimize potential biases and ethical risks, while repeated interactions with actors contributed to building trust and enhancing data quality.

Methodological limitations

As with any qualitative study, this research has limitations. The reliance on observation and informal interactions, while well suited to the studied context, limits the generalizability of the findings. Moreover, the absence of formal interviews or quantitative measures constrains the ability to statistically assess the prevalence of cooperative practices.

However, these limitations are offset by the depth and contextual richness of the empirical material. Future research could build on these findings by adopting mixed-method approaches, combining qualitative insights with quantitative analyses to further examine cooperation in informal economic settings.

FINDINGS

The empirical findings reveal the existence of well-established cooperative practices among informal entrepreneurs operating in parallel currency exchange markets. These practices are embedded in network-based arrangements in which competition and cooperation coexist and interact dynamically. The analysis highlights three main dimensions of cooperation in this context: (1) the characteristics of the informal currency market as a cooperative arena, (2) the coexistence of competitive and cooperative interactions within networks, and (3) the emergence of vertical and horizontal forms of network-based cooperation.

Parallel currency markets as cooperative arenas

Parallel currency markets operate at the intersection of formal and informal economies. Although they function outside official regulatory frameworks, they are not unstructured or chaotic. Instead, these markets are organized around dense relational networks that facilitate the circulation of foreign currency flows at local, national, and transnational levels.

The findings show that informal currency exchange activities are inherently risky due to their legal ambiguity, exposure to market volatility, and interaction with both legal and illegal activities. In this context, network membership emerges as a critical resource, often as important as financial capital itself. Entrepreneurs rely on relational ties to secure access to foreign currency, obtain market information, and mitigate uncertainty.

The sensitive and high-risk nature of parallel currency exchange strongly shapes network configurations, actor profiles, and the nature of exchanged resources. Networks tend to be semi-closed and trust-based, yet sufficiently flexible to accommodate new actors when strategic opportunities arise. These characteristics create favorable conditions for the emergence of cooperative behavior, as actors must simultaneously protect their individual positions and engage in collective arrangements to sustain market functioning.

Coexistence of competition and cooperation within informal networks

The findings indicate that competition and cooperation are not mutually exclusive in parallel currency markets. Instead, they coexist within the same relational space and often involve the same actors.

Competitive interactions

Competitive interactions primarily revolve around individual strategic actions aimed at capturing market share, attracting clients, and maximizing short-term gains. Competition is largely expressed through price-based strategies, particularly through the manipulation of exchange rates. Entrepreneurs continuously monitor rivals' actions and adjust their own rates accordingly in order to maintain or improve their competitive position.

In some cases, competition takes the form of aggressive or hyper-competitive behavior, including attempts to destabilize rivals by undercutting prices or capturing their clientele. These competitive dynamics benefit clients by generating more favorable exchange rates but tend to reduce individual profits and increase market volatility.

Cooperative interactions

At the same time, cooperative interactions are pervasive and essential for market survival. Cooperation enables entrepreneurs to access critical resources, particularly foreign currency and market information, which would be difficult or costly to obtain independently. Cooperative exchanges are predominantly based on trust, reciprocity, and long-term relational embeddedness.

Cooperation facilitates the sharing of information related to exchange rate trends, market demand, and risk conditions. These informational exchanges often occur through weak ties that connect actors across different networks, thereby enhancing collective market awareness and coordination.

Network-based coopetition : vertical and horizontal forms

Between pure competition and pure cooperation, the findings reveal the existence of network-based coopetition, in which entrepreneurs simultaneously compete and cooperate within the same relational framework. Two main forms of coopetition emerge: vertical coopetition and horizontal coopetition.

Vertical Coopetition : from cooperation to competitive interdependence

Vertical coopetition primarily involves relationships between informal entrepreneurs and non-competitor actors, such as suppliers, clients, travelers, and, in some cases, formal banking intermediaries. These relationships are initially cooperative and focus on securing access to foreign currency resources and distribution channels.

However, the findings indicate that these vertical relationships may evolve into competitive ones when suppliers or clients become potential competitors. For example, clients or suppliers who acquire sufficient market knowledge and capital may enter the parallel currency market themselves, thereby transforming cooperative ties into competitive interdependencies. In such cases, cooperation and competition coexist within the same vertical relationship, generating both opportunities and tensions.

Horizontal coopetition : cooperation among rivals

Horizontal coopetition refers to cooperative relationships among direct competitors operating at the same level of the market. This form of coopetition is particularly significant in parallel currency markets, where actors face shared risks and high levels of uncertainty.

Horizontal coopetition is based on mutual trust and goal alignment and involves the pooling and sharing of resources, including foreign currency, market information, and expertise related to exchange rate anticipation and calculation. By cooperating with rivals, entrepreneurs are able to achieve superior collective performance, stabilize market operations, and counter external threats or dominant competitors.

At the same time, horizontal coopetition remains inherently fragile. The sharing of sensitive resources and knowledge exposes actors to opportunistic behavior, such as the

misappropriation of information, clients, or suppliers. As a result, coopetitive relationships are continuously renegotiated and monitored to maintain a balance between collaboration and rivalry.

Determinants of coopetitive practices in informal entrepreneurial networks

The analysis identifies three main determinants that encourage informal entrepreneurs to engage in coopetitive practices within parallel currency markets.

Goal alignment and mutual profit seeking

Goal alignment emerges as a primary driver of coopetition. Entrepreneurs engage in coopetitive relationships when they perceive a convergence of strategic objectives, particularly the pursuit of mutual profit within a win–win logic. Shared strategic intentions facilitate the coordination of actions and legitimize cooperation among rivals, even in highly competitive environments.

Synergy seeking through resource and knowledge sharing

The pursuit of synergies constitutes a second key determinant. Coopetition enables entrepreneurs to pool and share critical resources, particularly informational resources and expertise related to market anticipation and exchange rate calculation. Through cooperation with rivals, actors develop coopetitive capabilities that enhance learning, adaptability, and market responsiveness.

The findings suggest that coopetition is more likely to emerge among actors with relatively similar resource endowments and levels of expertise, as this similarity facilitates reciprocal exchanges and reduces power asymmetries.

Risk sharing and collective risk management

Risk sharing represents a third major determinant of coopetition. Entrepreneurs operating in parallel currency markets face multiple risks, including exchange rate volatility, liquidity constraints, and opportunistic behavior by partners. Coopetition allows actors to collectively manage and mitigate market-related risks while accepting the relational risks associated with cooperation among competitors.

This dual exposure to market risk and relational risk generates tensions that are inherent to coopetitive arrangements. Managing these tensions becomes a central challenge for actors engaged in network-based coopetition.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Discussion of findings

This study set out to examine whether and how cooperative practices emerge among entrepreneurs operating in informal economic contexts. By focusing on parallel currency exchange markets, the findings provide strong empirical evidence that cooperation is not confined to formal organizational settings but also constitutes a central mode of interaction in informal entrepreneurial networks.

The results confirm that cooperation in informal markets is inherently paradoxical. Entrepreneurs simultaneously engage in intense competitive behaviors, such as price-based rivalry and market destabilization, while maintaining cooperative relationships grounded in trust, reciprocity, and mutual dependence. This coexistence of competition and cooperation echoes core insights from the cooperation literature (Bengtsson & Kock, 2000; Raza-Ullah, 2020) while extending them to contexts characterized by institutional voids and legal ambiguity.

A key theoretical contribution of this study lies in the identification of network-based (reticular) cooperation as a dominant organizational form in informal economies. Unlike formal interfirm alliances, cooperation in parallel currency markets is embedded in dense relational networks that combine vertical and horizontal interactions. Vertical cooperation emerges when cooperative relationships with suppliers or clients evolve into competitive interdependencies, while horizontal cooperation reflects collaboration among direct competitors seeking to stabilize market conditions, share resources, and manage uncertainty.

These findings refine existing cooperation models by highlighting the fluid and dynamic nature of cooperative relationships in informal settings. Rather than being governed by formal contracts or organizational boundaries, cooperation in informal markets is regulated through relational norms, reputation, and ongoing negotiation. This relational embeddedness plays a crucial role in mitigating opportunism while simultaneously enabling resource sharing and collective action.

The identification of three key determinants, goal alignment, synergy seeking, and risk sharing, further contributes to the literature by illustrating how cooperation is sustained under conditions of high uncertainty. Goal alignment facilitates coordination among rivals, synergy seeking enhances collective performance through resource and knowledge sharing, and risk sharing allows entrepreneurs to cope with market volatility and institutional fragility. Together, these determinants underscore the strategic rationality underlying cooperative behavior in informal economies.

Theoretical implications

This research makes several theoretical contributions. First, it extends the coopetition literature by moving beyond formal organizational contexts and demonstrating that coopetition is a viable and effective strategic logic in informal economies. By doing so, it responds to calls for greater contextualization of coopetition research and enriches our understanding of strategic behavior under institutional constraints.

Second, the study contributes to network theory by conceptualizing informal entrepreneurial networks as arenas of paradoxical interaction, where competitive and cooperative logics coexist and reinforce one another. The notion of reticular coopetition offers a useful analytical lens for examining how network structures shape strategic interactions in contexts characterized by weak institutions.

Third, the findings contribute to the growing literature on the management of paradoxes by showing how informal entrepreneurs navigate coopetitive tensions without formal governance mechanisms. Trust, reciprocity, and reputational considerations emerge as key informal governance mechanisms that enable actors to balance rivalry and collaboration over time.

Managerial and policy implications

Although this study focuses on informal economic actors, it offers broader managerial and policy-relevant insights. For practitioners operating in highly uncertain or weakly institutionalized environments, the findings highlight the importance of relational capabilities and network embeddedness as sources of strategic advantage. Entrepreneurs can enhance their resilience and performance by developing the ability to manage coopetitive relationships and associated tensions.

From a policy perspective, understanding the relational dynamics of informal markets may help regulators design more effective and inclusive policy interventions. Rather than viewing informal markets solely as spaces of illegality, policymakers may benefit from recognizing the structured and relational nature of these markets and the strategic rationality of the actors involved.

Limitations and future research directions

Like all qualitative studies, this research has limitations. The findings are based on a single empirical context and rely primarily on observation and informal interactions, which may limit generalizability. Future research could address these limitations by adopting mixed-method

approaches that combine qualitative insights with quantitative analyses to examine the prevalence and performance implications of cooperation in informal settings.

Further research could also explore the micro-level managerial practices used by informal entrepreneurs to manage cooperative tensions. While existing studies have identified several principles for managing cooperation in formal organizations, such as functional separation, individual integration, and co-management (Bengtsson & Kock, 2000; Chen, 2008; Fernandez et al., 2014), it remains unclear whether and how these principles apply in informal economies. Investigating alternative or context-specific management mechanisms represents a promising avenue for future research.

Finally, comparative studies across different informal sectors or national contexts could deepen our understanding of how institutional environments shape the emergence and evolution of cooperative practices.

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