

## CULTURAL VALUES AND KNOWLEDGE THROUGH HOFSTEDE'S FRAMEWORK: A BIBLIOMETRIC AND BIPARTITE NETWORK STUDY OF COOPERATIVES

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**Annotation.** This study explores how cultural values, based on Hofstede's dimensions, are applied to the study of cooperatives, identifying dominant themes, key academic contributions, and regional patterns in the literature. Understanding how cooperatives, as democratic and member-driven organisations, operate within different cultural contexts offers new insights into the intersection of culture, governance, and the social economy. A bibliometric analysis is conducted to classify, categorise, and identify relationships among academic publications on cooperatives and cultural values. The study employs VOSviewer to map intellectual structures, key thematic clusters, and regional trends. Additionally, a bipartite network co-occurrence analysis using Python is used to examine the intersection of Hofstede's cultural dimensions, regional influences, and thematic keywords, thereby providing a structured framework for understanding cooperative governance. The results indicate that Hofstede's framework can provide valuable insights into cooperative governance, as its dimensions align well with the democratic and member-driven nature of these organisations. Based on the results, the influence of cultural factors in cooperatives varies according to regional contexts and the specific purposes or industries in which they operate. This variability underscores the importance of considering local cultural nuances when evaluating cooperative practices. The study identifies key thematic areas to correctly explore culture on cooperatives based on Hofstede's dimensions. The present study provides a systematic examination of the intersection between cultural dimensions and cooperatives, an approach to cooperatives culture study as it has been marginal so far. By mapping out the structure of the research area and analysing regional and keyword trends, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how cultural values influence cooperative governance and decision-making across diverse socio-economic contexts proposing a research agenda from the perspective of Hofstede's ideas.

**Keywords:** cooperatives, Hofstede, culture, bibliometric analysis, social economy.

**JEL classification:** M31, P13, Z13.

## Introduction

The social economy encompasses organisations prioritising social objectives over profit maximisation, including cooperatives, mutuals, foundations, and associations (Haugh, Kitson, 2007). These entities operate based on solidarity, democracy, and inclusion, fostering economic participation and social responsibility (Calabrese, Falavigna, 2024). Within this framework, cooperatives are essential in balancing economic sustainability with social impact, serving as mechanisms for inclusive economic development and addressing societal needs beyond profit generation (Ghauri *et al.*, 2022).

Understanding culture in organisations is strategic, as cultural values modulate governance, decision-making, and collaboration (Palumbo and Douglas, 2024). Culture dictates how authority is distributed, trust is built, and individuals interact within institutional frameworks (Galvin *et al.*, 2021; Lukyanova *et al.*, 2022; Iershova *et al.*, 2022). When cultural values align with organisational principles, institutions function effectively, fostering engagement and efficiency (Assoratgoon and Kantabutra, 2023). Given that cooperatives rely on democratic governance and shared ownership, cultural values influence how authority, participation, and decision-making are structured (Ghauri *et al.*, 2022).

While cooperatives emphasise collectivism and decentralisation, their organisational structures and governance models often reflect broader cultural norms. Some cooperatives adopt structured leadership, while others prioritise horizontal governance and participatory decision-making (Estragó, 2023). These variations highlight that culture shapes not only how cooperatives operate but also how they adapt to different socio-economic contexts (Majee and Hoyt, 2011).

The study of Hofstede's cultural dimensions in the organisational context is widely established, as these dimensions have been extensively applied to analyse corporate governance, leadership, and management practices across different cultural settings (Schachner *et al.*, 2024). However, their application to cooperatives remains underexplored, despite the fact that cooperatives, like any other organisation, operate in cultural environments that form their governance, participation, and decision-making. This gap in the literature represents a research opportunity, as understanding how Hofstede's framework applies specifically to cooperatives can provide new insights into the intersection of culture, governance, and the social economy.

This study aims to explore how cultural values, based on Hofstede's dimensions, are applied to the study of cooperatives, identifying dominant themes, key academic contributions, and regional patterns in the literature. The research is guided by the following objectives. The first is to create knowledge about the study of culture in cooperatives. The second objective is set to apply Hofstede's criteria to the understanding of culture in cooperatives. The third objective considers evaluating how key terms associated with Hofstede's dimensions appear in cooperative studies and conduct an initial assessment of the variation of these dimensions across regions.

The originality of this study lies in its systematic examination of the intersection between cultural dimensions and cooperatives, a field only marginally explored in previous research. By mapping out the intellectual structure of this research area, identifying key thematic clusters, and examining regional trends, this study provides a comprehensive overview of how cultural values influence cooperative governance.

To achieve the objectives, this study employs bibliometric analysis, a quantitative research method that classifies, categorises, and identifies relationships among academic publications (Donthu *et al.*, 2021;

Sánchez-Robles *et al.*, 2024). This approach focuses on understanding the most relevant authors who have published contributions related to cooperatives and culture to date. In addition, it is explored how the primary sources (journals) that publish information related to cooperatives and SDGs, as well as the main keywords and themes are linked to the objectives of the research. For this purpose, VOSViewer software is used (Van Eck and Waltman, 2017). Additionally, a network co-occurrence analysis examines Hofstede's cultural dimensions, regional influences, and thematic clusters through bipartite network analysis (Guillaume and Latapy, 2006; Lv *et al.*, 2024), mapping Hofstede's cultural dimensions against geographic regions and key thematic keywords. By employing this methodology, the study categorises academic contributions systematically, providing a structured understanding of cultural values in cooperatives and identifying the key intellectual foundations of this field.

## 1. Theoretical Framework

### 1.1 Cooperatives within the Social Economy

The social economy encompasses a wide range of organisations and initiatives that are based on people and social objectives rather than profit maximisation (Haugh and Kitson, 2007). These organisations include cooperatives, mutuals, foundations and associations. They are based on values such as solidarity, democracy and inclusion. As part of the social economy, cooperatives are central in exemplifying these principles in their organisational structures and operational practises. They are not only a mechanism for achieving participants' economic objectives, but are also seen as a tool for addressing broader social and cultural needs, thus fostering social development (Calabrese and Falavigna, 2024).

A cooperative is an organisation that is owned and democratically controlled by its voluntary members who join to seek benefits based on their use of the business (Ghauri *et al.*, 2022). As organisations, cooperatives follow the guiding principles of the social economy enabling democratic systems where members collaborate to perform professional duties (Iliopoulos and Valentinov, 2022). Furthermore, cooperatives allow comparativists to access opportunities that might otherwise be out of reach, while also generating positive social impact for the communities they serve (Majee and Hoyt, 2011). Additionally, they align with the social economy's emphasis on sustainability, global cooperation, and the pursuit of long-term social impact and promote social responsibility (Kyazze *et al.*, 2017) by fostering alliances and creating inclusive networks that aim to address the specific needs of their communities even to fight poverty (Salomon, 2023).

These organisations present a unique governance model with no fixed hierarchy or departmental structure among members. Each member is democratically responsible to reach agreements on the actions to be taken (Estragó, 2023) reflecting the collective interest of the members of the cooperative (comparativists) (Liu *et al.*, 2024). However, a board of directors is chosen for the cooperative decision-making for its interest based on the right to vote of all cooperative members as well as for strategic decision-making. This governance model democratises the governance of the organisation and empowers members equally.

Cooperative financing structure is challenging. While cooperatives normally require upfront capital to gain membership and ownership (Grashuis and Cook, 2018), it is not always mandatory for members to invest capital to become comparativists, as in some regions such as in China or the US (Kurakin and Visser, 2017; Valentinov and Iliopoulos, 2021). For example, a farmer can become a member of a

cooperative without investing capital but by selling his production through it. In general, cooperatives are financed by members' contributions and investments as well as by external credit from financial institutions (Mamouni Limnios *et al.*, 2016).

Based on this model, cooperatives face challenges related to human capital in terms of education and training of the comparativists (Jamaluddin *et al.*, 2023). These elements are critical for cooperative success, given that the members are supposed to be highly active in the management and decision-making (Pesci *et al.*, 2024). Cooperatives promote training to their members for their successful participation in the management, control and purpose of the organisation (Akbari *et al.*, 2023). To achieve success in the long-term development of cooperative organisations, policies should encourage cooperative members to actively participate in governance (Liu *et al.*, 2024). However, in many cases, the complexity of the project to be promoted by the cooperative results in the subcontracting of specialised companies to manage operational and administrative aspects (Ferreri and Vidal, 2022). In recent years, a growing trend has emerged in which specialised companies promote the creation of cooperatives to undertake specific projects (Pevereni *et al.*, 2024). These companies assist in legal and structural processes to certain people, and subsequently position themselves as the main subcontractors of the potential cooperative for the management of the project. This is happening in sectors, such as housing, renewable energy, and agriculture. While this is providing value to a certain market, it is worth noting that it also raises concerns about governance in terms of maintaining democratic decision-making among the members and ensuring cost transparency.

The legal structure of a cooperative is adopted under the common objective to pursue the benefits of its members (Bretos and Marcuello, 2017). These benefits determine the different types of cooperatives that are in existence. These include producer cooperatives that focus on marketing the members' products and optimising production processes (Bijman and Wijers, 2019); consumer cooperatives that provide goods and services to members at reduced costs (Minnehametova *et al.*, 2021); worker cooperatives that promote job creation and equitable risk-sharing among members (Thompson, 2015); housing cooperatives that offer affordable housing options managed democratically (Ferreri and Vidal, 2022); finance cooperatives that pool resources for collective financial benefits (Kamau *et al.*, 2024); multi-stakeholder cooperatives that combine resources from diverse stakeholders to foster sustainability (Gonzalez, 2017); non-profit community service cooperatives (Lafont *et al.* 2023); and new generation cooperatives that focus on emerging industries with production optimisation as a core goal (Singh, 2023). Lately, alternative cooperative models are emerging across entrepreneurship and digitalisation capabilities such as platform cooperatives, which differ slightly from traditional cooperatives in their business model being based on digital platforms and technology, allowing workers or users to be owners and managers of the digital infrastructure, rather than relying on physical and local structures (Atanasova *et al.*, 2024). This shift aligns with broader digitalisation trends in cooperatives, where new technology adoption has become a strategic necessity for organisational transformation and economic sustainability (Ribeiro-Navarrete *et al.*, 2024), therefore playing a significant role in advancing sustainable development, aligning with global priorities such as the sustainable development goals (Lafont *et al.*, 2023).

## **1.2 The Role of Culture in Cooperatives**

Cultural values are fundamental for shaping organisational structures (Palumbo and Douglas, 2024). They influence how individuals collaborate, establish trust, and engage in governance, ultimately

affecting organisational and decision-making efficiency (Galvin *et al.*, 2021). Since cultural values align with organisational principles, they tend to function more effectively, whereas misalignment can create challenges in the long term (Assoratgoon and Kantabutra, 2023). It is important to highlight both the existence of an organisational culture and the type of culture that allows governance and operational effectiveness matter, as different cultural frameworks foster distinct ways of interaction and decision-making (Bogoviz *et al.*, 2019).

Since cooperatives are also organisations that engage in governance and decision-making, cultural values influence how authority, participation, and collaboration are structured within them. While cooperatives are based on collectivism and decentralisation, their governance models reflect broader cultural norms on hierarchy, trust, and group dynamics. In some societies, cooperatives develop structured leadership, whereas in others, they favour participatory governance, aligning with prevalent cultural expectations. According to Ghauri *et al.* (2022), cooperatives are professional associations that aim to fulfill economic, social and cultural objectives of the members in a common way.

**Table 1. Hofstede's Framework: Cultural Dimensions and Their Impact on Organisational Behaviour**

Hofstede's Dimension (Abbreviation)	Description	References	Impact on Organisational Behaviour	Examples
Individualism vs. Collectivism (IC)	Measures the extent to which individuals prioritise personal goals over group objectives. Individualist cultures emphasise self-reliance, while collectivist cultures value group loyalty and interdependence.	Hofstede, 1980, 1986, 2001, 2010; Taras <i>et al.</i> , 2023	Influences collaboration, team dynamics, and employee motivation.	Individualism: preference for independence in the US. Collectivism: group loyalty in Japan.
Power Distance (PD)	Captures the degree to which power inequalities are accepted within a society or organisation. High power distance cultures favor hierarchy and authority, while low power distance cultures promote equality and participatory decision-making.	Hofstede, 1980, 1986, 2001, 2010; Taras <i>et al.</i> , 2023	Affects leadership styles, communication flows, and decision-making.	High: hierarchical workplaces in India. Low: flat organisations in the Netherlands.
Masculinity vs. Femininity (MF)	Reflects the balance between assertiveness, achievement, and competition (masculinity) versus care, relationships, and quality of life (femininity). Masculine cultures emphasise competitiveness and material success, while feminine cultures prioritise social harmony.	Hofstede, 1980, 1986, 2001, 2010; Taras <i>et al.</i> , 2023	Shapes workplace priorities, such as performance goals vs. work-life balance.	Masculinity: emphasis on competitiveness in Germany. Femininity: focus on harmony in Sweden.
Uncertainty Avoidance (UA)	Measures how societies manage ambiguity and unstructured situations through rules and guidelines. High uncertainty avoidance cultures prefer structured environments, while low uncertainty avoidance cultures are more flexible and open to change.	Hofstede, 1980, 1986, 2001, 2010; Taras <i>et al.</i> , 2023	Influences risk-taking, flexibility, and adherence to organisational rules.	High: strict regulations in Japan. Low: adaptability in Singapore.
Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation (LSto)	Reflects a culture's focus on future rewards and sustainability versus tradition and short-term results. Long-term oriented cultures emphasise perseverance and planning, while short-term oriented cultures prioritize tradition and immediate outcomes.	Hofstede, 1980, 1986, 2001, 2010; Taras <i>et al.</i> , 2023	Affects strategic planning, innovation, and sustainability practices.	Long-term: emphasis on savings and perseverance in China. Short-term: focus on tradition in the US.
Indulgence vs. Restraint (IR)	Describes the extent to which societies encourage gratification of desires versus adherence to social norms. Indulgent cultures support openness and enjoyment, while restrained cultures emphasise discipline and social order.	Hofstede, 1980, 1986, 2001, 2010; Taras <i>et al.</i> , 2023	Impacts employee satisfaction, innovation, and workplace culture.	Indulgence: open social expression in Latin America. Restraint: focus on control in Eastern Europe.

Source: compiled by the authors.

To systematically analyse the role of cultural values in governance and organisational structures, various theoretical frameworks have been developed. Among them, Hofstede's framework is one of the most

widely applied for understanding cultural influences in organisations (Schachner *et al.*, 2024). Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions were developed in the 1970s through an extensive study of IBM employees across various countries aiming to describe cultural values and its variability (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede *et al.*, 2010). Throughout the years, this model has been extended given some identified limitations on the instruments (Taras *et al.*, 2023). Hofstede's framework provides a foundational lens for understanding how cultural differences influence individual and organisational behaviour. The framework identifies six key dimensions that describe cultural variability (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede *et al.*, 2010), as described in *Table 1*.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Bibliometric Analysis

This study employs a bibliometric analysis approach to explore the application of cultural values to cooperatives based on the cultural dimensions defined by Hofstede (Hofstede, 1986). Bibliometric analysis is a quantitative research method used to classify, categorise, and identify connections between academic publications within a given field (Donthu *et al.*, 2021; Sánchez-Robles *et al.*, 2024). This methodology allows to understand the structure and dynamics of academic contributions related to these concepts and to identify key themes, trends, and influential authors.

According to Ribeiro-Navarrete *et al.* (2021), bibliometric analysis enables the understanding of the main academic contributions. It is worth noting that this analysis also facilitates the identification of structure and dynamics of a certain field (Lacárcel *et al.*, 2021). This analysis enables the identification of networks of elements formed by documents, authors, journals, geographies, and keywords as well as the relevance of these networks (Sánchez-Robles *et al.*, 2024). Furthermore, clusters that contain the main academic contributions in a field can be both displayed and classified.

Three types of analysis have been developed. The first is the co-citation analysis that is used to identify the intellectual structure of the field by analysing the references cited together across publications (Boyack and Klavans, 2010). This technique highlights the most influential authors and foundational works in the field. The second is the bibliographic coupling which is applied to explore relationships between documents that share common references, allowing the identification of clusters of research and thematic connections (Zupic and Čater, 2015). The third is the keyword co-occurrence analysis, which is used to determine the most frequent keywords in the dataset, providing insights into dominant themes and emerging trends within the field (Chen and Xiao, 2016).

These analyses provide scientific rigor, value, and quality to a bibliometric study with scientific rigor (Merigó and Yang, 2017). The resulting maps included the generation of neural networks that illustrate the connections between authors, journals, and keywords, providing a visual representation of the intellectual structure in this field.

For the bibliometric analysis, VOSviewer software, version 1.6.20., was used. This software facilitates the visual interpretation of results, allowing the generation of content indexes with metrics for each element, emphasising the significance of the links and connections between the main themes (Rogers *et al.*, 2020). The relevance of the clusters and their content increases with the density and prominence of the nodes within the displayed networks. Similarly, VOSviewer suggests different alternatives to identify neuron maps and data matrixes (Van Eck, Waltman, 2010).

In this study, the fractional counting option in VOSviewer was used to evenly distribute the weight of co-authorship links among contributors. This method ensures that each co-author receives a proportionate share of the total link weight, enhancing the precision of the analysis in cases with papers of multiple contributors (Ribeiro-Navarrete *et al.*, 2021).

In addition to the bibliometric techniques, this study employs a network co-occurrence analysis through a bipartite network analysis method to explore the relationships between Hofstede's cultural dimensions and geographical regions, as well as to identify the keywords most frequently associated with each cultural dimension. This analysis was implemented using Python scripts, leveraging libraries such as Pandas, NetworkX, and Matplotlib. The code was developed and executed in Visual Studio Code (version 1.94.4). A bipartite network is a special complex network, which can describe the complex system containing two kinds of objects (Guillaume and Latapy, 2006; Lv *et al.*, 2024). In a bipartite network, there are two node sets (namely, terms and documents), with edges allowed only between the two sets (de Martino *et al.*, 2024). In our analysis, one set of nodes represents Hofstede's dimensions (Power Distance, Individualism vs. Collectivism, Long/Short-Term Orientation, Indulgence vs. Restraint, Masculinity vs. Femininity and Uncertainty Avoidance), while other sets correspond to the regions extracted from the sample and the most relevant keywords. An edge between a dimension and a region or keyword is established whenever a publication indicates a connection between them, with the edge weight corresponding to the frequency of these co-occurrences. The resulting figures provide evidence of the links among Hofstede's dimensions and the most representative keywords and regions of the study.

To systematically categorise these relationships, each article was reviewed to identify its area of focus, and each abstract was analysed to assess its potential in association with Hofstede's dimensions. This process followed a coding procedure in which each article was assigned a value of 1 if a connection to a Hofstede's dimension was identified, and 0 if no relationship was observed. To enhance the visualisation, by using an amplified weight factor, a spring layout algorithm was applied for the closer positioning of the nodes with stronger connections. Node sizes were scaled according to the number of articles associated with each dimension, region, or keyword, while edge widths were set proportional to the co-occurrence frequencies. This network mapping provides a clear visual representation of the interaction between cultural values, geographic contexts, and thematic research trends, thereby complementing the other bibliometric analyses conducted in this study.

## 2.2 Data Sampling

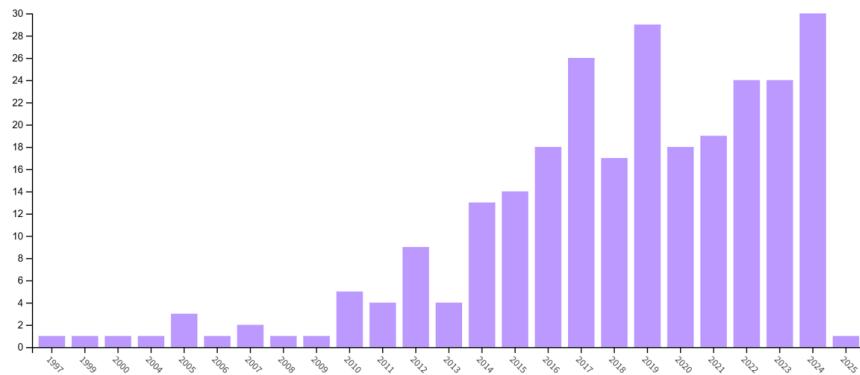
Following similar studies (Lafont *et al.*, 2023; Sánchez-Robles *et al.*, 2024), the *Web of Science* (WoS) database was selected for data collection. This database is known for its inclusion of high-quality, peer-reviewed academic journals indexed in the *Journal of Citation Reports* (JCR), ensuring that the analysis is grounded in reputable sources. WoS is particularly suitable for bibliometric studies due to its extensive coverage, standardised citation data, and robust indexing of interdisciplinary research. Using the WoS database is a common approach in bibliometric studies for the robust and consistent collection and classification of data (Gaviria-Marin *et al.*, 2018). The data has been extracted following the previous relevant studies by Williams and Bornmann (2016) and Rogers *et al.* (2020), which indicate that when identifying emerging or relevant topics, the databases search should be structured, following classification, division protocols and filtering. Thus, the dataset for this study was extracted from the *Web of Science* database using Boolean operators (AND, OR).

The search terms were as follows: ('cooperatives' or 'cooperativist' or 'cooperativism') and ('culture' or 'cultural') or ('social economy'). The queries were made on 15 January 2025, and were limited to the following document types: articles, review article, and early access. Following the approach applied by Ribeiro-Navarrete *et al.* (2021), we employed the WoS category selection filter and initially chose categories such as economics, business, management, and business-finance, to capture the mainstream literature on enterprise-driven research. However, in light of the growing emphasis on sustainability and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within organisational studies, we additionally included environmental studies, environmental sciences, and green, sustainable science, and technology. These latter categories were deemed essential because cooperatives increasingly engage in environmental stewardship and green innovation, positioning themselves as key players in fostering sustainable practices across industries. Therefore, the incorporation of these categories allowed for a more holistic coverage of the cooperative landscape encompassing business and finance-oriented perspectives but also the environmental dimensions of cooperative activities related to organisations.

In addition, we included Cultural Studies due to its potential relevance to Hofstede's cultural dimensions baseline, which often inform theoretical and empirical work on cooperative governance, stakeholder engagement, and performance. By including this category, we sought to capture socio-cultural analyses and comparative cross-cultural studies that illuminate how local values, norms, and beliefs may shape cooperatives' strategies and outcomes. Ultimately, broadening the WoS category filters to include both cultural and environmental categories ensured a richer and more comprehensive dataset for understanding the applications of cultural values to social economy.

### **2.3 Sample Description**

After cleaning the dataset in Microsoft Excel to remove duplicates and contributions irrelevant to the topic, a total of 296 contributions were included in the analysis. *Figure 1* shows the evolution of the studies published by year. Cultural values have been incorporated within the studies, especially from 2011 when the number of studies dealing with cultural aspects started to increase. It is worth noting the as per *Figure 1*, the number of studies observed from 2014 matches with the increase of studies on social economy and culture globalisation. It can be explained by its increased need due to the financial crisis of 2008–2010, as it highlighted the vulnerabilities of traditional economic structures, prompting alternative organisational models, such as cooperatives or social economy enterprises, in subsequent years. These models were increasingly explored as mechanisms to enhance economic resilience, social inclusion, and sustainable development (Lafont *et al.*, 2023). Besides, the observed increase from 2016 onwards may be due to the increasing global interest on sustainability, social innovation and economic resilience. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals integrated social economy which include cooperatives into its framework including governance aspects. Additionally, due to the financial stress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the interest on social economy, such as cooperatives, may have increased as resilient and community-driven alternatives to traditional models (Billiet *et al.*, 2021). As an organisational mechanism, cooperative organisations enhance societal access to essential services for individuals such as housing, economic activities or business opportunities, particularly in times of economic crisis.



Source: WoS, retrieved on 15 January 2025.

Figure 1. Number of Published Articles by year from 1997 to January 2025

With respect to the categories of the most published studies, they are as follows: economics (26.2%), environmental studies (10.1%), management (8.9%), environmental sciences (7.8%), and business (7.0%). Table 2 demonstrates the main categories per number of publications. Also, the most cited authors based on WoS are included.

Table 2. WoS Categories and Percentage of Records and Most Article Citations

Web of Science Categories	Record Count	% of 256	% def
<i>Economics</i>	98	35.507	35.5%
<i>Environmental Studies</i>	71	25.725	25.7%
<i>Environmental Sciences</i>	50	18.116	18.1%
<i>Business</i>	43	15.580	15.6%
<i>Management</i>	43	15.580	15.6%
<i>Green Sustainable Science Technology</i>	41	14.855	14.9%
<i>Agricultural Economics Policy</i>	12	4.348	4.3%
<i>Development Studies</i>	12	4.348	4.3%
<i>Cultural Studies</i>	11	3.986	4.0%
<i>Regional Urban Planning</i>	8	2.899	2.9%
Article	Author	Citations	
<i>Transitions in European land-management regimes between 1800 and 2010</i>	Jepsen (2015)	272	
<i>Renewable energy cooperatives as gatekeepers or facilitators? Recent developments in Germany and a multidisciplinary research agenda</i>	Yildiz (2015)	260	
<i>Distributional effects of agricultural cooperatives in China: Exclusion of small-holders and potential gains on participation</i>	Ito (2012)	188	
<i>Cooperatives, concessions, and co-management on the Pacific coast of Mexico</i>	Mccay (2014)	142	
<i>Communities matter: Institutional preconditions for community renewable energy</i>	Wirth (2014)	131	
<i>The Social Dimensions of Sustainability and Change in Diversified Farming Systems</i>	Bacon (2012)	115	
<i>Contesting energy transitions: wind power and conflicts in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec</i>	Avila-calero (2017)	104	
<i>Individual choice or collective action? Exploring consumer motives for participating in alternative food networks</i>	Zoll (2018)	82	
<i>Measuring the effect of agricultural cooperatives on household income: Case study of a rice-producing cooperative in China</i>	Hoken, H, Su, Q (2018)	56	
<i>Farmer cooperatives in China: diverse pathways to sustainable rural development</i>	Song, YC (2014)	55	

Source: the authors based on VOSviewer software.

### 3. Bibliometric Analysis Results

In this section the results of co-citation analysis, bibliographic coupling and keyword co-occurrence are included.

#### 3.1 Co-Citation Analysis

Table 3 shows the first 10 results displayed based on the number of co-citation analysis of references and authors. The analysis of the references provides a wider approach.

**Table 3. Reference Co-Citation and Author Co-Citation Results**

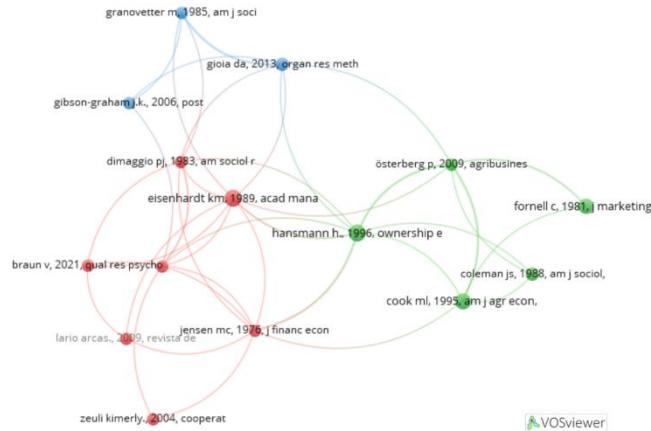
Reference co-citation				Author co-citation		
Title	Authors (s)	Citations	Link Strength	Author(s)	Citation	Link Strength
<i>Cooperative firms in theory and practice</i>	Hansmann h., 1996	11	29	Audretsch, db	17	110
<i>Managing and resisting 'degeneration' in employee-owned businesses: A comparative study of two large retailers in Spain and the United Kingdom</i>	Storey j, 2014	6	25	Fritsch, m	22	110
<i>The ties that bind? Exploring the basic principles of worker-owned organisations in practise</i>	Heras-saizarbitoria i, 2014	5	23	Garrido, s	13	46
<i>Building theories from case study research</i>	Eisenhardt km, 1989	10	22	Henriksen, i	15	42
<i>The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organisational fields</i>	Dimaggio pj, 1983	6	17	Benner, a	16	39
<i>Theory of the firm: Managerial behavior, agency costs and ownership structure</i>	Jensen mc, 1976	6	16	Hansmann, h	13	35
<i>Members' perception of their participation in the governance of cooperatives: the key to trust and commitment in agricultural cooperatives</i>	Österberg p, 2009	6	14	Ostrom, e	33	33
<i>The future of US agricultural cooperatives: A neo-institutional approach</i>	Cook ml, 1995	9	12	Cornforth, c	16	29
<i>The logic of a co-operative economy and democracy 2.0: Recovering the possibilities for autonomy, creativity, solidarity, and common purpose</i>	Rothschild j, 2016	5	10	Bauwens, t	15	8
<i>Understanding the diverse scaling strategies of social enterprises as hybrid organisations: The case of renewable energy cooperatives</i>	Bauwens t, 2020	5	6	Gibson-graham, jk	20	6

Source: the authors based on VOSviewer software.

Figure 2 presents the links and weights of the co-citations of the references of the sample. The figure illustrates the top 10 references computed in the co-citation analysis. To run and display this author neural network, the minimum number of citations was set at six citations. Of the total of 20 references included in this criterion, 15 were included in Figure 2 to facilitate the analysis. The total number of links revealed by the analysis was 38; the total link strength amounted to 49; and the degree was set at 10. Three clusters were identified.

The different labels shown in Figure 2 individually represent a reference. Also, the visualised size of the letters represents the number of times the reference is cited. Besides, the references that show greater

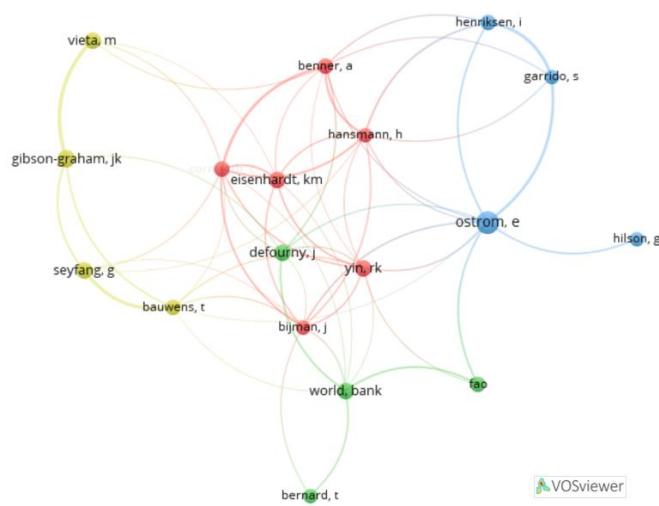
distance between others indicate less frequent citation. The references that are represented closer indicate that there is higher probability of being to the same reference. *Figure 2* also identifies three clusters which are represented in colours. The three clusters are similar in terms of citations. This could represent either a dynamic and diverse area of study or a lack of a clear direction in terms of conceptual frameworks. Considering the lack of studies observed related to cooperatives and social economy with cultural values, the latest conclusion can be accepted.



Source: the authors based on VOSviewer software.

**Figure 2. Reference Co-Citation Analysis**

Following the co-citation analysis, *Figure 3* represents the authors with the most citations within the database. It is worth noting that results and interpretation of author co-citation analysis and references co-citation analysis are similar. The filters selected for this analysis were as follows. The minimum number of citations was at 13. A total of 24 authors out of a total of 12192 met this criterion. A total of 87 links and a total link strength of 320 were obtained. Based on the results, four clusters can be identified in *Figure 3*.



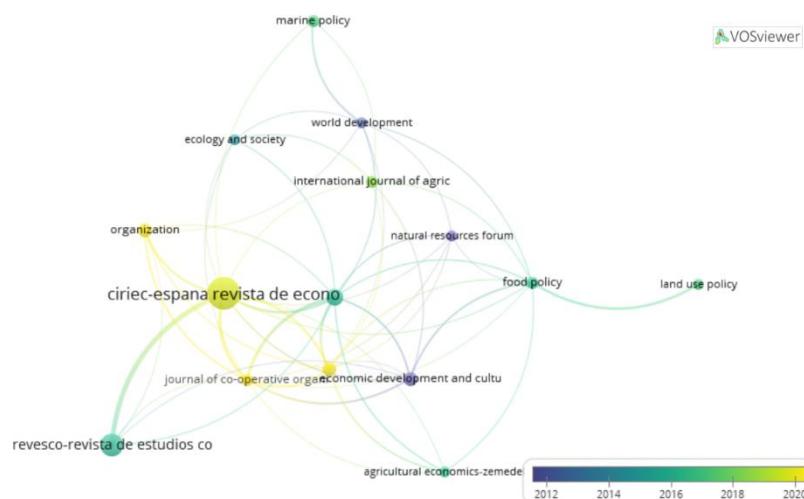
Source: the authors based on VOSviewer software.

**Figure 3. Author Co-Citation Analysis**

Figure 3 displays four distinct co-citation clusters, each characterised by the strength of links among authors. The most central and frequently cited authors appear in the red cluster, including Birchall, J., Cornforth, C., Simmel, Georg, and Benner, A., suggesting their pivotal roles in shaping research on cooperatives and social economy. The second cluster, containing authors such as Ostrom, E., and Cook, M.L., connects with the first cluster yet shows comparatively weaker co-citation links, indicating a shared, but less intensive, research focus. The third cluster includes Spear, R., Defourny, J., and Borzaga, C., who occupy a more peripheral position within the co-citation network; they remain important contributors but exhibit fewer direct links to the central authors. A fourth, smaller cluster likely comprises authors with the fewest citations, situated at the network's outer edges. Overall, these clusters reveal varying degrees of influence and interconnection within the field.

### 3.2 Bibliographic Coupling of Sources

In this section the different journals that published the most relevant contributions in relation to cooperatives, and social economy related to cultural values under Hofstede's dimensions criterion are analysed. The bibliometric coupling of sources is performed (see Figure 4) to identify the sources that collect the greatest number of documents, citations, and link strength. The following criterion is followed for this analysis: the minimum number of documents published in the same journal was established at three. This threshold is low but ensures that even smaller, but still relevant, academic contributions are captured, which otherwise would have been excluded. Additionally, to refine the results and improve the quality of the network, several sub-filters were applied. Specifically, journals with fewer than 10 citations per paper published were excluded from the analysis. This approach ensures that only those sources with a reasonable level of citation impact are considered, which helps maintain the reliability and academic relevance of the bibliographic coupling network. Of the 168 journals referred within the database, 15 meet this threshold. The analysis shows a total of 52 links and a 258 link strength. Table 4 lists the 10 most relevant sources identified in the database.



Source: the authors based on VOSviewer software.

Figure 4. Bibliographic Coupling of Sources by Average Year of Publication

Figure 4 visualises bibliographic coupling among journals, with colors representing the average year of publication (2012–2020). *CIRIEC-Espaa Revista de Economía Pública Social y Cooperativ* appears centrally, indicating strong connectivity and recent publication activity, as reflected by its yellow color. In

contrast, *Revesco-Revista de Estudios Cooperativos*, while also well-connected, appears in a more greenish tone, suggesting a slightly older average publication year but still maintaining relevance in the field. Journals such as *Marine Policy*, *Food Policy*, and *Land Use Policy* appear in lighter green-yellow shades, indicating a recent increase in cooperative-related research within policy and sustainability domains. Conversely, *World Development* and *International Journal of Agriculture* appear in darker green tones, signifying earlier contributions that remain influential but have seen less recent engagement in cooperative research. *Natural Resources Forum* and *Agricultural Economics-Zemedi* are positioned on the periphery with fewer and older connections.

Overall, the figure highlights a temporal shift in cooperative research, with *CIRIEC-España Revista de Economía Pública Social y Cooperativa* leading recent academic discussions, *Revesco-Revista de Estudios Cooperativos* maintaining a steady yet slightly older presence, and newer interdisciplinary contributions emerging in sustainability and policy-related fields. The analysis confirms the multidisciplinary nature of cooperative studies, spanning various thematic areas. The diversity of journals, including those focused on economics, management, sustainability, and policy, indicates that cooperatives are examined from different perspectives and research categories. The presence of sources related to environmental management, land use, and food policy suggests that cooperative discussions extend beyond traditional economic frameworks, incorporating broader managerial, societal, and sustainability considerations.

**Table 4. Bibliographic Coupling of Sources**

Source	Documents	Citations	Total link strength
<i>Ciriec-espana revista de economia publica social y cooperativa</i>	27	94	110
<i>Journal of co-operative organization and management</i>	4	323	67
<i>Annals of public and cooperative economics</i>	7	28	60
<i>Revesco-Revista de estudios cooperativos</i>	13	61	56
<i>Energy research &amp; social science</i>	5	163	39
<i>Food policy</i>	4	17	30
<i>Economic development and cultural change</i>	5	135	27
<i>Organisation</i>	5	115	23
<i>Land use policy</i>	3	300	14
<i>World development</i>	3	309	6

Source: the authors based on VOSviewer software.

Table 5 shows the bibliographic coupling of key sources in the literature related to the research. Among the analysed sources, *Ciriec-España Revista de Economía Pública Social y Cooperativa* stands out as the most central reference in the field. With 27 papers, 94 citations, and a robust total link strength of 110, this journal demonstrates both high productivity and strong thematic integration within the research network. Its performance underscores its role as a cornerstone for studies addressing the intersection of cooperatives, social economy, and cultural dimensions. Another relevant source is the *Journal of Co-operative Organisation and Management*, irregardless that it contributes with only four papers, but it shows a high number of citations, 323, coupled with a relevant link strength of 67. This indicates that while the volume of publications is limited, the impact of its articles is substantial. The high citation count suggests that its contributions are influential and widely recognised, even if they share fewer references with other sources compared to *Ciriec-España Revista de Economía Pública Social y Cooperativa*. Besides, *Energy Research and Social Science*, with five papers with 163 citations and a link

strength of 39, it reflects the significance of its high-quality contributions, despite a somewhat isolated positioning in the shared reference network.

Overall, these sources illustrate the dual dimensions of academic influence: one based on prolific output and integration into the literature, as exemplified by *Ciriec-España Revista de Economía Pública Social y Cooperativa*, and the other based on high-impact, influential contributions, as seen in the *Journal of Cooperative Organization and Management* and *Energy Research and Social Science*.

### 3.3 Author Keyword Cooccurrence

The most relevant keywords identified in the contributions linked to cooperatives, social economy and culture values are analysed. *Table 5* shows the occurrences and total link strength. *Figure 5* displays the identified keywords in a neuron map and clusters according to their relevance. A minimum of eight occurrences of a keyword was set, and 30 keywords out of 1652 met this threshold. Of these 30 keywords, the most aligned with the research objective are considered and analysed, obtaining 27 contributions showing relations between them. *Table 5* shows the 15 most relevant keywords linked to the research objectives including the number of occurrences and its link strength.

**Table 5. Author Keywords Co-Occurrence**

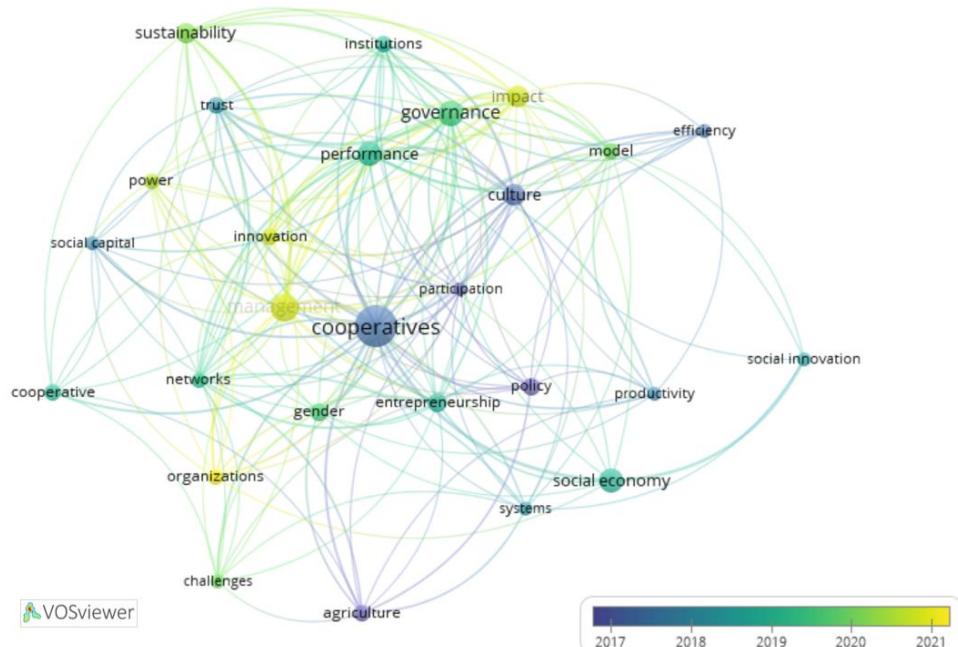
keyword	occurrences	total link strength
Cooperatives	63	76
Performance	22	50
Governance	25	46
Management	30	43
Impact	18	35
Culture	17	31
Entrepreneurship	14	27
Networks	9	27
Trust	10	27
Sustainability	16	25
Institutions	10	24
Innovation	11	22
Model	10	22
Social economy	22	19
Gender	12	17

Source: the authors based on VOSviewer software.

Setting aside the pivotal term *cooperatives*, the most frequently occurring keywords are *management* (30), *governance* (25), and *performance* (22). They reflect organisational concerns and indicate a strong business, economy, and management. Their prevalent use suggests a focus on operational efficiency, decision-making structures, and institutional frameworks, emphasising how cooperatives are analysed not only as social enterprises, but also through the lens of business strategy and organisational effectiveness. Given this strong managerial and economic orientation, it becomes particularly relevant to connect these findings to the analysis of cultural values, capturing the study of culture, as it relates to organisational structures and dynamics within cooperatives. The keyword *culture* (17) appears as a relevant concept even showing a significant link strength. Although its co-occurrence with other keywords does not necessarily imply a direct alignment with Hofstede's cultural dimensions, it highlights the growing recognition of cultural influences in cooperative governance, management styles, and institutional structures.

There are certain keywords that may have a link with Hofstede's cultural dimensions, such as the ones associated with societal impact: *sustainability* (16), *trust* (10), *institutions* (10), and *gender* (12). *Sustainability* and *institutional development* may align with long-term orientation, while *trust* and *gender-related* research may intersect with power distance or individualism/collectivism in cooperative environments.

For this reason, *Figure 5* represents the connections between the keywords arranged by clusters. Five main clusters are identified. The first cluster, centred on *governance* and *performance*, reflects the core organisational and managerial aspects of cooperative studies. The second cluster, including *cooperatives* and *performance*, implies a relation to decision-making and participation within cooperatives. The third cluster is built around *culture*, citing organisational environment within cooperatives. The fourth cluster suggests an emphasis on *management*, *impact*, and *sustainability* as the importance of managerial good practises. The fifth cluster features *social* and *economic transformation* through innovation.



Source: the authors based on VOSviewer software.

Figure 5. Author Keyword Co-Occurrence by Average Year of Publication

A first glance at the author keyword co-occurrence map reveals that *cooperatives* is surrounded by core key organisational and managerial concepts, such as *management*, *governance*, and *performance*, in terms of number of occurrences. Regarding the strength of relationships, *cooperatives* is surrounded primarily by *management*, *gender*, *entrepreneurship*, *participations*, and *policy* at first level. The strongest connections surrounding *cooperatives*, including *management*, *gender*, *entrepreneurship*, *participation*, and *policy*, suggest key thematic areas in cooperative research. The link with *management* highlights a focus on organisational strategies, leadership, and decision-making, reinforcing the business-oriented lens often applied to cooperatives. The proximity of *gender* suggests a growing emphasis on inclusivity, equity, and diversity in governance and participation. Meanwhile, *entrepreneurship* reflects the role of cooperatives in business creation, innovation, and economic

sustainability; and *participation* underscores their democratic nature, emphasising member involvement and shared decision-making. Finally, the strong relationship with *policy* indicates that cooperatives are frequently analysed within institutional and regulatory frameworks, highlighting their dependence on legal structures and public policies.

From a cultural perspective, these connections suggest possible alignments with Hofstede's dimensions. The focus on gender and participation may relate to Power Distance, reflecting how hierarchical structures influence inclusivity and decision-making. The link with entrepreneurship could be associated with Long-Term Orientation, as cooperatives often prioritise sustainable growth over short-term profit maximisation. The emphasis on collective participation suggests a connection with Individualism–Collectivism, as cooperatives inherently rely on collaborative decision-making and shared responsibility. The importance of policy and regulation might connect with Uncertainty Avoidance, as cooperatives may operate differently depending on the stability and rigidity of institutional frameworks in different cultural contexts. However, these interpretations should be approached with caution, as keywords alone cannot fully capture cultural influences, making qualitative analysis essential to understanding the framing of these concepts within cooperative research.

The keyword co-occurrence network reveals the thematic evolution of cooperative research over time. *Cooperatives* (dark blue) remains the central node, consistently connecting with key themes such as *management* (yellow), *governance* (green), and *culture* (blue-green). This suggests a longstanding focus on organisational structures and decision-making, with recent research shifting towards strategic management and innovation. More recent themes include *management* and *innovation* (yellow), indicating a growing interest in cooperative adaptation, business models, and technological evolution. Similarly, *power* (yellow-green) has gained attention, suggesting an increasing focus on hierarchical structures, leadership, and influence within cooperatives. In contrast, *sustainability* and *institutions* (green) emerged earlier, reflecting previous research on regulatory frameworks and environmental concerns. *Culture* (blue-green) connects with *trust*, *participation*, and *policy*, indicating that organisational culture and governance structures have been a central discussion point for several years.

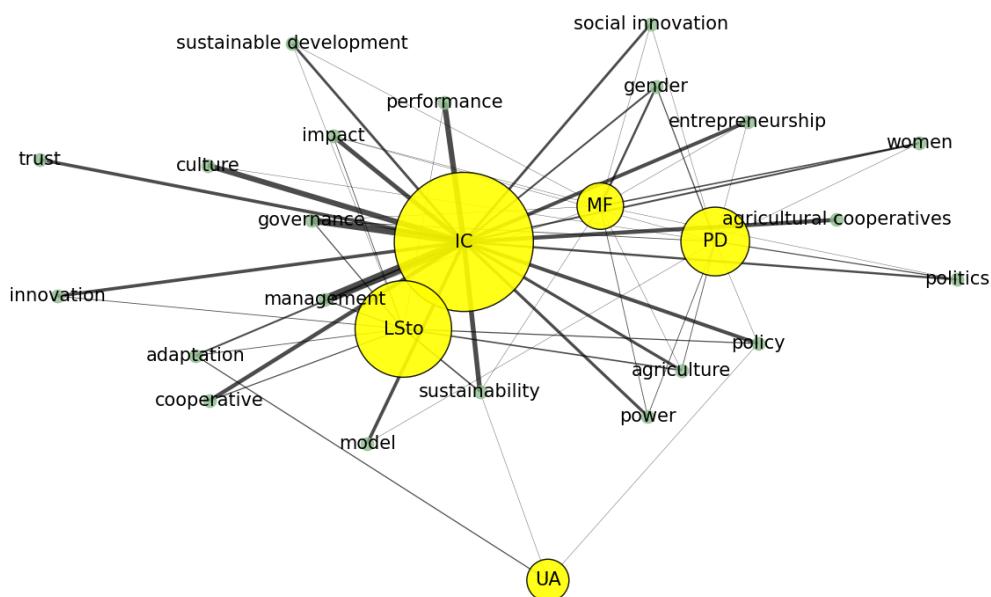
The relationship between *culture* (blue-green) and *trust*, *participation*, and *policy* could suggest links to Individualism–Collectivism and Power Distance. Cooperatives are inherently collective structures, and the emphasis on participation and governance may reflect how different cultures approach decision-making, collaboration, and authority distribution. In societies with high collectivism, cooperatives might be more aligned with shared responsibility and community-driven participation, whereas in more individualistic cultures, their structure might differ, emphasising efficiency and performance. Additionally, the recent rise of *power* (yellow-green) in cooperative research could relate to Power Distance, indicating that discussions on hierarchical structures and leadership within cooperatives are gaining relevance. If governance models are being increasingly analysed in terms of authority, influence, and organisational control, this might reflect a growing awareness of how power distribution varies across cultural contexts. Although *governance*, for instance, could suggest potential ties to power distance (e.g. hierarchical versus participatory decision-making), or *performance* could link to masculinity/femininity (e.g. focus on competitive achievement vs. emphasis on stakeholder well-being), such connections would only become evident upon closer examination of specific articles.

While these keywords suggest thematic connections to Hofstede's cultural dimensions, their interpretation remains highly contextual. Allocating them to specific cultural dimensions without deeper

qualitative analysis could lead to interpretative bias. Therefore, a textual analysis of the papers is essential to understand how these concepts are framed within the cultural context of cooperatives.

### 3.4 Network Co-Occurrence Analysis of Hofstede's Dimensions, Keywords, and Regions

While the previous analysis provided insights into how cooperatives, governance, and management are studied in relation to cultural concepts, it remains limited by its reliance on metadata and keyword co-occurrence patterns. To address these limitations aiming to fulfil this research objective, this section constructs a bipartite network linking Hofstede's cultural dimensions, geographic regions, and thematic keywords. By mapping co-occurrences among these elements, the analysis shows how cultural values intersect with cooperative studies across different regions, identifying dominant patterns, keywords, and conceptual relationships within the literature.



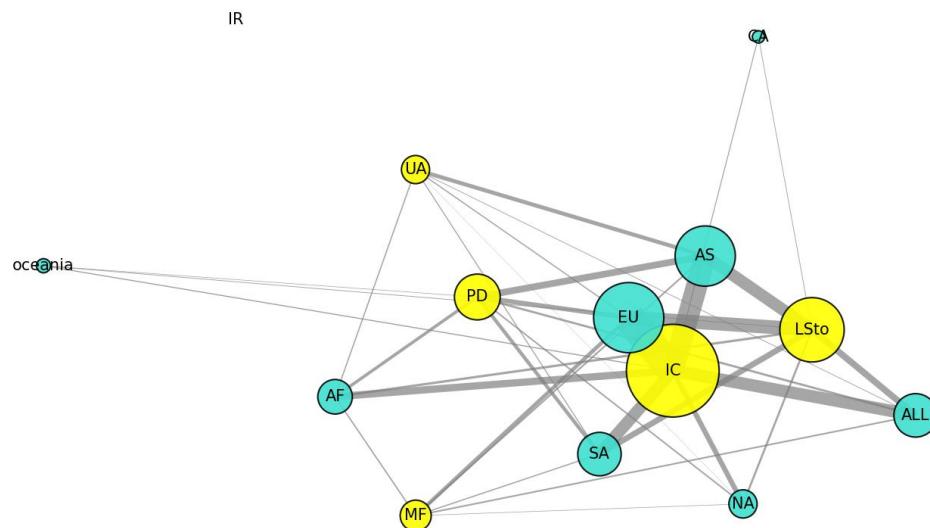
Source: the authors based on Python (Visual Studio Code), Pandas, NetworkX, and Matplotlib libraries.

Figure 6. Keywords to Hofstede's Dimensions Network Co-Occurrence

Figure 6 illustrates a bipartite network linking Hofstede's cultural dimensions (yellow circles) to the most frequently occurring keywords (green circles). The size of each Hofstede's dimension represents the volume of articles referencing that dimension. Larger circles (PD: Power Distance, IC: Individualism vs. Collectivism, LSto: Long- vs. Short-term Orientation) indicate more frequent occurrences in the dataset, whereas smaller circles (IR: Indulgence vs. Restraint) reflect comparatively fewer mentions. The proximity between a keyword and a particular Hofstede's dimension signals a stronger co-occurrence connection across articles.

The figure highlights *Individualism vs. Collectivism* (IC) as the most central dimension, strongly linked to *governance, management, trust, culture, and participation*. This may indicate that cooperative research frequently examines collective decision-making and stakeholder relationships, emphasising how cultural tendencies toward collaboration or independence shape cooperative structures which is consistent with the scope of the nature of a cooperative organisation. Similarly, *Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation* (LSto) is strongly associated with *sustainability, adaptation, and management*, indicating that long-term

planning and strategic foresight are key in cooperative resilience and development. The link between LSto and *management* reinforces the role of long-term oriented business strategies in cooperative success. Power Distance (PD) also holds remarkable connections, particularly with *policy* and *power*, suggesting that hierarchical structures and governance mechanisms are relevant factors in cooperative studies, especially in regulated sectors like agriculture. In contrast, Masculinity vs. Femininity (MF) and Uncertainty Avoidance (UA) appear less central. MF links to gender, entrepreneurship, and social innovation, reflecting discussions on inclusivity in cooperative models, while UA connects with sustainability and governance, indicating a moderate focus on risk management and stability.



Source: the authors based on Python (Visual Studio Code), Pandas, NetworkX, and Matplotlib libraries.

Figure 7. Regions to Hofstede's Dimensions Network Co-Occurrence

A bipartite *Figure 7* presents the network that links Hofstede's dimensions (yellow circles) with the regions under study (blue circles). The yellow circles vary in size according to how frequently each cultural dimension is addressed within the sample, while the blue circle sizes reflect the prominence of each region (AF= Africa; EU=Europe; SA=South America; NA=North America; AS=Asia; All=Global/world; n/d=undefined). The proximity between circles indicates stronger co-occurrences whereas nodes placed closer together share more frequent links in the literature. This analysis examines the co-occurrence network between Hofstede's dimensions and regions, offering an initial snapshot of how cultural values may intersect with cooperative studies in different geographical contexts.

The network co-occurrence analysis between Hofstede's dimensions and regions reveals that *Individualism vs. Collectivism* (IC) is the most central and highly connected dimension, particularly with *Europe* (EU), *Asia* (AS), *North America* (NA), and *South America* (SA). This suggests that cooperative studies in these regions frequently examine the balance between individual and collective organisational behaviours, highlighting its relevance across diverse cultural contexts. Similarly, *Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation* (LSto) is strongly linked to Europe and Asia, indicating a research focus on how strategic planning and future-oriented decision-making vary across cultural settings. Power Distance (PD) is closely associated with Africa (AF), Asia, and Europe, reflecting an interest in hierarchical structures and authority distribution in the cooperatives, particularly in regions where governance models may differ significantly. Uncertainty Avoidance (UA) shows a weaker presence but connects with multiple regions,

including Europe and Asia, suggesting that risk management and stability concerns are less dominant but still relevant in specific regional contexts.

Oceania and Central America (CA) appear on the periphery, indicating lower co-occurrence with Hofstede's dimensions, which may suggest that cooperative research in these regions has engaged less explicitly with cultural value frameworks. The presence of ALL (global studies) reinforces the argument that certain cooperative themes are analysed from a broader, cross-regional perspective rather than being confined to specific cultural settings.

#### 4. Discussion

The importance of studying cooperatives and their cultural values lies in the fact that these organisations offer an alternative to traditional profit-driven business models (Atanasova *et al.*, 2024). Cooperatives are founded on principles such as solidarity, inclusion, and democratic governance, making them vehicles for social and economic development (Calabrese and Falavigna, 2024). Examining how cultural values influence decision-making, leadership, and sustainability within these organisations is critical for understanding their operational procedures (Pesci *et al.*, 2024). Such insights not only enhance academic discourse on organisational culture, but also provide practical recommendations for improving governance practices in cooperative settings.

Since the study of culture within cooperatives is rich in theoretical reference, it integrates diverse frameworks and concepts that help explain the organisational and social structures underlying these entities, as well as the application of Hofstede's principles to the study of organisational culture (Schachner *et al.* 2024). However, this study reflects the lack of specific studies that focus specifically on the organisational culture of cooperatives, as it has been found in this study that only a few are published (Aluaimi *et al.*, 2022). This gap in literature highlights a significant research opportunity. The inherent democratic and participatory nature of cooperatives seems ideally suited for exploration through Hofstede's dimensions.

The analysis of the results reveals that research on cooperatives spans a wide array of sectors, resulting in a dispersion of studies across various journals and authors. Notably, European research constitutes a significant portion (33), with Spain emerging as a prominent hub. Spain's leading role may be attributed to its large number of cooperatives and a long-standing tradition of cooperative activity (Sala-Ríos, 2024). Additionally, the examination of author keyword co-occurrence underscores the relevance of core organisational and managerial terms such as management, governance, and performance alongside cooperatives, for it is widely explored in academy. Regarding the keywords that may refer to culture values, keywords such as participation, gender, entrepreneurship, and policy not only map out discussions of cooperative governance, but also suggest potential alignments with Hofstede's dimensions, linking inclusivity and participatory practices with Power Distance and entrepreneurial initiatives with Long-Term Orientation.

The results obtained upon network co-occurrence bipartite analysis (refer to Section 3.4) emphasise the centrality of the Individualism versus Collectivism dimension. This dimension is strongly connected with keywords such as *governance*, *management*, *trust*, *culture*, and *participation*, underscoring the importance of collective decision-making in cooperative research so far (Liu *et al.*, 2024). Similarly, the Long-Term versus Short-Term Orientation dimension is closely associated with keywords like *sustainability*, *adaptation*, and *management*, highlighting the role of long-term strategic planning in

ensuring cooperative resilience (Kyazze *et al.*, 2017). Power Distance shows significant associations with keywords such as *policy* and *power*, suggesting that analyses of hierarchical structures and authority distribution remain crucial in cooperative studies (Estragó, 2023). Although the dimensions of Masculinity versus Femininity and Uncertainty Avoidance appear less central, their links *gender*, *entrepreneurship*, and *governance* add further nuance to our understanding of cultural influences within cooperatives.

The second part of the analysis involves examining the network linking Hofstede's dimensions with geographic regions. The network reveals that the Individualism versus Collectivism dimension is the most central, with robust links to regions such as Europe, Asia, North America, and South America. This finding suggests that the balance between individualistic and collective conducts is a universally relevant topic in cooperative research. Likewise, Long-Term versus Short-Term Orientation shows significant associations with Europe and Asia, indicating an emphasis on strategic, future-oriented decision-making in these regions. In contrast, Power Distance is notably connected with Africa, Asia, and Europe, reflecting an interest in how hierarchical structures and authority vary across different regulatory and cultural environments. Although Uncertainty Avoidance exhibits a more moderate presence, its connections with several regions indicate that issues of risk management and stability, while less dominant, still merit attention.

Based on the results and their interpretation, it provides an opportunity to further explore cultural values in cooperatives for two main reasons. First, there have not been many studies that apply cultural theories specifically to cooperatives, which implies valuable insights on the organisation of these institutions are lacking. Second, Hofstede's framework fits well with cooperatives because of the nature of its dimensions due to the decentralised decision-making and the fact that the owners themselves form most of the human capital.

Even though this study includes a detailed textual analysis, bibliometric methods are limited. Using systematic literature reviews, multiple correspondence analyses or qualitative methods could broaden the understanding and help build a more complete picture of how cultural values shape cooperative management, member involvement, and long-term success. This deeper look is especially important in industries where the cooperative model might cause uncertainty among members about the required social capital and challenges related to managing human resources. By examining these issues in more detail, we can suggest practical ways to build trust among cooperative members and increase confidence in the cooperative model overall. For example, in Spain, cooperatives established for housing construction are legally required to provide a financial guarantee for the amounts contributed, ensuring security for members. This requirement reflects a cultural emphasis on financial stability, institutional trust, and regulatory safeguards in cooperative governance. Such legal and structural elements often stem from deeper cultural values related to risk perception and collective responsibility. Given that cooperative models vary significantly across regions due to different cultural expectations, it becomes essential to analyse cultural values in depth. A better understanding of these factors can provide valuable insights into how cooperatives are structured, governed, and adapted to different socio-economic contexts. Based on the discussion, future research areas for the study of cultural values in cooperatives and its importance are shown in *Table 6*. This proposal defines key research areas for understanding cultural values within cooperatives by adopting Hofstede's theory, addressing the nature and challenges of cooperative governance.

#### 4.1 Implications for Theory and Practice

The study of cultural values within cooperatives remains underexplored, with few specific investigations that directly address the interplay between cultural dimensions and cooperative organisational structures. This scarcity underscores a notable gap in the academic literature, where traditional theories of culture are not widely applied to the cooperative context. Such a gap not only limits the understanding of the influence of cultural values on the governance and decision-making in cooperatives, but also highlights the opportunity to employ established cultural frameworks. Hofstede's theory, in particular, captures essential elements relevant to cooperatives by addressing dimensions that are highly instructive and defining. Given that cooperatives typically exhibit a lighter human resources structure, since human capital is largely composed of the owners themselves, the application of cultural dimensions related to governance becomes especially appropriate. By integrating Hofstede's dimensions into the analysis of cooperatives, researchers can gain valuable insights into the mechanisms of collective decision-making, power distribution, and stakeholder engagement, thereby enriching the theoretical foundations of both cultural studies and cooperative governance.

**Table 6. Cooperatives, Cultural Dimensions and Future Areas of Research**

Hofstede's Dimension	Areas of governance affection	Importance of its study in cooperatives/future areas of research
Power Distance (PD)	• Decision-Making and Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- How high PD may widen the gap between members and the board, reducing members trust and affecting democratic decision-making.</li><li>- Different hierarchical structures that may guarantee democratic decision-making even in high PD cultures.</li></ul>
	• Human Capital and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Training to the members on governance and corporate responsibility to ensure that decision-making and potential board privileges do not compromise long-term survival.</li></ul>
	• Governance criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Governance transparency and equity promotion from board of directors based on low/high PD.</li><li>- Governance conduct minimising issues like information asymmetry and favoritism to decision-makers from third parties.</li></ul>
Individualism vs. Collectivism (IC)	• Leadership and Board Composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Policies related to governance to guarantee common interest differencing between individualist and collectivist approaches.</li><li>- Size of the board of directors.</li></ul>
	• Member Trust and Conflict Resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- How individual or collectivist influence cooperatives success given members expectancy (e.g. members may feel comfortable strongly delegating decision-making OR members may feel uncertainty if board does not take leadership)</li><li>- How individual or collectivist values influence mutual trust and overall cooperation among members.</li><li>- The impact of balancing individual and collective interests on conflict resolution and organisational stability.</li></ul>
Masculinity vs. Femininity (MF)	Performance vs. Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Cooperatives success sensitivity to masculinity or femininity governance attitudes.</li><li>- The balance in between members financial profit and members social profit.</li></ul>
	• Member Satisfaction and Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Balance between assertiveness and nurturing behavior and its impact on member satisfaction.</li></ul>
	Governance Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- How different expressions of MF influence strategic planning and the cooperative's overall governance model.</li></ul>

**Table 6 (continuation). Cooperatives, Cultural Dimensions and Future Areas of Research**

Hofstede's Dimension	Areas of governance affection	Importance of its study in cooperatives/future areas of research
Uncertainty Avoidance (UA)	• Risk Management and Innovation	- How varying levels of UA affect members' risk aversion, influencing cautious versus innovative decision-making.
	• Trust and Governance Practices	- Tailored risk management strategies that can build trust and align with members' comfort levels.
	Operational Flexibility	- Examine the balance between formal governance and adaptability in response to different UA levels.
	• Strategic Planning	- Correlations in between risk aversion and type of cooperatives and type of industries by regions.
Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation (LSTO)	• Project Selection and Strategic Planning	- How orientation conditions the types of projects pursued and influences long-term sustainability.
	• Member Stability and Investment	- How long term orientation can influence member stability and confidence versus a short-term focus driving immediate returns.
	Governance and Capital Trust	- Investigate how orientation affects the amount of capital contributed and the trust placed.
	• Flexibility vs. Discipline	- Balance between indulgence and restraint and its affection to cooperative's ability to foster creativity while maintaining regulatory compliance.
(IR)	• Policy and Governance	- Internal policies definition that covers members' cultural preferences for work-life balance and systematic control.
	General	- Policy mechanisms to balance cultural attitudes from cooperativists. - Understanding of different approaches to evaluate the impact on cooperative's success. - Specific studies for each dimension to get deeper into the most effective way of governance. - Evaluation of different positions of each dimensions to understand which one is best for cooperative's success.

Source: compiled by the authors.

From a practical perspective, understanding and developing corporate cultural strategies in cooperatives can rise certain benefits. As cooperatives inherently prioritise democratic governance and shared ownership, a well-defined corporate culture can enhance internal cohesion and promote more effective decision-making. This cultural clarity can lead to improved operational efficiency, greater member engagement, and a stronger alignment of strategic objectives. For managers and policymakers, applying Hofstede's framework provides a structured approach to assess and refine governance models that are better suited to the unique needs of cooperatives. In practice, such cultural insights can guide the design of training programs, supervising third parties, leadership development initiatives, and governance reforms that are sensitive to the cooperative spirit. Finally, fostering a robust cultural environment not only reinforces the values of inclusivity and collaboration, but also strengthens the overall resilience and competitiveness of cooperatives in a dynamic economic landscape where cooperatives may have a growing interest given the growing volatility of financial markets.

## Conclusions

Following the two-phase development of this study, the bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer and the network co-occurrence bipartite analysis in Python, the research objectives have been successfully

achieved. This study has enabled the understanding of Hofstede's framework as a relevant tool for the study of cultural organisation of cooperatives, allowing the identification of future research to address the existing research gap. Understanding the organisational culture of cooperatives is crucial for ensuring their long-term sustainability and fostering the emergence of new cooperatives, as they align with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Moreover, Hofstede's cultural dimensions may effectively capture the key elements of organisational culture that are essential for both effective and fair cooperative governance. The findings highlight specific areas that require further exploration, emphasising the multidisciplinary relevance of cooperatives. Given their role in addressing financial constraints while aligning with socio-economic needs, cooperatives remain a vital mechanism for fostering economic resilience and social inclusion.

### **Limitations**

This study has certain limitations, primarily related to the methodological constraints associated with VOSviewer software (Van Eck and Waltman, 2017). Although the methodology follows established scientific standards, the validity of the results depends on the selection of co-citations and references. Additionally, as an exploratory study, it does not provide definitive causal interpretations. Besides, dataset composition presents a limitation, as the study relies exclusively on *Web of Science* (WoS), potentially omitting relevant studies from other databases. Moreover, language bias may exist, as non-English publications are underrepresented. Another concern is the abstract-based classification of 256 articles in relation to Hofstede's cultural dimensions, which, while common in bibliometric research, may lead to partial misclassification and author misinterpretation in some cases. Despite these limitations, this study provides a structured foundation for future research, encouraging qualitative and full-text analyses to refine these initial findings.

### **Literature**

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## **KULTŪROS VERTYBĖS IR ŽINIOS VADOVAUJANTIS HOFSTEDE TEORIJA: BIBLIOMETRINIS IR DVIŠALIO TINKLO KOOPERATYVŲ TYRIMAS**

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**Santrauka.** Šiame tyrime sistemingai nagrinėjama kultūros dimensijų ir kooperatyvų sąveika, o toks požiūris į kooperatyvų kultūros tyrimus iki šiol mažai nagrinėtas. Tyrimo metu nustatyta šios tyrimų sritis struktūra ir analizuojamos regioninės bei reikšminiu žodžiu tendencijos. Tyrimas padeda geriau suprasti, kaip kultūros vertybės veikia kooperatyvų valdymą ir sprendimų priėmimą įvairiuose socialiniuose ir ekonominiuose kontekstuose. Siūlomi tyrimai iš Hofstede teorinės perspektyvos. Pasitelkus bibliometrinę analizę, „VOSviewer“ ir „Python“, nustatytos akademinių temos, intelektinės struktūros ir analizuojamų sričių dėsningumai. Išvadose pabrėžiama, kad Hofstede teorinis pagrindas gerai suderinamas su demokratinėmis kooperatyvų vertybėmis. Tačiau taip pat akcentuojama, kaip svarbu suprasti kultūrinius vietos niuansus siekiant geresnės valdymo praktikos. Galiausiai, siekiant tinkamai ištirti kooperatyvų kultūrą ir remiantis Hofstede dimensijomis, nustatytos pagrindinės terminės sričys.

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** kooperatyvai; Hofstede; kultūra; bibliometrinė analizė; socialinė ekonomika; dvišalio tinklo tyrimas.