

Co-operatives, territories and social capital: reconsidering a theoretical framework

Co-operatives,
territories and
social capital

1599

Michele Bianchi

*Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health, Glasgow Caledonian University,
Glasgow, UK, and*

Marcelo Vieta

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada

Received 10 March 2020
Revised 25 July 2020
Accepted 16 September 2020

Abstract

Purpose – This paper promotes a critical approach to co-operative studies by contributing new theoretical insights. The aim is to propose a new view on the co-operative firm as a socioeconomic phenomenon embedded into the local contexts in which it is situated. Sociological and economic analyses have mainly explored the relationship between co-operative members and the organization, the economic performance of co-operatives or compared co-operatives with other firm types. Less attention has been given to the co-operative–territory relation, which can reveal insights into members' collective actions, a co-operative's origins from specific social groups or how they establish relationships with certain community stakeholders over others.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper begins with a literature review of academic studies that situate co-operatives in relation to community, with a focus on how social capital theory has been deployed to understand this relation. It then proposes a theoretical examination of two fundamental authors in the field of social capital theory: Robert Putnam and Pierre Bourdieu. Drawing on findings from the literature review and considerations derived from the theoretical dialog between Putnam and Bourdieu, the paper proposes a revised social capital-based framework for analyzing key relations and expected outcomes of the co-operative–territory relation.

Findings – Reconsidering the role of social capital theory for co-operative studies, this article unfolds a dual reflection. First, it underlines the necessity for research that more closely considers co-operatives' territorial relationships. Second, it critically interrogates and pushes forward social capital theory as a framework for examining the social relations that embed co-operatives and their capacity to activate territorial economies.

Originality/value – The paper highlights the necessity for a further examination of the co-operative–territory relationship. It presents an innovative framework for improving sociological understanding of co-operatives as organizations embedded into their local socioeconomic contexts.

Keywords Economic sociology, Social capital, Community development, Territory, Co-operative studies

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The co-operative is a model of the firm that provides members with a way of organizing to meet shared needs through collaborative efforts and democratic governance (Craig, 1993; Ostrom, 2012; Zamagni, 2005). The past two decades have seen growing research interest in the link between co-operatives and community. Theoretical and empirical analyses have focused on various interrelated issues concerning co-ops and communities, including management, governance and membership (Fulton and Ketilson, 1992; Lang and Roessl, 2011; Tak, 2017); social welfare (Campbell and Sacchetti, 2014; Thomas, 2004; Walzer and Merret, 2001); rural or local economic development (Bianchi and Vieta, 2019; Borzaga and Santuari, 2001; Euricse, 2015; Majee and Hoyt, 2011; Novkovic and Golja, 2015; Rakopoulos, 2014; Stofferahn, 2009; Vieta, 2010, 2014, 2019, 2020; Vieta and Lionais, 2015; Zeuli *et al.*, 2004; Zeuli and Radel, 2005); housing (Morris, 2014); local energy provision (Bauwens and Delfoury, 2017; Mori, 2017; Tarhan, 2015).



International Journal of Social
Economics
Vol. 47 No. 12, 2020
pp. 1599-1617
© Emerald Publishing Limited
0306-8293
DOI 10.1108/IJSE-03-2020-0135

The author would like to thank the Ian MacPherson Legacy Fund for the travel support which allowed to present the draft of this paper at 2018 CASC/ANSER Conference.

This literature suggests extant social bonds between co-operatives and local contexts, conceptualizing co-operatives as a social phenomenon. However, it glosses over or inadequately investigates the specific organizational and territorial characteristics animating co-operatives' community bonds. This suggests the necessity of developing a theoretical framework accounting for these connections and for how they interplay with a co-operative's mission, objectives and services or products. For this reason, this paper is guided by the following question: how can we encompass the complexity of relationships between co-operatives and territories into a theoretical framework?

To answer this question, we critically interrogate social capital theory as a framework for examining co-operatives, with the aim of developing a more explicit framework for investigating the links between co-operatives and territories. To build out this framework, we propose bringing into conversation the two most influential thinkers of social capital theory: the American sociologist Robert Putnam and the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. While we remain sensitive to their differences and limitations, we think each theoretical direction brings strengths to a consolidated social capital framework for studying co-operatives and their territorial relationships. On the one hand, Putnam explained the virtues of collaboration and reciprocity, but his analysis presented limitations in terms of contextualization. On the other hand, Bourdieu provided a wider framework within which social actions could be explained as consequences of the sociocultural and socioeconomic dynamics which influence people and bring them to certain types of social networks, to exchange capitals within them and to recognize similar subjects from related cultural backgrounds.

This paper thus has a dual aim: first, it reviews the deployment of social capital theory for studying the connections between co-operatives and local communities. Second, it proposes a synthesized and revised social capital theory framework for exploring how co-operatives tend to be tightly embedded in local social, economic, cultural and political dynamics and are thus ideal for anchoring a territory's economic activities in endogenous rather than exogenous interests. In what follows, we first outline *the links between co-operatives and community* and then define the concept of *territory*, the term for encapsulating notions of locality, community and political, socioeconomic and geographic spaces. We then explore the connections between co-operatives, territories and social capital and the main features of Bourdieu's and Putnam's social capital theories, with the goal of gathering and synthesizing their most salient insights for better understanding *the co-operative-territory connection*. The final discussion section details our consolidated social capital framework for co-operative studies.

Co-operatives and territories

Heterodox economic theories of the firm are increasingly recognizing that the co-operative form is ideal for managing collective actions for local well-being (Campbell and Sacchetti, 2014; Flannigan and Sutherland, 2016; Michie *et al.*, 2017; Morris, 2014; Novkovic and Golja, 2015; Ostrom, 2012; Rakopoulos, 2014). Recent research has suggested two overarching tendencies linking co-operatives to local communities, thus underscoring why they are ideal for developing and consolidating territorial bonds. First, co-operatives have been viewed and increasingly theorized as superior organizations for grounding a community's social and economic development (Borzaga and Sforzi, 2015; Hatak *et al.*, 2016; Lang and Roessl, 2011; Majee and Hoyt, 2011; MacPherson, 2013; Vieta and Lionais, 2015). Co-operatives enable *the bridging of local initiatives and capacities to external opportunities* while anchoring the firm to local interests. In a similar vein, Borzaga and Sforzi (2015) showed how co-operatives operate as coordinators of local economic activity and create value for and by communities, reinvesting their outputs back into their localities while promoting innovative solutions and defending jobs during economic downturns. Second, the co-operative business model, as inherently democratic, encourages the active civic involvement of members, responds to the needs of varied stakeholders and socializes the economy by bringing together the producers

of those activities with their beneficiaries (Bianchi, 2016; Borzaga and Sacchetti, 2015; Campbell and Sacchetti, 2014; Euricse, 2015; Pérotin, 2017; Vieta and Lionas, 2015). For Vieta and Lionas (2015) and Hatak *et al.* (2016), co-operatives are primed for sustainable community development because they connect members and their work to local issues, opportunities and resources.

At the same time, these intricate relationships are strengthened by the complexity of contexts external to the co-operative; each co-operative is embedded into a territory, which is a sum of various local actors and resources. Goldenberg and Haines (1992) considered the territory as the result of social interactions converging in a geographic area with specific ties. This highlights the community component of the territory, pointing out the relevance of social bonds and relations as key factors in local identity. We thus conceive of *territory* as the sum of a physical locality's social bonds and social relations, including citizen and noncitizen residents; a plurality of enterprises that coordinate the production and distribution of goods, services and other resources, including those in the public, private and social economy (or third) sectors; public authorities and other local expressions of political forces; the broader civil society.

Despite the emerging relevance of these social connections, two main shortcomings appear in the literature. First, there is a need for more precision regarding the interrelations and interactions between co-operatives (and their organizational specificities) and territories. Second, social capital theory itself, while promising for guiding research regards the first point, remains too complex and multipronged to adequately frame sociological inquiry regarding co-ops and territories.

Social capital theory is promisingly positioned for guiding the study of co-operatives. Valentinov (2004) agreed by arguing that the co-operative represents a social capital-based organization because socially driven and collective principles govern it in contrast to the market rules and management hierarchy that govern traditional firms. Similarly, Spear (2000) explained how co-operatives' social characteristics give them an economic and social advantage compared with other organizational models, pointing out, for instance, how trust is rooted in their participatory and democratic structure. Moreover, co-ops often support people in moments of crises and promote new possibilities for strengthening local social relations by connecting local people with resources for their own development (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000; Vieta, 2014, 2020). It is, therefore, possible to argue that social relations – and, thus, social capital – are central to the co-operative organizational form.

Table 1 shows that, beginning in the early 2000s, a growing and varied collection of peer-reviewed publications in co-operative studies began to deploy social capital theory. Table 1 also highlights the key themes that have been explored in co-operative studies using social capital theory. Overall, the concept of social capital in co-operative research, as in its use in research into other social phenomenon, appears complexly throughout the literature, used either as an *object* of study or as a *framework* for research.

As an object of study, researchers analyze the presence of social capital itself, which usually includes a diffuse set of social phenomena that serve as its proxies, including, for instance, the strength of social relations, the dynamics of networks, defining or assessing group trust and so on. In co-operative studies, this research also mostly homes in on the internal functioning of co-operatives, underplaying, in the process, how co-ops interrelate with the socioeconomic contexts that root them. Social capital as object of study also tends to determine how the research study that will be used to assess it will be operationalized (often quantitatively), defining social capital by the visible elements or measurable actions in social systems. As an object of study, social capital is not static and this research often measures its change and deploys verbs such as “grow,” “generate,” “increase,” “destroy,” “accumulate” and so on. While useful for homing in on the social dimensions being explored, these diffuse approaches position social capital as a catch-all term compromising its validity as an analytical concept.

Author(s)	Year	Field	SC as framework or object
Svendsen and Svendsen	2000	Community development	Framework
McClenaghan	2000	Community welfare	Framework
Lemon and Lemon	2003	Community welfare	Object
Chloupkova <i>et al.</i>	2003	Co-op performance	Object
Valentinov	2004	Institutional analysis	Framework
Kay	2005	Community development	Object
Evans and Syrett	2007	Local development	Object
Uski <i>et al.</i>	2007	Co-op management	Object
Jussila <i>et al.</i>	2008	Co-op management	Object
Stofferahn	2009	Co-op management	Object
Duraj	2010	Community welfare	Object
Ferrucci	2010	Co-op management	Object
Degli Antoni and Portale	2011	Community development	Object
Majee and Hoyt	2011	Community development	Object
Lang and Roessl	2011	Agriculture co-ops	Framework
Nilsson <i>et al.</i>	2012	Theoretical analysis	Framework
Tapia	2012	Co-op management	Object
Travaglini	2012	Community welfare	Object
Lang and Novy	2014	Community development	Framework
Campbell and Sacchetti	2014	Community welfare	Framework
Abdallah <i>et al.</i>	2015	Agriculture co-ops	Object
Borzaga and Sforzi	2015	Agriculture co-ops	Framework
Flanigan and Sutherland	2016	Agriculture studies	Object
Feng <i>et al.</i>	2016	Agriculture co-ops	Object
Hatak <i>et al.</i>	2016	Housing co-ops	Object
Bauwens and Defourny	2017	Energy production	Object
Sforzi and Bianchi	2020	Community development	Framework

Table 1.
Key literature linking
social capital theory to
co-operative studies

On the other hand, social capital as a research framework is used to guide the analysis of social structures and their relational characteristics, including in organizations, social groups, institutions or territorial networks. Here, social capital theory conceptually frames the type of research questions that will be interrogated or the social phenomenon that will be analyzed, while not *a priori* determining that a particular social phenomenon or set of phenomena, such as trust or social bonds, are the prime causes, indicators or factors of social capital *per se*. For us, social capital is more useful as a framework for research and conducting analysis rather than as an object of study in itself, helping to identify or put into relief the possible social relations within socioeconomic phenomenon while, at the same time, not bestowing inherently normative values on any of the phenomenon or assuming beforehand their condition. This approach also enables the researcher to critically interrogate and not assume the efficiency or utility of particular aspects of social capital. Considering social capital as a framework permits the researcher, in other words, to see the characteristic parts of the socioeconomic phenomenon as a sum of variably related phenomena that are more or less interconnected while guiding a more open-ended, critical and ultimately more plausible analysis of socioeconomic reality.

The growing body of co-operative studies research deploying social capital theory in [Table 1](#) underlines the adequateness of the social capital analysis for studying co-operatives. The majority of the studies we reviewed treated social capital as research object, assessed in terms of co-operatives and network structures, the characteristics of member interactions or interpersonal trustworthiness and collaboration, while investigating the object from different perspectives, including management and governance, relations between members within a co-operative or how co-operatives relate with other organizations. Social capital as a

framework was deployed by a minority of studies to interpret phenomena such as co-operatives and social cohesion, local development or community empowerment, guiding further analysis of elements often connected to social capital, such as the level of trust and collaboration and the types of social relations that structure local projects.

The studies in [Table 1](#) begin to fill the breach we identified earlier in the broader and historical co-operative studies literature, particularly those rooted in economics, where a restricted vision of the co-operative phenomenon mostly investigates either the internal functions of the firm or co-operatives as an idealized firm disconnected from their socioeconomic contexts. Instead, the reviewed studies in [Table 1](#) point to the need for more sociological analyses of co-operatives that pay attention to their social-contextual aspects, such as why and how co-operatives appear in determined territories and how they interrelate with local issues and potentialities. As [Lang and Roessl \(2011\)](#) exhorted, co-operatives have to be examined in relation to the context where they appear. This paper proposes a model to do just that, with the goal of furthering our understanding of how the territory contributes to the development of co-operatives and how co-operatives, in turn, contribute to territorial development. We argue that social capital as a research framework can help to unpack these co-operative–territory connections.

Despite the inroads mapped in [Table 1](#), overall academic literature has underestimated and under researched the co-operative–territory relation. In an attempt to refine the concept of social capital for critically assessing the co-operative–territory connection, we turn next to the work of the two most influential sociologists of the concept: Robert Putnam and Pierre Bourdieu ([Siisiäinen, 2003](#)). In doing so, we cast our sights toward a synthesized theory of social capital for specifically framing research into the co-operative–territory relation.

Understanding co-operatives' territorial role via a synthesized social capital theory: toward a Putnamian–Bourdieuian approach

Putnam

For Putnam, who took up social capital as an object of study, the positive association between community cohesion, civic participation and economic stability is a key element in collective processes leading to broader community benefits. For him, community must be considered as a whole entity for understanding how social capital impacts its development. For [Putnam \(2000\)](#), in a nutshell, social capital refers to “the connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense, social capital is closely related to what some have called “civic virtue”” (p. 19). Civil society, in turn, is evaluated as the expression of the aggregation of individuals' actions for general and common interest among members, residents or citizens. Social capital, for Putnam, also consists of social and moral sanctions for transgressors, strengthening norms of reciprocity, developing fluid communication among members and creating moments and spaces for social cohesion as the cultural base for future collaborative solutions to sociopolitical and socioeconomic issues. Putnam's approach has been influential and deployed, for instance, for assessing community development programs and practices ([DeFilippis, 2001](#); [Majee and Hoyt, 2011](#); [McClenaghan, 2000](#)).

Putnam's analysis, however, is considered incomplete by a number of sociologists and is increasingly supplemented by other perspectives ([Carpiano, 2006](#); [Flannigan and Sutherland, 2016](#); [Nilsson *et al.*, 2012](#)). Despite its rich macro-level insights into the inner workings of civil society, Putnam's liberal social capital theory provides a partial vision of social networks because it is not able to fully explain from where the networks originate, nor does it explain how other forms of capital are involved in them. Moreover, as [DeFilippis \(2001\)](#) and [Siisiäinen \(2003\)](#) argued, Putnam's approach does not include a full accounting of power relations, conflicting interests or problems correlated with nonorganized interests. More broadly, he

does not adequately consider the social hierarchies, divisions and inequalities that also make up communities. The resultant picture of Putnam's ideal society, therefore, is one made up of social networks with nonexistent social hierarchies where people from unspecified social, political and cultural backgrounds collaborate. His theory does not explain the historical contexts and material foundations that (de)generate these dynamics and how social networks embody these norms and moral values.

The lack of analysis of conflict and power structures within social networks in Putnam's theory compromises its effectiveness for studying of social organizations such as co-operatives. For instance, Putnam clearly explains the social elements that strengthen civic virtues through moral norms and trust but does not sufficiently consider the power relations constituting organizations and socioeconomic exchange. This is highly relevant for analyzing the social bonds between co-operatives and territories since, as is well known, people tend to associate with others based on related social status and common identities and clarifying norms and strengthening trust are vitally important for sustaining co-operative organizations (Tyler and Blader, 2001). Moreover, conceptualizing social capital as the main "glue" for collective initiatives without considering social conflict and power relations within and outside a collectivity is indeed risky for both developing inclusive collective organizations such as co-operatives and for properly understanding their place within the broader territory.

Bourdieu

It is precisely Bourdieu's perspective on the social structures of power undergirding the accumulation of capitals (i.e. different forms of capital) which begins to fill the gap left by Putnam's formulation of social capital. For Bourdieu, power is central to the analysis of social capital and is undergirded by, first and foremost, symbolic capital, which drives both a society's conflicts and evolution. Symbolic capital is grounded in the material while manifesting its effects immaterially, expressing and giving efficacy to power not mainly from its physical aspects but from symbolic meaning and values. What can thus be called "symbolic power" is determined by the conflicts among different social classes within social systems. Via a critical sociological research program deploying a variety of analyses of key institutions and practices, Bourdieu shows how norms and behaviors that privilege and uphold social hierarchies persist. Bourdieu theorizes this as *habitus*, his pivotal analytical concept, which for him is a property of social agents and systems (individual and collective). *Habitus* is "a system of durable, transportable dispositions which function as the generative basis of structured, objectively unified practices" (Bourdieu, 1979, p. 7). It comprises "structured and structuring structure" (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 170).

While *habitus* structures perceptions and behaviors, there is more to social struggle and power for Bourdieu. The measure of power is also determined by the amount of capitals – economic, cultural, social and symbolic – possessed by individuals, organizations or institutions. Bourdieu's critical sociology is about unpacking the social hierarchies that allocate or limit different forms of capital – that is, who has them, who does not, what is needed to get them, what are the barriers in acquiring them, etc. These considerations are thus fundamental for more thoroughly assessing any type of social networks, organizations or institutions (Carpiano, 2006).

Moreover, subjective values and objective laws and norms sustain social capital in what Bourdieu (1989) calls symbolic power's "consecration" (p. 22). In this way, symbolic power in social capital works in two ways: on the one hand, it serves to strengthen social institutions and mutual exchange, which develops mutual knowledge and recognition (as in the professorial class, for instance). On the other hand, others who would place the institution at risk due to their lack of social capital are kept out of its inner lifeworld.

For Bourdieu, social capital is a social force which enables identification and collaboration with others for achieving personal and collective aims. Furthermore, social capital affords the

exchange of resources that increase mutual recognition inside groups. Nevertheless, Bourdieu's theories also have limits; as Alexander (1996) pointed out, Bourdieu can also be seen to have a reductionist vision on social complexity, ultimately connecting all social action to the economic/material with people appearing to be strictly interest-driven agents, while overlooking other social motivators such as solidarity. Despite these caveats, Bourdieu's sociological analysis, in our view, is crucial for better understanding the organization–territory relation, parsing out the sources and role of power. Indeed, any critical sociological research framework has to interrogate and consider the social dynamics, contexts and power relations within which social networks are located.

Putnam and Bourdieu

By combining key theoretical insights on social capital from both authors, it is possible to delineate a portrait of how local communities animated by something akin to civic spirit can and do pool and organize resources co-operatively, while also considering how co-operative initiatives involve only some local agents and the expense of others. Both Putnam and Bourdieu considered social capital to be a resource to some degree possessed by social agents. Putnam's understanding of possessing social capital is functionalist: communities with greater social capital promote a better civil society, functioning as counterparts to public authorities. Sticking to a macro-sociological analysis, however, Putnam does not adequately consider the individual's experiences and assumes that the stock of social capital is widely possessed (or not) by all group or social members (Putnam *et al.*, 1993; Svendsen and Svendsen, 2000). The analysis, we argue, following Bourdieu, has to consider communities not simply as whole entities but as complex aggregations of people, organizations and social and political forces, all with varying degrees of access to resources and situated in different positions along a social hierarchy. By adopting this perspective for conducting research on the co-operative–territory connection, it is possible to dig deeper into the organizational dynamics of co-operatives and their broader social/territorial impacts.

Co-operatives, to reiterate, are outcomes of collective processes for organizing the meeting of common needs. Specifically, they are organizations affording the democratic management and control of collective actions and resources. At the same time, and drawing from Bourdieu, local communities/territories can be considered social fields with power hierarchies and struggles over resources. Resource coordinating organizations such as co-operatives are intimately ensconced in these dynamics. Figure 1, which we will describe more fully in the next section, attempts to visually represent this field/territory–organization/co-operative relation.

Co-operatives, we argue, are particularly well positioned to mitigate a community's social and power differentials to some degree due to their openness to democratic control. Territorially based co-operatives are most often founded by and made up of locally rooted social groups motivated to meet the mutual needs of members and, either directly or indirectly, broader territorial needs, all the while promoting collaboration among members and other stakeholders. Putnam's social capital theory can help explain the social phenomena that shape and support collaborative initiatives (i.e. trust, social bonds and so on), clearing the way for investigating the socially productive aspects of social capital for co-operative organizations. A solely Putnamian analysis, however, could be reductive if it does not also consider the social divisions, barriers, differentials and power relations within communities and their coordinating organizations. After all, communities, as Bourdieu helps us see, are also constituted by complex interconnections between groups ensconced in power relations tussling over social, political, cultural and economic resources. Bourdieu's research can help explain how group members come together (or the barriers from doing so), how they decide with whom they create connections with (or are blocked from doing so) and how organizations such as co-ops select certain members rather than others.

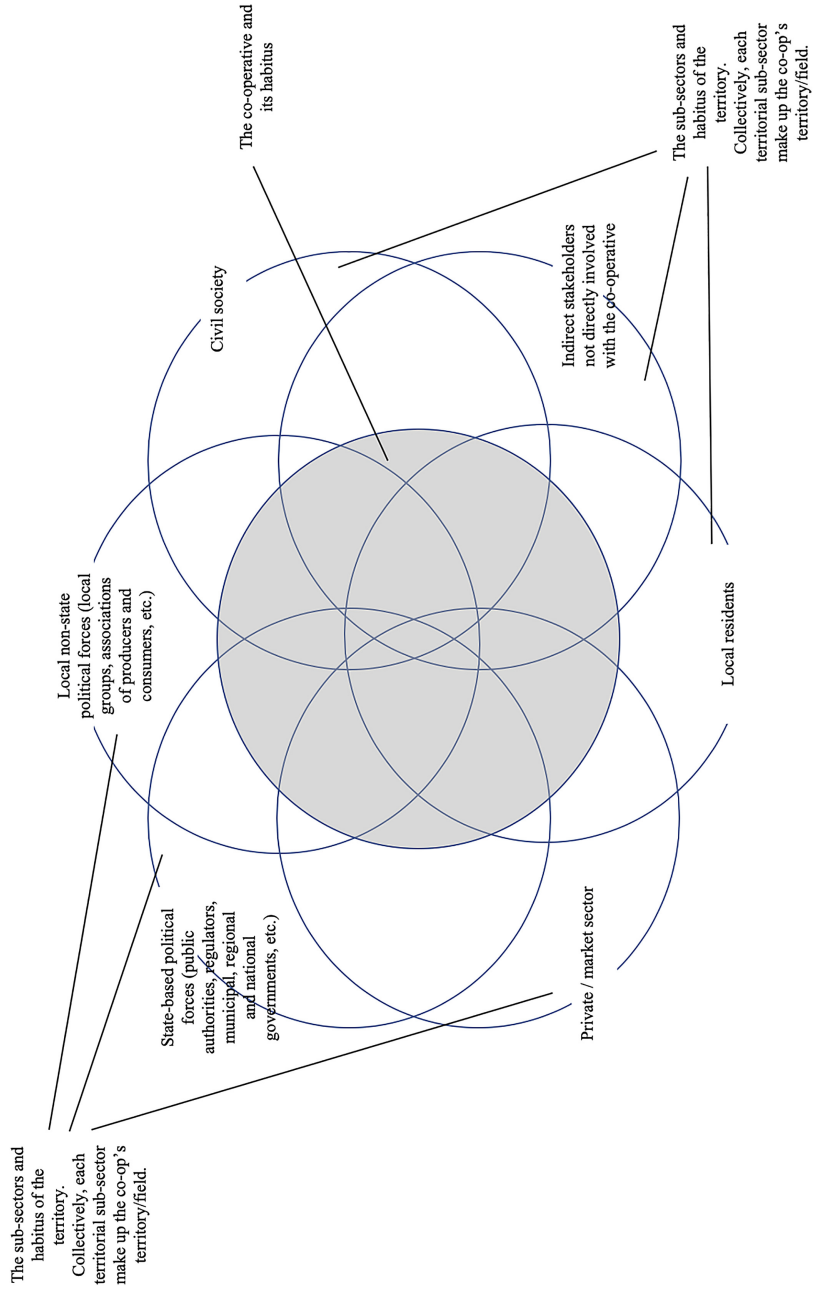


Figure 1.
The networks of co-operatives in local territories via a synthesized social capital framework

Reconsidering social capital for theorizing the co-operative–territory relation

This section proposes a new synthesized framework for assessing the co-operative–territory relationship. Our literature review and critical analysis of social capital theory show that an integrated sociological perspective (for instance, by drawing from key features of Putnamian and Bourdieuan theories) is valuable for better understanding this relationship. This integrated, social-capital-as-research-framework approach, we argue, overcomes two major shortcomings which we have identified in the co-operative studies literature to date. First, only relying on microeconomic or microsociological analysis when studying co-operatives is insufficient for understanding their social and territorial relations. As Bourdieu helps us see, sociological and economic analyses need to be embedded in social and material realities, too often lacking in theoretical models and assumptions. Co-operative studies too should consider the social relations, networks and bonds that co-operatives are already always enconced in, all central to social capital theory and efficacious for pointing out the resources useful for a socially minded organization's function (Kay, 2005; Travaglini, 2012; Uski *et al.*, 2007). Second, social capital theory can help explain the role of social bonds in territorial projects and how and why co-operatives have inherently deep relations with their territories (Borzaga and Tortia, 2009). Too often, co-operative research glosses over the specifics of these territorial bonds and their connections to the very organizational structures of co-operatives, such as the role of leaders in founding and sustaining co-ops, how members interact with the co-op leadership and the rest of the organization, how democratic practices within co-ops are linked or not to similar practices outside of the co-operative, from which social groups within the territory members come from and so on. For instance, the reasons behind a co-operatives' founding can be varied and are dependent on members' cultural, social and economic capitals. Social capital theory can assist in framing and guiding this analysis, pinpointing the important elements of the co-operative–territory relation to be considered.

For example, how and why do co-op members incorporate certain values and norms in their firms and with external subjects in broader networks? Putnam's work can help answer this as well as explain how these values generate positive outcomes more broadly in society. Bourdieu's theories, in turn, can help describe how co-op members deploy their social connections for creating networks and facilitating resource accumulation and exchange. With this approach, we can more concretely see how co-operatives can efficaciously mobilize economic capital by pooling member resources and coordinate production and resource allocation by organizing the structural social capital of members while regulating networks with cognitive social capital and formal roles (Campbell and Sacchetti, 2014; Evans and Syrett, 2007). In short, and contradistinctly microeconomistic or tightly focused organizational approaches, co-operatives must be understood as entities embodied inside their socioeconomic realities; co-op members' needs are generated by socioeconomic contexts and co-operators' capacities to meet these needs depend on the structural and cognitive social capital available to them to deploy collectively via the co-op.

Figure 1, synthesizing the literature we reviewed in Table 1 and illustrating our reassessment of social capital theory, captures the multitude of territorial stakeholders and institutions impacted by and impacting co-operatives, as well as the supportive role or oppositional tensions involved in varying degrees, depicting the key elements of the co-operative–territory ecosystem. Overall, the political, economic and social environments of the territory influence the development and role of co-operatives and their subsequent economic activity. The overlapping dimensions between the components (or subsectors) of the territory/field [1] and between territorial components and the co-operative represent the intricately enmeshed nature of these relations or the “connective tissues” or bonds between the co-op and territory. The community–territory relations constituted by the overlaps (or connective tissues) between the co-operative and the components of the territory/field depicted in Figure 1 can be either mutually beneficial or oppositional/

contested and the overlap and each circle expands or contracts based on the degree of capitals possessed and the symbolic power exerted by any of the components represented by the circles, including the co-operative. The conflictive nature of or mutually beneficial relationship(s) between the territory/field's components and the co-operative, in turn, help us guide which relations to focus on and what forms of capitals, power dynamics, barriers or challenges or the mutually beneficial character of each of the territory/field components that need to be unpacked sociologically from the perspective of the co-operative. The role of the researcher, then, is to use methods appropriate to describe and unravel these territory/field-co-operative relations, represented by the overlapping areas of the Venn diagram in [Figure 1](#).

Importantly, relations with the state via local representatives and public authorities is also a key, and often overlooked, dimension of co-operative initiatives. Civil society, seen by some researchers as also embracing the notion of a "social" or "solidarity economy" and mostly underdetermined or ignored by purely market economy-driven analyses, can also advocate for innovative, sustainable and co-operative solutions to local problems, working outside of or in collaboration with the private/market and public sectors ([Quarter et al., 2018](#)). Civil society is thus a particularly strategic partner for co-operatives, pointing out local issues and potential opportunities ripe for co-operative coordination that may otherwise remain hidden ([Sforzi and Bianchi, 2020](#)).

[Table 2](#) complements [Figure 1](#) by articulating the possible outcomes of the co-operative-territory relation from the point of view of a co-operative and its organizational components and as filtered through our synthesized social capital framework. The core of co-operative initiatives is made up by a confluence of groups that draw on and strengthen pre-existing social relationships in order to start up an organization which is able to foster well-being for members with positive impacts (direct and indirect) on local territories. Co-op members' needs derive from their local socioeconomic contexts, while the potential for meeting needs are embedded in the collective assets and capacities rooted in the same contexts ([Bianchi, 2016](#); [Vieta, 2014, 2020](#); [Zamagni, 2005](#)). Co-operators look to their social networks to find people of trust for gathering resources to start up and consolidate their co-operatives; these networks are reinforced by the values of collaboration and the future benefits deriving from the co-operative's activities. Moreover, co-operators often connect their collective firm's aims to wider social and political movements which can further coalesce and inspire their collaborative actions ([Vieta and Lionais, 2015](#)). Shared values and objectives are the basis for establishing collaborations and relationships with external stakeholders, edifying the co-operative's efficacy to fulfill their missions and final goals and outputs ([Campbell and Sacchetti, 2014](#)).

In short, co-operative firms are an aggregation of different forms of capitals, best seen when assessing members' varied contributions to the organization and their relations with various components of the local territory. Co-operatives need varied forms of capitals to start up and scale up their activities, generated by pooled member resources and facilitated by favorable policies, legislation and financing mechanisms. While supportive ecosystems are thus crucial to co-operatives, it is, first and foremost, the nature of the co-op firm as a democratically and collaboratively driven organization that maximizes member benefits and, as an outcome, can resonate with positive externalities for local communities ([Michie et al., 2017](#)). A co-operative's assets can become key direct and indirect resources for local development when co-operators bring solidarity and mutual values into the firm ([Bianchi, 2019](#)). At the same time, the social values embedded in co-ops prime them as businesses ready-made for environmental sustainability and social inclusivity, enhancing their contributions to both civil society and to more socially and ecologically sensitive economic activity ([Bianchi and Vieta, 2019](#)).

Co-operative components	Structural social capital elements	Functional social capital elements	Outcomes
Co-operative structure	Conservation of social relations among co-operators through mutual benefits; as a collective firm, it is open to establish relationships with the territory	Values and moral norms adopted by co-operators for cooperating	The decentering of profit over social/mutual objectives or the nonprofit status of some co-operatives; development of noncommercial relationships
Co-operators' group	Common cultural capital; previous relationships among them; search for resources in their social networks	Shared values and norms which enable collaboration; creation of mutual trust with community in order to generate well-being	Aggregate local stakeholders; expressions of the co-operative's social objectives driving the organization's actions
Definition of aims, objectives and services	Co-operators' cultural capital as the main factor for interpreting local issues and potentialities; social connections for understanding local issues and potentialities	Collaboration, trust and mutuality as pivotal elements of the co-operative's aims; community well-being as positive outcome	Co-operators' habitus determines the firm's mission and objectives
Relationships with territory	Co-operators' networks; resources derived from networks between co-operatives and territories; collaborations with other local stakeholders	Shared vision and values as main facilitators of these relationships	Co-operative can acquire more resources, information and advocacy
Co-operatives' assets	Material resources which can enhance collaborations with external stakeholders	Mutuality as a main value for strengthening these collaborations; assets can have key value for the community	Co-operatives prove their value through the provision of material benefits

Table 2.
The possible outcomes of the co-operative–territory relation from the point of view of a co-operative and its organizational components

The case study: co-operative La Paranza in Naples, Italy

This section presents results from a case study analysis of a social co-operative in Naples (Italy) carried out through semi-structured interviews of 15 co-operative members and their local partners in 2018. We used NVivo software to code transcripts and *in situ* observation notes, grouping findings according to our synthesized social capital framework illustrated in Figure 1 and Table 2. Here, the objective of the case study is to further illustrate how the theoretical framework presented above can help enhance the sociological understanding of the territorial embeddedness of a co-operative.

The social co-operative of La Paranza is based in Rione Sanità, a neighborhood in Naples' old town. Since 2006, it works toward the social and physical regeneration of this marginalized area that has suffered structural socioeconomic disadvantages, such as high levels of unemployment and scarce public services (Bianchi, 2020). In a precedent work, Canestrino *et al.* (2019) also assessed the social impacts of this co-operative on its territory. The perspective adopted by Canestrino *et al.* used social entrepreneurship as a model that evaluated the social value generated by the co-operative, the internal functioning and outcomes for the local community. Applying our framework to this case study, we suggest that our revised sociological analysis provides related but more nuanced findings linking La Paranza more explicitly to its territory. First, it considers the co-operative as part of a wider social network

required us to not only look at the co-operatives' mission and values but to also consider and interview La Paranza's community partners, stakeholders and local residents. Second, our consideration of social capital as a composition of various elements incorporated into the social relationships between La Paranza and the wider territory were revealed to be determined by the dynamics of members' symbolic power, tacitly acknowledging the habitus of the social agents and, more explicitly, the relationships with the territorial subsectors related to the co-operative. Our model thus reveals a more nuanced picture of La Paranza's social reality.

The core problem in this borough is the absence of the state; it has to guarantee the social infrastructure. The point is that there is a dramatically high level of unemployment here, such as a country during wartime, and nobody, except the non-profit sector and the territory itself, work to solve the problems [of Rione Sanità] (interview n°4, founding member of co-op).

La Paranza's founding group of young residents shares a common background and habitus as members of the local parish, where they learned the social teachings of Catholicism. La Paranza's first and major project was the regeneration of the local catacombs, an underground archeological area that had been abandoned for decades. Promoting a regeneration project explicitly linked to the neighborhood's self-determined action, solidarity and sense of community, by 2008, La Paranza had mustered enough collective social capital to be granted permission to work on the reopening of the catacombs by the Vatican, a unique state- and culture-based political force. This endorsement further added symbolic value to the co-op's project, helping secure the economic capital needed to begin the regeneration of the catacombs via a €500,000 grant from a foundation.

With the original support from the local parish and its founders' background in social Catholicism afforded them much of the social and cultural capital necessary in the context of the territory/field of Rione Sanità to find and consolidate the co-op initiative. In other words, this group of friends already possessed the social relationships and strong bonds with their community (other local residents) and the local nonstate political actor of the parish to be given the space, time and social trust to carry out their co-operative project. From this foundation, the founders, directed their co-op's social mission to the revitalization of the local neighborhood, were then able to receive cultural and economic capital support from the political actor of the Vatican and consequently impacted and gained further support from other indirect stakeholders, such as other residents of Rione Sanità and the municipality of Naples. The founders were able to pool and springboard from these initial social, cultural and economic capitals to eventually elaborate a strategy articulated via a project that transferred in part the symbolic power of Catholic social doctrine onto their community revitalization initiative.

Managing a community good, for the territory and with the territory, transforms it into a collector of positive energies that voluntarily decides to give of themselves for the general good (interview n° 2, founding member of co-op).

In recent years, La Paranza has expanded its network of local collaborations and partnerships with various local and regional organizations aimed at promoting the socioeconomic regeneration of other areas of the Rione Sanità neighborhood. From a Putnamian perspective, we can understand the success of La Paranza because of its heightened "civic virtue," generated by gradually expanding its social capital via the strengthening of its community bonds, seeing its community regeneration projects such as the revitalization of the catacombs through to completion and overall building its legitimacy via the trust gained from past successes and their collaborative approach which contributed to securing the community's well-being. With an added Bourdieuan lens, we can also see that La Paranza has also expanded on the symbolic power that it has deployed for community action and that has been facilitated by the social, cultural and economic capitals the co-op has managed to accumulate and mediate over the years. Moreover, via the social trust earned by La Paranza, social power differentials

have been flattened to some degree and socioeconomic self-determination has been improved tremendously for the local residents of Rione Sanità via the cultural and economic benefits that have been stimulated by La Paranza's initiatives, such as a revival of tourism in the neighborhood and the growth of local services benefiting local residents.

Of course, La Paranza did not carry this out solely on its own volition. The varied territorial subsectors, constituting the co-op's field of action, have collaborated and overlapped with the social mission and organizational character of La Paranza in articulating the projects and activating the social benefits that the neighborhood has accrued. While La Paranza was the catalyst for local socioeconomic development and change, the co-op relied on numerous partnerships started by personal relationships forged between the co-op members and key stakeholders in other local and regional organizations, thus gradually building on and further deploying its social and cultural capitals. At the same time, these external subjects outside of the co-operative recognize implicitly the symbolic value undergirding it – legitimized further by the co-op's past successes and its relationships to the institutions of the Catholic Church – and agree to support it because they have trust in the founders and leaders of the co-op, who embody both the values and mission of the co-operative and the self-determined spirit of initiative and tenacity of the neighborhood. The solidarity forged by this trust, in turn, facilitated the consolidation of the numerous partnerships which La Paranza has forged, involving the material and immaterial exchange of resources between numerous social actors and territorial subsectors. For Putnam, these collaborations and partnerships are the result of mutually respectful relationships overlapped by strong bonds of trust. For Bourdieu, these are social exchanges reinforcing the mutual recognition between social actors with shared goals and dispositions that mutually contribute to each actor's cultural and social capitals. Rather than seizing on these bonds and trust for private economic gain (i.e. for the accumulation of economic capital), the mediation of the co-operative of La Paranza and its social mission directs these gains to the betterment and well-being of the territory of Rione Sanità, in no small part due to the character of social co-operatives in Italy – multistakeholder-based, socially focused and democratically run organizations that coordinate the socioeconomic security and welfare of the community.

We are all from Sanità and . . . the idea [started from us] . . . from below. Being in the same borough, third sector organizations, retailers, and citizens [of Sanità already] had a strong and dense network of social relationships, we knew each other, and in many cases it has been friendship before professional relations (interview n° 2, founding member of co-op).

For social actors driven by issues of community well-being and care, the choice to organize as a co-operative is not secondary. The co-operative form embodies values such as democratic management, member participation, reciprocity and mutual aid that can effectively mobilize the forms of capital and the social networks needed to see through to completion community development and regeneration initiatives. These are all factors that afforded the founders of La Paranza, the organizational springboard from which to articulate their community initiatives, forge deep alliances with key territorial stakeholders and secure crucial funding and support from local state and nonstate political and cultural entities. In short, the La Paranza founders adopted the co-operative form in order to articulate and actually see through the broader community's desire to revitalize the local neighborhood and the local neighborhood in turn accrued the benefits of the co-operative's projects via the revitalization of once-depleted spaces. For La Paranza, its ultimate success can be seen in the institutionalization of its projects; in 2014, the Rione Sanità social network forged by La Paranza created a foundation in order to formalize these networks and strengthen the collaborations.

Conclusion

Arguing for a sociological research framework that more thoroughly explores the co-operative–territory connection, in this article, we reassessed social capital theory for

co-operative studies. We did so by, first, underscoring the necessity for sociological research that more closely considers co-operatives' territorial relationships. Second, we critically interrogated social capital theory in the spirit of developing a more nuanced research framework for exploring the social relations that embed co-operatives and their capacity to activate and support territorial resources and economies. Via a synthesized Putnamian–Bourdieuian approach to social capital theory as a framework for analysis, we ultimately proposed a pathway for considering the embeddedness of co-operatives in local territories and particularly for assessing how they emerge from and are further consolidated by their socioeconomic contexts as expressions of a social group's willingness or need to meet social objectives.

Figure 1 and Table 2 graphically and comparatively modeled our synthesized social capital framework for assessing the character of the territorial embeddedness of co-operatives. We then illustrated how the framework can be deployed in the field via a case study of a social co-operative in a depleted neighborhood of Naples, Italy. In a nutshell, the synthesized social capital framework we developed in this article articulates the diverse relationships between co-operatives and territories, considering co-ops as organizations operating within various multidimensional and overlapping components of a broader territorial field within which they are tightly situated. The framework particularly highlights the overlapping, multidirectional and constitutive elements of territories that co-operatives must engage with for mobilizing and managing social capital (and other capitals) in order to address collective issues and for fostering collaborative social bonds. What co-operatives bring to local territories, in turn, is a highly relational organizational model from which to coordinate and allocate resources and help foster participation through membership and democratic decision-making processes, receiving inputs from their members and partners in order to calibrate the activities necessary for meeting socioeconomic needs.

Co-operatives, we ultimately conclude, are unique organizational forms which are able to create social wealth and foster democratic participation by potentially involving a range of stakeholders. While co-operatives can operate in almost all economic sectors and are defined by their membership type, they are ripe organizations for socially oriented economic activity and sustainable development because they are locally rooted businesses that work for the mutual benefit of members. Implication for research: through the approach we articulated in this article, we can more readily see how co-operatives, via their democratic structures, members' mutual interests, and their deep links to surrounding communities, facilitate territorial economies and their development. Co-operatives are organizations that tend to be embedded intricately into their socioeconomic contexts, bring together local stakeholders and aggregate resources in order to carry out socially or economically beneficial aims. Implications for practice and policy: co-operatives can be seen to mobilize collective social capital as coalesced and guided by a co-op members' habitus or members' common dispositions and practices oriented toward meeting shared needs via collective actions and goals. In turn, their collective actions pass through the networks that co-ops are able to create and keep alive with other local stakeholders and territorial subsectors via practices of solidarity and reciprocity. For deciphering these complex community–territory connections, as we have argued throughout, social capital theory can play a key role as a framework for analysis, helping to work out and bring to relief the connective tissues of social bonds that link the collective organization to the territory.

Note

1. Note that the territory/field components are not exhaustive of all possible components but are the types of territorial institutions and actors that we have identified in our co-operative–territory research.

References

- Abdallah, S., Bressers, H. and Clancy, J. (2015), "Potential electricity co-operatives in Kenya: could social capital be a barrier?", *Community Development Journal*, Vol. 50, pp. 213-228, doi: [10.1093/cdj/bsu029](https://doi.org/10.1093/cdj/bsu029).
- Alexander, C.E. (1996), *The Art of Being Black: The Creation of Black British Youth Identities: The Creation of Black British Youth Identities*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Bauwens, T. and Defourny, J. (2017), "Social capital and mutual versus public benefit: the case of renewable energy cooperatives", *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics*, Vol. 88, pp. 203-232, doi: [10.1111/apce.12166](https://doi.org/10.1111/apce.12166).
- Bianchi, M. (2016), "How communities can regenerate urban context. The case study of Hackney Co-operative developments", Euricse Paper. doi: [10.2139/ssrn.3116252](https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3116252).
- Bianchi, M. (2019), "With members and for members? A theoretical analysis of mutuality in co-operatives, its evolution and re-formulation through the Italian community co-ops", *Argomenti*, Vol. 12, pp. 85-103, doi: [10.14276/1971-8357.1798](https://doi.org/10.14276/1971-8357.1798).
- Bianchi, M. (2020), *A Critical Analysis of Italian Community Co-Operatives: A Qualitative Research through Social Capital Theories for Investigating Territorial Connections and Community Development Processes*, University Carlo Bo, Urbino, available at: <https://ora.uniurb.it/handle/11576/2673161#.XqhDgGhKg2w>.
- Bianchi, M. and Vieta, M. (2019), "Italian community co-operatives responding to economic crisis and state withdrawal. A new model for socio-economic development", in *Presented at the Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals: What Role for Social and Solidarity Economy?*, United Nations Task Force for Social and Solidarity Economy, Geneva.
- Borzaga, C. and Sacchetti, S. (2015), *Why Social Enterprises Are Asking to Be Multi-Stakeholder and Deliberative: An Explanation Around the Costs of Exclusion*.
- Borzaga, C. and Santuari, A. (2001), "From traditional co-operative to innovative social enterprise", in Borzaga, C. and Defourny, J. (Eds.), *The Emergence of Social Enterprise*, Routledge, London.
- Borzaga, C. and Sforzi, J. (2015), "Social capital, cooperatives and social enterprises", in Christoforou, A. and Davis, J.B. (Eds.), *Social Capital and Economics. Social Values, Power, and Social Identity*. Routledge, London and Abingdon, pp. 193-214.
- Borzaga, C. and Tortia, E. (2009), "Social enterprises and local economic development", in Noya, A. and Clarence, E. (Eds.), *The Changing Boundaries of Social Enterprises*, OECD Publishing, Paris, pp. 195-228.
- Bourdieu, P. (1979), "Symbolic power", *Critique of Anthropology*, Vol. 4, pp. 77-85, doi: [10.1177/0308275X7900401307](https://doi.org/10.1177/0308275X7900401307).
- Bourdieu, P. (1989), "Social space and the symbolic power", *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 7 No. 1, pp. 14-25.
- Bourdieu, P. (1994), *Other Words: Essay Toward a Reflexive Sociology*, Polity, Cambridge.
- Campbell, C. and Sacchetti, S. (2014), "Social enterprise networks and social capital: a case study in Scotland/UK", in Christoforou, A. and Davis, J.B. (Eds.), *Social Capital and Economics: Social Values, Power, and Social Identity*, Routledge, London and New York, pp. 215-235, doi: [10.4324/9780203505014](https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203505014).
- Canestrino, R., Ćwiklicki, M., Di Nauta, P. and Magliocca, P. (2019), "Creating social value through entrepreneurship: the social business model of la paranza", *Kybernetes*, Vol. 48 No. 10, pp. 2190-2216, doi: [10.1108/K-03-2018-0135](https://doi.org/10.1108/K-03-2018-0135).
- Chloupkova, J., Svendsen, G.L.H. and Svendsen, G.T. (2003), "Building and destroying social capital: the case of cooperative movements in Denmark and Poland", *Agriculture and Human Values*, Vol. 20, pp. 241-252, doi: [10.1023/A:1026141807305](https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1026141807305).
- Carpiano, R.M. (2006), "Toward a neighborhood resource-based theory of social capital for health: can Bourdieu and sociology help?", *Social Science and Medicine*, Vol. 62, pp. 165-175, doi: [10.1016/j.socscimed.2005.05.020](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2005.05.020).
- Craig, J.G. (1993), *The Nature of Co-operation*, Black Rose Books, Montreal.

- DeFilippis, J. (2001), "The myth of social capital in community development", *Housing Policy Debate*, Vol. 12, pp. 781-806, doi: [10.1080/10511482.2001.9521429](https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2001.9521429).
- Degli Antoni, G. and Portale, E. (2011), "The effect of corporate social responsibility on social capital creation in social cooperatives", *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, Vol. 40, pp. 566-582, doi: [10.1177/0899764010362568](https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764010362568).
- Duraj, J. (2010), "Social cooperatives' ways of operation activity in Poland — some features of theory and practice", *Comparative Economic Research*, Vol. 13, pp. 49-65, doi: [10.2478/v10103-010-0003-x](https://doi.org/10.2478/v10103-010-0003-x).
- Feng, L., Friis, A. and Nilsson, J. (2016), "Social capital among members in grain marketing cooperatives of different sizes", *Agribusiness*, Vol. 32, pp. 113-126, doi: [10.1002/agr.21427](https://doi.org/10.1002/agr.21427).
- Ferrucci, F. (2010), *Capitale Sociale e Partnership tra Pubblico, Privato e Terzo Settore*, Franco Angeli, Milano.
- Flanigan, S. and Sutherland, L. (2016), "Buying access to social capital? From collaboration to service provision in an agricultural co-operative", *Sociologia Ruralis*, Vol. 56, pp. 471-490, doi: [10.1111/soru.12092](https://doi.org/10.1111/soru.12092).
- Euricse (2015), *Economia cooperativa. Rilevanza, evoluzione e nuove frontiere della cooperazione italiana*.
- Evans, M. and Syrett, S. (2007), "Generating social capital?", *European Urban and Regional Studies*, Vol. 14, pp. 55-74, doi: [10.1177/0969776407072664](https://doi.org/10.1177/0969776407072664).
- Fulton, M.E. and Ketilson, L.H. (1992), "The role of cooperatives in communities: examples from saskatchewan", *Journal of Agricultural Cooperation*, Vol. 7, pp. 1-28.
- Goldenberg, S. and Haines, V.A. (1992), "Social networks and institutional completeness: from territory to ties", *The Canadian Journal of Sociology/Cahiers Canadiens de Sociologie*, Vol. 17, pp. 301-312, doi: [10.2307/3341325](https://doi.org/10.2307/3341325).
- Hatak, I., Lang, R. and Roessl, D. (2016), "Trust, social capital, and the coordination of relationships between the members of cooperatives: a comparison between member-focused cooperatives and third-party-focused cooperatives", *Voluntas*, Vol. 27, pp. 1218-1241, doi: [10.1007/s11266-015-9663-2](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-015-9663-2).
- Jussila, I., Tuominen, P. and Saksa, J.-M. (2008), "Following a different mission: where and how do consumer co-operatives compete?", *Journal of Co-operative Studies*, Vol. 41, pp. 28-39.
- Kay, A. (2005), "Social capital, the social economy and community development", *Community Development Journal*, Vol. 41, p. 160, doi: [10.1093/cdj/bsi045](https://doi.org/10.1093/cdj/bsi045).
- Lang, R. and Novy, A. (2014), "Cooperative housing and social cohesion: the role of linking social capital", *European Planning Studies*, Vol. 22, pp. 1744-1764, doi: [10.1080/09654313.2013.800025](https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2013.800025).
- Lang, R. and Roessl, D. (2011), "Contextualizing the governance of community co-operatives: evidence from Austria and Germany", *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, Vol. 22, pp. 706-730, doi: [10.1007/s11266-011-9210-8](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-011-9210-8).
- Lemon, C. and Lemon, J. (2003), "Community-based cooperative ventures for adults with intellectual disabilities", *The Canadian Geographer/Le Géographe canadien*, Vol. 47, pp. 414-428, doi: [10.1111/j.0008-3658.2003.00033.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0008-3658.2003.00033.x).
- MacPherson, I. (2013), "Cooperatives' concern for the community: from members towards local communities' interests", Euricse Paper Nos 46/13, doi: [10.2139/ssrn.2196031](https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2196031).
- Majee, W. and Hoyt, A. (2011), "Cooperatives and community development: a perspective on the use of cooperatives in development", *Journal of Community Practice*, Vol. 19, pp. 48-61, doi: [10.1080/10705422.2011.550260](https://doi.org/10.1080/10705422.2011.550260).
- McClenaghan, P. (2000), "Social capital: exploring the theoretical foundations of community development education", *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 26, pp. 565-582, doi: [10.1080/713651581](https://doi.org/10.1080/713651581).

-
- Michie, J., Borzaga, C. and Blasi, J.R. (2017), "The Oxford handbook of mutual co-operative and co-owned business", in *Oxford Handbooks*, 1st ed., Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Mori, P.A. (2017), "Community co-operative and co-operatives providing public services", in Michie, J., Blasi, J. and Borzaga, C. (Eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Mutual, Co-operative, and Co-owned Business*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Morris, M. (2014), "The cooperative advantage for social inclusion meets uncooperative government regulation: international cooperative principles and cooperative housing regulation in the province of Ontario, Canada", *Journal of Entrepreneurial and Organization Diversity*, Vol. 4, pp. 28-51, doi: [10.5947/jeod.2015.003](https://doi.org/10.5947/jeod.2015.003).
- Nilsson, J., Svendsen, G.L.H. and Svendsen, G.T. (2012), "Are large and complex agricultural cooperatives losing their social capital?", *Agribusiness*, Vol. 28, pp. 187-204, doi: [10.1002/agr.21285](https://doi.org/10.1002/agr.21285).
- Novkovic, S. and Golja, T. (2015), "Cooperatives and civil society: potential for local cooperative development in Croatia", *Journal of Entrepreneurial and Organization Diversity*, Vol. 4, pp. 153-169.
- Ostrom, E. (2012), *The Future of the Commons: Beyond Market Failure and Government Regulations*, Occasional Paper, Institute of Economic Affairs, London.
- Pérotin, V. (2017), "Worker Co-operatives", in *The Oxford Handbook of Mutual, Co-Operative, and Co-Owned Business*, doi: [10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199684977.013.9](https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199684977.013.9).
- Putnam, R.D. (2000), *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Simon & Schuster, New York.
- Putnam, R.D., Leonardi, R. and Nonetti, R.Y. (1993), *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, STU-Student edition, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.
- Quarter, J., Mook, L. and Armstrong, A. (2018), *Understanding the Social Economy: A Canadian Perspective*.
- Rakopoulos, T. (2014), "Cooperative modulations: the antimafia movement and struggles over land and cooperativism in eight Sicilian municipalities", *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, Vol. 19, pp. 15-33, doi: [10.1080/1354571X.2014.851964](https://doi.org/10.1080/1354571X.2014.851964).
- Sforzi, J. and Bianchi, M. (2020), "Fostering social capital in urban neighbourhood: the case of community-owned pubs", *Social Enterprise Journal*, Vol. 16 No. 3, pp. 281-297, doi: [10.1108/SEJ-07-2019-0050](https://doi.org/10.1108/SEJ-07-2019-0050).
- Siisiäinen, M. (2003), "Two concepts of social capital: Bourdieu vs. Putnam", *International Journal of Contemporary Sociology*, Vol. 40, pp. 183-204.
- Spear, R. (2000), "The co-operative advantage", *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics*, Vol. 71, pp. 507-523, doi: [10.1111/1467-8292.00151](https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8292.00151).
- Stofferahn, C.W. (2009), "Cooperative community development: a comparative case study of locality-based impacts of new generation cooperatives", *Community Development*, Vol. 40, pp. 177-198, doi: [10.1080/15575330903001679](https://doi.org/10.1080/15575330903001679).
- Svendsen, G.L.H. and Svendsen, G.T. (2000), "Measuring social capital: the Danish co-operative dairy movement", *Sociologia Ruralis*, Vol. 40, pp. 72-86, doi: [10.1111/1467-9523.00132](https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9523.00132).
- Tak, S. (2017), "Cooperative membership and community engagement: findings from a Latin American Survey", *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 32, pp. 566-586, doi: [10.1111/sofc.12349](https://doi.org/10.1111/sofc.12349).
- Tarhan, M.D. (2015), "Renewable energy cooperatives: a review of demonstrated impacts and limitations", *The Journal of Entrepreneurial and Organizational Diversity*, Vol. 4, pp. 104-120, doi: [10.5947/jeod.2015.006](https://doi.org/10.5947/jeod.2015.006).
- Tapia, F. (2012), "Commons, social capital, and the emergence of agricultural cooperatives in early twentieth century Spain", *European Review of Economic History*, Vol. 16, pp. 511-528, doi: [10.2307/41708743](https://doi.org/10.2307/41708743).

- Thomas, A. (2004), "The rise of social cooperatives in Italy", *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, Vol. 15, pp. 243-263, doi: [10.1023/B:VOLU.0000046280.06580.d8](https://doi.org/10.1023/B:VOLU.0000046280.06580.d8).
- Travaglini, C. (2012), "The generation and re-generation of social capital and enterprises in multi-stakeholders social cooperative enterprises: a system dynamic approach", *Revista de Administração*, Vol. 47, pp. 436-445, doi: [10.1590/S0080-21072012000300008](https://doi.org/10.1590/S0080-21072012000300008).
- Tyler, T.R. and Blader, S.L. (2001), "Identity and cooperative behavior in groups", *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*, Vol. 4, pp. 207-226, doi: [10.1177/1368430201004003003](https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430201004003003).
- Uski, T., Jussila, I. and Saksa, J.-M. (2007), "Regional co-operation: a strategic network perspective on a customer-owned organization", *Journal of Co-operative Studies*, Vol. 40, pp. 18-29.
- Valentinov, V. (2004), "Toward a social capital theory of co-operative organization", *Journal of Co-operative Studies*, Vol. 37, pp. 5-20.
- Vieta, M. (2010), "The social innovations of autogestión in Argentina's worker-recuperated enterprises: cooperatively organizing productive life in hard times", *Labor Studies Journal*, Vol. 35, pp. 295-321.
- Vieta, M. (2014), "Learning in struggle: Argentina's new worker cooperatives as transformative learning organizations", *Industrial Relations*, Vol. 69, pp. 186-218, doi: [10.7202/1024212ar](https://doi.org/10.7202/1024212ar).
- Vieta, M. (2019), "Recuperating and (re)learning the language of autogestión in Argentina's empresas recuperadas worker cooperatives", *Journal of Cultural Economy*, Vol. 12 No. 5, pp. 401-422.
- Vieta, M. (2020), *Workers' Self-Management in Argentina: Contesting Neo-Liberalism by Occupying Companies, Creating Cooperatives, and Recuperating Autogestión*, Brill Academic Publishers and Haymarket Books, Leiden, Chicago.
- Vieta, M. and Lionais, D. (2015), *Editorial: The Cooperative Advantage for Community Development*, Social Science Research Network, Rochester, NY, (SSRN Scholarly Paper No. ID 2639138).
- Walzer, N. and Merrett, C.D. (2001), *Cooperative Approach to Local Economic Development*, M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, NY and London.
- Woolcock, M. and Narayan, D. (2000), "Social capital: implications for development theory, research, and policy", *The World Bank Research Observer*, Vol. 15, pp. 225-249.
- Zamagni, S. (2005), "Per una teoria economico-civile dell'impresa cooperativa", in Mazzoli, E. and Zamagni, S. (Eds), *Verso Una Nuova Teoria Economica Della Cooperazione*, Bologna.
- Zeuli, K. and Radel, J. (2005), "Cooperatives as a community development strategy: linking theory and practice", *The Journal of Regional Analysis and Policy*, Vol. 35, pp. 43-54, doi: [10.22004/ag.econ.132302](https://doi.org/10.22004/ag.econ.132302).
- Zeuli, K., Freshwater, D., Markley, D. and Barkley, D. (2004), "Cooperatives in rural community development: a new framework for analysis", *Journal of the Community Development Society*, Vol. 35, pp. 17-35, doi: [10.1080/15575330409490130](https://doi.org/10.1080/15575330409490130).

Further reading

- Bourdieu, P. (1977), *Outline of a Theory of Social Practice*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Bourdieu, P. (1985), "The social space and the genesis of groups", *Theory and Society*, Vol. 14, pp. 723-744.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986), "The forms of capital", in Richardson, J.G. (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, Greenwood Press, New York, pp. 47-58.
- Grenfell, M. (2008), *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts, Key Concepts*, Acumen, Stocksfield.
- Harker, R.K., Richard, K., Mahar, C. and Wilkes, C. (1990), *An Introduction to the Work of Pierre Bourdieu: The Practice of Theory*, Macmillan, Houndmills.
- Klein, N. (2015), *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*, Vintage Canada, Toronto.

-
- Liang, Q., Huang, Z., Haiyang, L. and Wang, X. (2015), "Social capital, member participation, and cooperative performance: evidence from China's Zhejiang", *The International Food and Agribusiness Management Review*, Vol. 18, pp. 49-78, doi: [10.22004/ag.econ.197768](https://doi.org/10.22004/ag.econ.197768).
- Novkovic, S. (2008), "Defining the co-operative difference", *The Journal of Socio-Economics, Special Issue: Cooperatives and the Economy*, Vol. 37, pp. 2168-2177, doi: [10.1016/j.socec.2008.02.009](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socec.2008.02.009).
- Sabatini, F., Modena, F. and Tortia, E. (2014), "Do cooperative enterprises create social trust?", *Small Business Economics*, Vol. 42, pp. 621-641, doi: [10.1007/s11187-013-9494-8](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-013-9494-8).
- Schuetzenmeister, F. (2010), *University Research Management: An Exploratory Literature Review*.
- Tzanakis, M. (2013), "Social capital in Bourdieu's, Coleman's and Putnam's theory: empirical evidence and emergent measurement issues", *Educate*, Vol. 13, pp. 2-23.
- Vieta, M. (2016), "Autogestión: prefiguring a "new cooperativism" and "the labour commons"", in DuRand, C. (Ed.), *Moving beyond Capitalism*, Routledge, London.

About the authors

Dr. Michele Bianchi (PhD in sociology of governance, social participation and citizenship, the University of Urbino Carlo Bo) is a researcher at the Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health at Glasgow Caledonian University. Dr. Bianchi's current work investigates community-based initiatives in developing countries and their capacity to implement the 17 UN Social Development Goals. Dr. Bianchi deploys a qualitative approach in his study of co-operatives and social economy organizations and amply uses case study methodologies and semi-structured interviews. His previous research analyzes the new phenomenon of Italian community co-operatives and their action as local socioeconomic developers. Michele Bianchi is the corresponding author and can be contacted at michele.bianchi@gcu.ac.uk

Dr. Marcelo Vieta (PhD in social and political thought, York University) is an associate professor in the Program in Adult Education and Community Development and the Collaborative Program in Workplace Learning and Social Change at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, as well as co-founder and executive committee member of the Centre for Learning, Social Economy and Work (CLSEW). Dr. Vieta is the author of the book *Workers' Self-Management in Argentina: Contesting Neo-liberalism by Occupying Companies, Creating Cooperatives, and Recuperating Autogestión* (Brill/Haymarket, 2020). Vieta conducts research on and teaches workplace and organizational learning and social change, the social and solidarity economy, the sociology of work, co-operatives, economic democracy, the philosophy of technology and critical theory. Regionally, he has specialized in Latin America, Canada and Italy. In recent years, Vieta has been researching and publishing on the historical conditions, the political economic contexts and the lived experiences of the worker-recuperated enterprises of Argentina and Italy.

For instructions on how to order reprints of this article, please visit our website:

www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/licensing/reprints.htm

Or contact us for further details: permissions@emeraldinsight.com