pro-metrics

Mapping cultural policy research in the European Union: A bibliometric analysis of collaboration and thematic structures (1990-2024)

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ABSTRACT

Objective. The objective of the study was to provide a comprehensive characterization of the scientific contributions of European Union (EU) within the domain of cultural policy. To this end, a bibliometric analysis was conducted, which facilitated the identification of collaborative patterns among authors, institutions, countries, and thematic clusters within the field.

Design/Methodology/Approach. A total of 1,148 documents were retrieved from OpenAlex, encompassing articles and reviews published between 1990 and 2024. A standardized approach was employed, encompassing authors, institutions, countries, and concepts. Indicators of co-authorship, international collaboration, institutional cooperation, and concept co-occurrence were utilized.

Results/Discussion. The findings indicated that scientific production was concentrated in specific countries and institutions, with the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Spain, and the Netherlands serving as key players in the collaboration networks. The primary co-authorship structures were organized into clear clusters, led by Joaquim Rius-Ulldemolins, Kate Oakley, Anita Kangas, and Mariano Martín Zamorano, each centered around particular themes. The institutional network reflected these patterns, while the co-occurrence of concepts highlighted an interdisciplinary field structured around broad thematic areas such as cultural policy, cultural identity, creative industries, and cultural heritage.

Conclusions. The study confirms the growth of cultural policy as a research area in Europe, although variations in collaboration and scientific production are evident.

Originality/Value. This study provides a comprehensive overview of European research in cultural policy, offering a unique synthesis of analyses from authors, institutions, countries, and concepts derived from an extensive open database. The value of this study lies in its demonstration of the structuring of the socio-intellectual field of cultural policy in the EU, the provision of empirical data for comparative studies, and the strengthening of academic communities in this field

1. INTRODUCTION

THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU) has emerged as the preeminent global actor in the realm of cultural policy, wielding significant influence within its member states and on the international stage (Burri, 2024). It has, albeit indirectly, promoted the alignment of cultural orientations among member states through various resources and practices that exert influence on the cultural sphere without imposing formal obligations (Primorac *et al.,* 2018). According to Mathieu and Visanich (2022), "accomplishing cultural policy entails more than just formulating policy, which is part of the equation but more or less begins and ends with the political and administrative processes around policy formulation and implementation, including evaluation." Calligaro (2023) has noted that the regulatory work of the Community and the EU in the field of culture has been organized around three main areas. The initial section pertains to trade and industry, considering the mounting significance of cultural goods in the global market since the late 1980s. The second section delves into socioeconomic issues, offering insights into the economic, symbolic, and media influence of cultural industries, as well as the political clout wielded by their professional organizations. The third section pertains to political and cultural dimensions. Cultural productions play a pivotal role in shaping national and regional identities. However, they can also contribute to the development of a shared European identity, thereby generating tensions between these various levels of identification.

In the context of the EU political landscape, culture has been utilized as a means to attain diverse social, political, and economic objectives (Primorac *et al.,* 2018). By the 1980s, cultural policy had become a fully recognized component of the government sector on a global scale. Paradoxically, since the late 1960s, many EU countries have embraced the idea that each nation should have its own cultural policy, regarded as a form of public intervention aimed at protecting national culture and other values deemed essential. It is noteworthy that, despite assertions to the contrary, national governments have adopted remarkably similar models in this domain (Alasuutari & Kangas, 2020). Since its inception as the European Community, the Union has collaborated with other transnational organizations in the cultural sphere, including the Council of Europe and UNESCO. Since its inception, the Council of Europe has identified culture as one of its core pillars, as evidenced by the signing of the European Cultural Convention in 1954 (Lähdesmäki *et al.,* 2021). According to the analysis by Rubio Arostegui and Rius-Ulldemolins (2020), European cultural policies in the second half of the 20th century were primarily driven by public intervention and were defined in various ways. It was not until the early 1990s that these nations began to align toward a common framework. In Germany, *Kulturpolitik* includes the arts, education, and leisure; in Italy, it is primarily related to cultural heritage; and in the United Kingdom, it focuses on protecting heritage and the arts, later adding entertainment and cultural industries.

In the context of Western European cultural policy, these shifts gave rise to a new paradigm characterized by a focus on democratization, inclusivity, and enhancing access to cultural resources (Hesmondhalgh & Pratt, 2005). As Duxbury *et al.* (2019) demonstrate, national cultural policy systems reflect the historical trajectories of nation-building and the institutional frameworks and governance structures that are distinct to each nation. However, it is imperative to acknowledge the observation of Dubois (2013) that the evolution of cultural policies is not a sudden phenomenon, but rather a gradual process that emerges through the interplay between political and cultural forces. This progression typically manifests through the gradual accumulation of directions and institutions, rather than sudden, radical shifts. Consequently, each national cultural policy is characterized by its unique historical trajectory and establishes a distinct context for international comparison. For instance, the empirical study by Mikola *et al.* (2025) demonstrates that

the utilization of cultural policies in Central and Eastern European countries is contingent on the ideological orientations of respective governments. In the context of Hungary and Poland, right-wing populist parties, characterized by their robust ideological foundations, have strategically employed cultural elements to disseminate nationalist narratives. Conversely, in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, where technocratic approaches and reduced ideological populism are more prevalent, cultural policy has been administered in a more pragmatic manner. In Northern Europe, Saukkonen (2014) has noted that although Finland, Sweden, and the Netherlands are regarded as multicultural nations in terms of cultural rights, their cultural policies have exhibited a marked reluctance to adapt to social changes caused by immigration. The study indicates that the incorporation of diversity into general cultural policies has been limited. In practice, it has been more feasible to establish specific provisions for immigrant and minority groups than to fully integrate a multicultural approach into traditional arts policies.

Alexander and Peterson Gilbert (2023) provide evidence that the cultural policies of the 30 European countries under scrutiny exhibit considerable, albeit heterogeneous, degrees of market orientation and the integration of instrumental values within their subsidized cultural systems. The findings indicate that all European countries have experienced processes of commodification to varying degrees, resulting in a "post-commodified" landscape where diverse practices coexist depending on the country. Furthermore, they identify clear differences in how each nation expresses these market logics in its institutional and organizational structures, revealing different patterns of commodification across the contemporary European cultural sphere. According to Menger (2010), the European model of cultural policy is closely linked to the welfare state tradition, which it remains a key part of, alongside educational, social, and health policies. From this perspective, public cultural initiatives are integral to the institutional framework that has supported the region's traditional welfare functions over recent decades.

A salient fact is that cultural policy has gradually become a recognized research field, although it still faces internal tensions and debates about its disciplinary identity. Belfiore (2016) underscores that this field is propelled by a dichotomy between research endeavors that prioritize intellectual and methodological rigor and those that are oriented towards defending and legitimizing public policies. Concurrently, the academic and governmental interest in cultural and creative industries has led to an expansion of their conceptual and disciplinary boundaries, resulting in numerous studies in areas such as cultural geography, media studies, sociology, cultural management, and economics (Hesmondhalgh & Pratt, 2005). According to Scullion and García (2005), this expansion has been accompanied by the formation of research communities and forums, as evidenced by the development of the *International Conference on Cultural Policy Research,* which has reflected the area's international growth and thematic diversification since 1999. However, Scullion and García (2005) caution that, as a relatively new field that continually adapts to various institutional and social demands, there is a risk of fragmentation and loss of cohesion among researchers. Nevertheless, the accumulation of debates, methodologies, and empirical studies demonstrates that cultural policy is becoming a more established and interconnected academic discipline.

Consequently, numerous researchers have investigated the scientific production in this domain by employing bibliometric methodologies. However, a review of the extant literature reveals the presence of bibliometric studies that focus on cultural topics, including the intersection of arts and cultural consumption (Cuadrado-García & Montoro-Pons, 2025), the relationship between culture and innovation (Sica *et al.,* 2025), and cultural evolution (Youngblood & Lahti, 2018), among others. The majority of bibliometric studies focus on cultural heritage (Harisanty *et al.,* 2024; Prados-Peña *et al.,* 2025; Tang *et al.,* 2024), yet there is a paucity of research addressing cultural policy. Therefore, the objective of this study is to characterize the EU's scientific production in cultural policy through bibliometric analysis. By examining collaboration patterns among authors, institutions, and countries, and by analyzing the thematic structure based on the co-occurrence of concepts, the study provides an overview of how this academic field is organized within the

European context. This approach facilitates comprehension of the social and intellectual dynamics that are shaping the development of this field in the EU.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive bibliometric approach to analyze the scientific production on cultural policy produced by researchers affiliated with institutions in the EU. Four complementary sets of indicators are utilized: co-authorship analysis, country collaboration, institutional collaboration, and concept co-occurrence. Collectively, these indicators illuminate the socio-intellectual structure and thematic organization of research on cultural policy within the European context.

2.1. Data source and search strategy

The data were retrieved from the OpenAlex database, which was selected for its extensive multidisciplinary coverage and open, structured metadata. The search was performed in the title field using the terms "cultural policy" and "cultural policies," in both singular and plural forms, connected by the Boolean operator OR. The search was constrained to records classified as articles or reviews and within the period 1990-2024. It is important to note that no language filters were applied during the retrieval process. Given the study's emphasis on the scientific production of the EU, a records maintenance protocol was implemented to identify studies in which at least one author was affiliated with an institution located in a country that has been or is currently an EU member during the specified analysis period. This criterion encompasses both current member states and those that have previously withdrawn from the Union, irrespective of their respective dates of accession or exit. Following the application of these filters and the removal of duplicates and incomplete records, the final dataset comprised 1,148 documents, constituting the study's sample.

2.2. Variables and data processing

For each of the 1,148 records, the following variables were extracted from OpenAlex: full names of all authors, all author affiliations, countries of all authors, and the set of "concepts" assigned by the database. These concepts were treated as equivalent to author keywords for the analysis. These variables underwent systematic cleaning and normalization to reduce ambiguity and enhance consistency in the calculation of bibliometric indicators. The normalization of author names entailed the standardization of spelling variants and the resolution of exact duplicates. The consolidation of affiliation names aimed to unify various forms of the same institution, encompassing abbreviations, linguistic variants, and organizational subunits. The nomenclature of the countries was standardized according to their current official English names. The OpenAlex "concepts" were examined to remove minor variants and obvious redundancies, ensuring that semantically similar terms were handled consistently across the dataset. This preprocessing was essential to ensure accurate counts for authors, institutions, countries, and concepts, and to prevent artificial splitting of entities in the network maps.

2.3. Bibliometric indicators and network construction

Four types of bibliometric indicators were computed, each corresponding to a different network structure.

1. *Co-authorship analysis (authors):* A network of collaboration was established among individual authors to identify the predominant socio-intellectual clusters within the field and the most prominent researchers in EU-linked cultural policy production.
2. *Country collaboration analysis:* A country-by-country collaboration network was established, with its foundation being the countries of author affiliations. Each document in the network established links between all the countries represented among its authors. This network was utilized to examine patterns of intra-European collaboration and the connections between EU countries and other regions worldwide.
3. *Institutional collaboration analysis:* The generation of collaboration networks between institutions was accomplished

through the utilization of normalized af-filiation data. These networks reveal part-nerships among universities and research organizations, enabling the identification of the most active institutional hubs and re-gional groupings.

4. *Co-occurrence of concepts:* The utilization of OpenAlex "concepts" as a proxy for key-words facilitated the construction of a co-oc-currence network, which was employed to discern the predominant thematic clusters within the corpus and the interrelationships among core concepts pertinent to cultural policy research in the EU.

It is imperative to note that all networks were generated with the default counting options in VOSviewer, which was also used to visualize the maps.

2.4. Thresholds and visualization parameters

The network visualization was generated using VOSviewer with the software's default layout, clustering, and normalization settings. To en-hance the robustness and clarity of the maps, minimum-frequency thresholds were imple-mented to incorporate nodes in each network. For the purposes of co-authorship (authors), institutional collaboration (affiliations), and concept co-occurrence, a minimum thresh-old of two occurrences was employed. Conse-quently, the inclusion of authors, institutions, or concepts in the respective maps was contin-gent upon their appearance in a minimum of two documents. For the collaboration network of countries, a more inclusive threshold of one occurrence was applied to capture the full range of international connections between EU and non-EU countries. For each network, VOSviewer generated clusters based on the strength of links between nodes. Link strength was gauged by the number of co-occurrences (for concepts) or co-authored documents (for authors, institutions, and countries) between pairs of nodes. The resulting maps were then subjected to thorough analysis. This analy-sis included an examination of the clusters that were formed, as well as the density and strength of the links and the relative centrality of the nodes.

2.5. Analytical approach

The analysis encompassed both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. Quantitatively, the networks were described by the number of nodes, the distribution of links and link strength, and the identification of the most prominent authors, institutions, countries, and concepts within EU-related cultural policy re-search. The interpretation of each map was con-ducted on the basis of its cluster structure, with the objective of analyzing the manner in which groups of authors, institutions, countries, and concepts coalesce to generate socio-intellectu-al and thematic patterns. The objective of this qualitative analysis was to describe the main collaboration patterns and thematic nodes identified by the maps, with particular atten-tion to the role of EU-affiliated actors in shap-ing research on cultural policy. The objective of this dual approach was not to test hypotheses but rather to provide a structured overview of the field, situating EU research within its broader collaborative and thematic landscape.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Analysis of collaboration between countries

The collaboration network among countries demonstrates that several EU nations main-tain a high number of connections with oth-ers (Figure 1). The United Kingdom boasts the most connections in the network, with 39 di-rect links and a total link strength (TLS) of 124. This positions it as the nation with the most robust collaborative presence across the entire network (Table 1). Spain, with 28 links and a TLS of 39, also serves as a key node. France demonstrates a notable degree of collaborative engagement, evidenced by its 29 links and a TLS of 55. Germany exhibits a similar pattern, with 24 links and a TLS of 43. Sweden has 16 links and a TLS of 29, while Italy has 22 links and a TLS of 43. It is noteworthy that other EU countries have a substantial presence as well. The Netherlands has 24 links with a TLS of 51, followed by Belgium, which has 14 links and a TLS of 28. Finland contributes 14 links and a TLS of 22, and Austria has 10 links, with 13 being TLS. Poland is distinguished as a pivotal

node on the map, with 11 links and a TLS of 17, while Ireland has 10 links and a TLS of 15. Portugal has 6 links and a TLS of 10, and Slovenia also exhibits notable activity with 8 links and a TLS of 8. Member states with a smaller presence, but still part of the network, include Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Romania, Slovakia, Luxembourg, and Malta, with links ranging from 1 to 8.
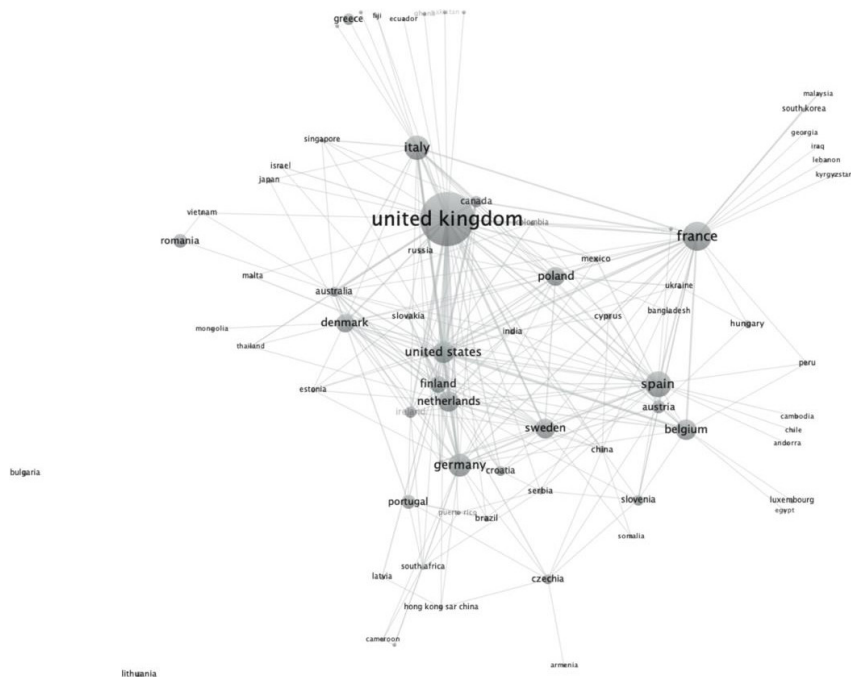
With respect to the collaborative endeavors among EU countries and their global partners, the network exhibits particularly robust connections with the United States, evidenced by 28 links and an TLS of 102. This indicates that the United States stands as one of the most prevalent external partners for the network. Australia has a significant number of connections, with 17 links and a TLS of 30. Canada is a close second, with 10 links and a TLS of 28. Switzerland and Norway are also noteworthy in this regard. Switzerland has 16 links and a TLS of 28, while Norway has 8 links and a TLS of 10, despite not being a member of the EU. Moreover, Japan has 3 links and a TLS of 3, while South Korea has 2 links and a TLS of 4, thereby underscoring the involvement of Asian countries. With regard to Latin America, collaborative efforts have been undertaken with Brazil (4 links and 6 TLS), Colombia (6 links and 7 TLS), and Mexico (6 links and 10 TLS). Chile has one direct collaboration link, and Argentina has two. Other Latin American countries, including Ecuador, Peru, and Puerto Rico, have more specific links, which are sometimes limited to just one. Among Asian countries, China has 10 links and an TLS of 11, while India has 9 links and 11 TLS. Countries exhibiting lower levels of participation, such as Iran, Vietnam, Israel, and Bangladesh, have demonstrated a pattern of isolated connections, typically characterized by a maximum of one or two links. In Eastern European and Balkan countries, collaboration varies. Bulgaria, Serbia, Ukraine, and Russia have established connections with several European nations, though to a lesser extent. Romania has 2 links and a TLS of 2, while Slovakia has 7 links and a TLS of 7. Countries such as Croatia, Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia display more specific collaborations, usually with 1-3 links.

The network also reveals that there are several significant connections among the EU countries themselves. Spain has established international connections with the Netherlands, France, Germany, Italy, and Sweden, with a frequency range of 5-9. France also maintains close ties with Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands, indicating a pattern of frequent co-authorship within Europe. Germany has established robust collaborative relationships with France, the United Kingdom, Italy, and the Netherlands. The Netherlands has notable connections, especially with the United Kingdom and the United States, which have the highest frequencies in the group. The map also illustrates the collaborative efforts among northern European countries: Sweden, Finland, Denmark, and Norway share links, with some links having weights reaching 5. Notable connections also exist between non-EU countries, especially the collaboration between the United States and Australia, as well as between the United States and several Latin American nations. However, these connections are less prevalent than those observed in networks centered on the EU.

Country	Links	TLS	Documents	Citations
United Kingdom	39	124	392	10,110
United States	28	102	64	1,047
France	29	55	111	882
Germany	24	43	73	660
Spain	28	39	91	1,144
Netherlands	24	51	59	1,242
Italy	22	43	83	1,193
Sweden	16	29	53	1,114
Belgium	14	28	59	743
Finland	14	22	38	783
Austria	10	13	24	104
Ireland	10	15	19	269
Poland	11	17	51	260
Portugal	6	10	25	306
Slovenia	8	8	17	166
Denmark	19	30	47	704
Switzerland	16	28	9	130
Norway	8	10	3	146
Australia	17	30	15	479
Canada	10	28	19	162
China	10	11	7	51
Japan	3	3	3	52
Brazil	4	6	6	65
Mexico	6	10	5	23

Table 1. Leading collaborating countries in terms of links, TLS, scientific production, and citations.

Figure 1. Country collaboration map.

3.2. Analysis of institutional collaboration

The institutional network is predominantly centered around European institutions, particularly universities in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium, Scandinavia, and Italy (Figure 2). Notable institutions with the most collaborations include the University of Leeds, with 33 links and 40 TLS, and Royal Holloway University of London, which has 28 links and 36 TLS (Table 2). The University of Manchester is also noteworthy, with 23 links and 28 TLS, followed by Newcastle University, with 21 links and 31 TLS. It is noteworthy that numerous other British institutions also maintain extensive connections, as evidenced by the 21 links and 32 TLS associated with University College London and the 11 links and 11 TLS linked to the University of York. Additionally, non-British European institutions maintain a substantial presence within the network. The University of Amsterdam has 3 links and 3 TLS, while KU Leuven has 3 links and 3 TLS. The University of Montpellier has 6 links and 15 TLS, while the University of Barcelona has 11 links and 13 TLS. In Italy, the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore and the University of Naples Federico II maintain more modest yet representative connections within the institutional network. In the Nordic

countries, the University of Helsinki has 3 links and 3 TLS, Linköping University has 1 link and 1 TLS, and Uppsala University has 3 links and 4 TLS. With regard to institutional locations outside the EU, North American institutions are also part of the network, though less densely than the European one. Harvard University has 6 links and 6 TLS, while George Mason University has 9 links and 9 TLS. The University of British Columbia has 10 links and 11 TLS, while the Ohio State University has 2 links and 3 TLS. A list of additional US institutions includes the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of South Florida, each with 3 links. A similar situation is observed with the National University of Singapore, which possesses 2 links and 3 TLS, thus positioning it as one of the most notable Asian nodes within the network.

A thorough analysis of the bilateral connections reveals that certain institutions have established particularly robust ties with specific partners. The University of Leeds has established numerous collaborative relationships with prominent institutions such as the University of Birmingham, the University of Bristol, the University of Oxford, the University of Glasgow, and the University of Manchester. These partnerships are reflected in the frequency values ranging from 1 to 4 per link. The Royal Holloway

University of London has notable collaborative relationships with institutions such as Newcastle University, Middlesex University, and the University of Kent, among others. Newcastle University has established significant collaborative relationships with numerous prestigious institutions, including the University of Bristol, the University of Glasgow, the University of Exeter, the University of Southampton, and University College London. The University of Manchester has established collaborative relationships with several prominent institutions, including Keele University, the University of Birmingham, the University of Bristol, the University of Southampton, and Durham University. Similarly, University College London has established collaborative relationships with numerous prestigious academic institutions, including the University of Glasgow, the University of Bristol, the University of Birmingham, and the University of Kent. The network also places emphasis on the connections between the Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier and various French institutions, as well as its relationships with other European organizations. Furthermore, the observed collaboration patterns suggest the presence of regional groupings. Scottish universit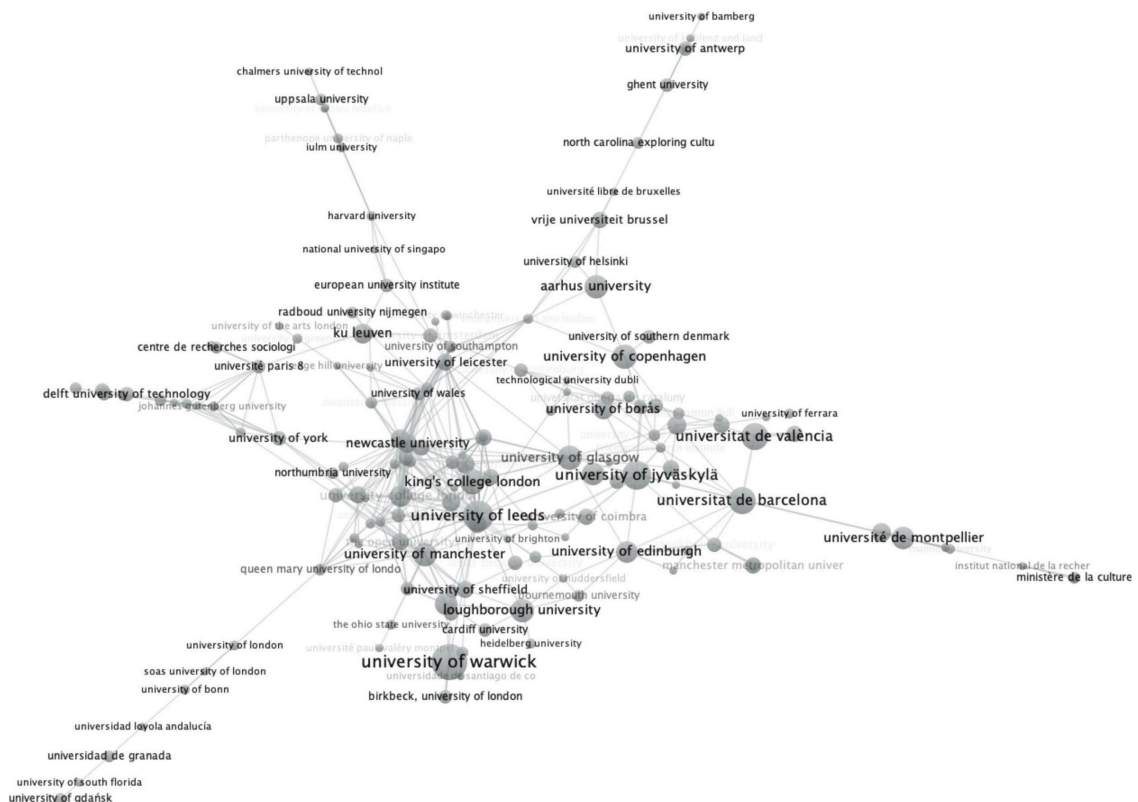ies, including the University of Glasgow and the University of Edinburgh, have numerous connections with each other and with English institutions, with frequencies that are particularly pronounced in the network. In Spain, prominent universities such as the University of Barcelona, the University of Valencia, and the Open University of Catalonia exhibit both internal and external collaborations, with values ranging from 3 to 7 links. In the Netherlands, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and Utrecht University also maintain frequent links with European institutions nearby, especially those in the United Kingdom.

Interinstitutional collaboration beyond the European region is comparatively constrained, though notable connections have been established with North American and Asian universities. The participation of Harvard University, the University of British Columbia, and the University of Melbourne demonstrates intermittent connections, while frequent collaborations are observed with the University of Glasgow, the University of Bristol, the University of Birmingham, and the University of Melbourne in numerous instances. In the Asian context, the National University of Singapore is designated as an external collaboration node, in conjunction with select Japanese institutions, albeit with reduced frequency.

Institution	Country	Links	TLS	Documents	Citations
University of Leeds	United Kingdom	33	40	72	1,243
Royal Holloway University of London	United Kingdom	28	36	41	1,011
University of Manchester	United Kingdom	23	28	58	1,514
University College London	United Kingdom	21	32	49	1,339
Newcastle University	United Kingdom	21	31	37	955
University of Montpellier/Paul-Valéry Montpellier	France	6	15	22	440
University of Barcelona	Spain	11	13	34	1,104
University of Glasgow	United Kingdom	18	22	45	1,278
KU Leuven	Belgium	3	3	21	389
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam	Netherlands	5	7	26	510
Uppsala University	Sweden	3	4	19	332
University of Helsinki	Finland	3	3	16	287
Harvard University	United States	6	6	17	620
George Mason University	United States	9	9	21	410
University of British Columbia	Canada	10	11	19	162
National University of Singapore	Singapore	2	3	12	201
University of Melbourne	Australia	4	5	14	254
Universitat de València	Spain	7	8	17	460
University of Naples Federico II	Italy	4	6	13	292

Table 2. Leading collaborating institutions in terms of links, TLS, scientific production, and citations.

Figure 2. Institutional collaboration map.

3.3. Co-authorship analysis

With respect to the co-authorship network, it is evident that the most cohesive group in the network is composed of Joaquim Rius-Ull-demolins, Juan Arturo Rubio Aróstegui, Alejandro Pizzi, Gil-Manuel Hernández i Martí, Pau Díaz-Solano, Ricardo Klein, and Mariano Martín Zamorano (Figure 3 and Table 3). This cluster is centered around Rius-Ulldemolins, the only author with connections to all other members. The collaborative efforts within this group are centered on the following areas of study: comparative cultural policies, European models of cultural governance, cultural participation, the political instrumentalization of culture, and urban transformations linked to cultural planning. Their collaborative research endeavors encompass a range of subjects, including analyses of European cultural model convergence, cultural governance in the aftermath of the economic crisis, urban reconfiguration processes in Barcelona and Valencia, the influence of political power on cultural institutions, the impact of populism

on Spanish cultural policies, and comparative studies of European cultural institutions. A secondary major network encompasses David Hesmondhalgh, David Lee, Kate Oakley, Melissa Nisbett, and Dave O'Brien, with Kate Oakley functioning as the central node, connecting the remaining authors. Their collaborative research has focused on the analysis of British and European cultural policies, with a particular emphasis on the neoliberal shift under New Labour, the strategic use of the concept of public value, the relationship between welfare and culture, and the assessment of cultural value within institutional settings. Additionally, they have engaged in collaborative research, examining various dimensions of cultural policies during the COVID-19 pandemic. This research has involved the examination of how government responses have influenced the cultural sector across a range of European countries. This group constitutes a thematic core that is centered on recent changes in cultural policy and their influence on creative industries and cultural institutions.

Another pivotal network revolves around Anita Kangas, who maintains connections with numerous authors and functions as a coordination nexus within this domain. Kangas's artistic oeuvre is characterized by ongoing collaborations with prominent figures in the field, including Christiaan De Beukelaer, Geir Vestheim, and Nancy Duxbury. In addition to these collaborative relationships, Kangas maintains a network of professional connections with other notable figures in the field, such as Dorte Skot-Hansen, Jenny Johannisson, Pertti Alasuutari, Roger Blomgren, and Vappu Renko. The thematic focus of this group centers on cultural democracy, Nordic cultural policies, citizen participation in culture, local development, and cultural governance. In addition, the group engages in debates concerning the role of the public sector and institutional models of culture in Finland, Sweden, and Norway. This group constitutes a core that represents the primary Scandinavian network on the map. A thorough analysis of the network reveals a distinct cluster centered around Mariano Martín Zamorano, who is directly linked to Arturo Rodríguez Morató, Joaquim Rius-Ulldemolins, Lluís Bonet, and Élodie Bordat-Chauvin. This cluster forms a clear subgroup within the global co-authorship network. The publications associated with this core focus on subjects such as cultural policies in illiberal democracies, cultural governance and nationalism, cultural policies in Ibero-America, institutional legitimation following the 2008 crisis, feminist activism in authoritarian contexts, and African soft power. The diverse themes within this group, along with the frequent collaborations, position Zamorano as a key figure in the comparative analysis of current trends in cultural policy.

No.	Author	Doc.	Author	TLS	Author	Cit.
1	Joaquim Rius-Ulldemolins	19	Joaquim Rius-Ulldemolins	17	Eleonora Belfiore	1,171
2	Emmanuel Négrier	12	Amy A. Eyler	16	Hans Mommaas	624
3	Eleonora Belfiore	10	Bonnie Sanderson	16	David Hesmondhalgh	591
4	Antonios Vlassis	9	Deborah Rohm Young	16	Clive Gray	487
5	Dave O'brien	9	Dyann Matson-Koffman	16	Beatriz García	466
6	Jeremy Ahearne	8	Janice L. Thompson	16	Anita Kangas	416
7	Thomas Perrin	8	Joellen Wilbur	16	Оливер Беннетт	312
8	Anita Kangas	7	Joshua R. Vest	16	Joaquim Rius-Ulldemolins	273
9	Clive Gray	7	Kelly R. Evenson	16	Lluís Bonet	264
10	Juan Arturo Rubio Aróstegui	7	Sara Wilcox	16	Jeremy Ahearne	257
11	Marco Martiniello	7	Kate Oakley	13	Amy A. Eyler	256
12	Mariano Martín Zamorano	7	Anita Kangas	11	Bonnie Sanderson	256
13	Kate Oakley	6	David Lee	9	Deborah Rohm Young	256
14	Katia Segers	6	Juan Arturo Rubio Aróstegui	8	Dyann Matson-Koffman	256
15	Lluís Bonet	6	Katia Segers	8	Janice L. Thompson	256
16	Steven Hadley	6	Aleksandra Uzelac	8	Joellen Wilbur	256
17	Davide Ponzini	5	Jaka Primorac	8	Joshua R. Vest	256
18	Justin O'connor	5	David Hesmondhalgh	6	Kelly R. Evenson	256
19	Olga Kolokytha	5	Christine Van Den Buys	6	Sara Wilcox	256
20	Simone Wesner	5	Ekain Muñoz Oñatibia	6	Christiaan De Beukelaer	237

Table 3. Leading authors in terms of scientific production, TLS, and citations.

3.4. Conceptual co-occurrence analysis

The co-occurrence map is a visual representation of the main ideas related to the topic under study (Figure 4 and Table 4). It displays a set of clearly separated clusters that organize these ideas. The initial cluster encompasses terms from scientific and technical domains, including biology (147), archaeology (212), ecology (82), and cultural heritage (131). These concepts are linked to applied areas such as civil engineering (36), digitization (5), computer security (17), and cultural heritage management (38), forming a diverse group that remains cohesive because of thematic connections between the natural sciences, engineering, and
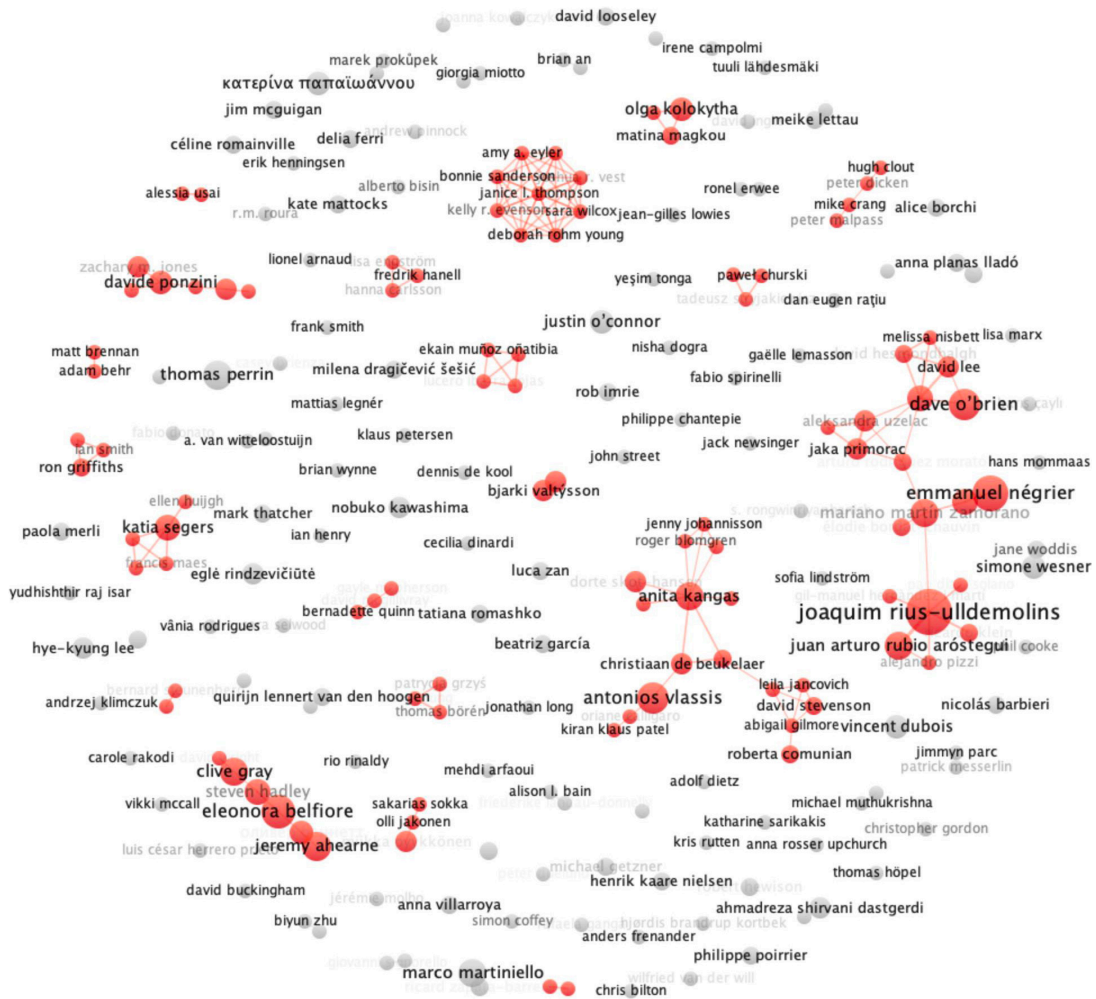
Figure 3. Co-authorship map.

heritage management. The second cluster encompasses concepts related to the arts, humanities, and cultural studies. The group's composition primarily consists of art (179), aesthetics (94), and art history (37), which exhibit a high degree of interconnectedness and are associated with other terms pertaining to artistic practices and discourses, including architecture (10), advertising (24), cultural politics (9), censorship (5), and dance (6). The subject matter of this text also encompasses connections to historical areas, including ancient history (15) and the cultural revolution (6), thereby expanding the range of topics within this cluster.

The third cluster encompasses concepts that are characteristic of the social sciences, particularly those associated with political theory, social philosophy, and economic systems. The most frequently encountered terms include democracy (74), economic system (51), algorithm (74), democratization (18), autonomy (13), diplomacy (11), and authoritarianism (9). These connections form a network that integrates political, economic, and philosophical elements, along with more technical terms such as argument (15), which appear due to their cross-disciplinary relevance in the corpus. The fourth cluster centers on concepts related to cultural industries, creativity, and territorial development. The structure of the text is organized around three overarching themes: creative industries (34), creativity (30), and creative cities (7). These themes are accompanied by related concepts, including cultural capital (26) and cultural economics (6), which are connected to the broader concept of the economy of culture. Concurrently, connections with territory and tourism emerge, represented by cultural

landscape (10) and cultural tourism (11), forming a cohesive thematic group focused on modern studies of cultural production.

The fifth cluster is indicative of the core, which is most closely connected to cultural studies and cultural policy. The term "cultural policy," which appears 410 times, is the most prominent on the map. It encompasses a group including cultural identity (36), cultural studies (16), cultural rights (12), communication (13), and consumption (16). The group under discussion also features analytical concepts such as affect (8) and ambivalence (5), which link the group to discursive and sociocultural studies. This cluster exhibits a high concentration of terms directly related to cultural and communicative themes in literature. The sixth cluster encompasses concepts related to cultural diversity, multiculturalism, and social cohesion. Key terms include cultural diversity (74), diversity (62), community cohesion (6), and civil society (6). Specific nationalities such as Danish (6) and Czech (6) are mentioned in certain studies. This group's work demonstrates a pronounced emphasis on the subjects of diversity and social structure. The seventh cluster encompasses subjects related to media, technology, and data analysis, including citizen journalism (19), data science (8), demography (27), development economics (25), arts (104), and anthropology (108). The correlation between these concepts is illustrated by the relationship between communication practices, quantitative methods, and sociocultural fields, which form a broad and interconnected cluster on the map.

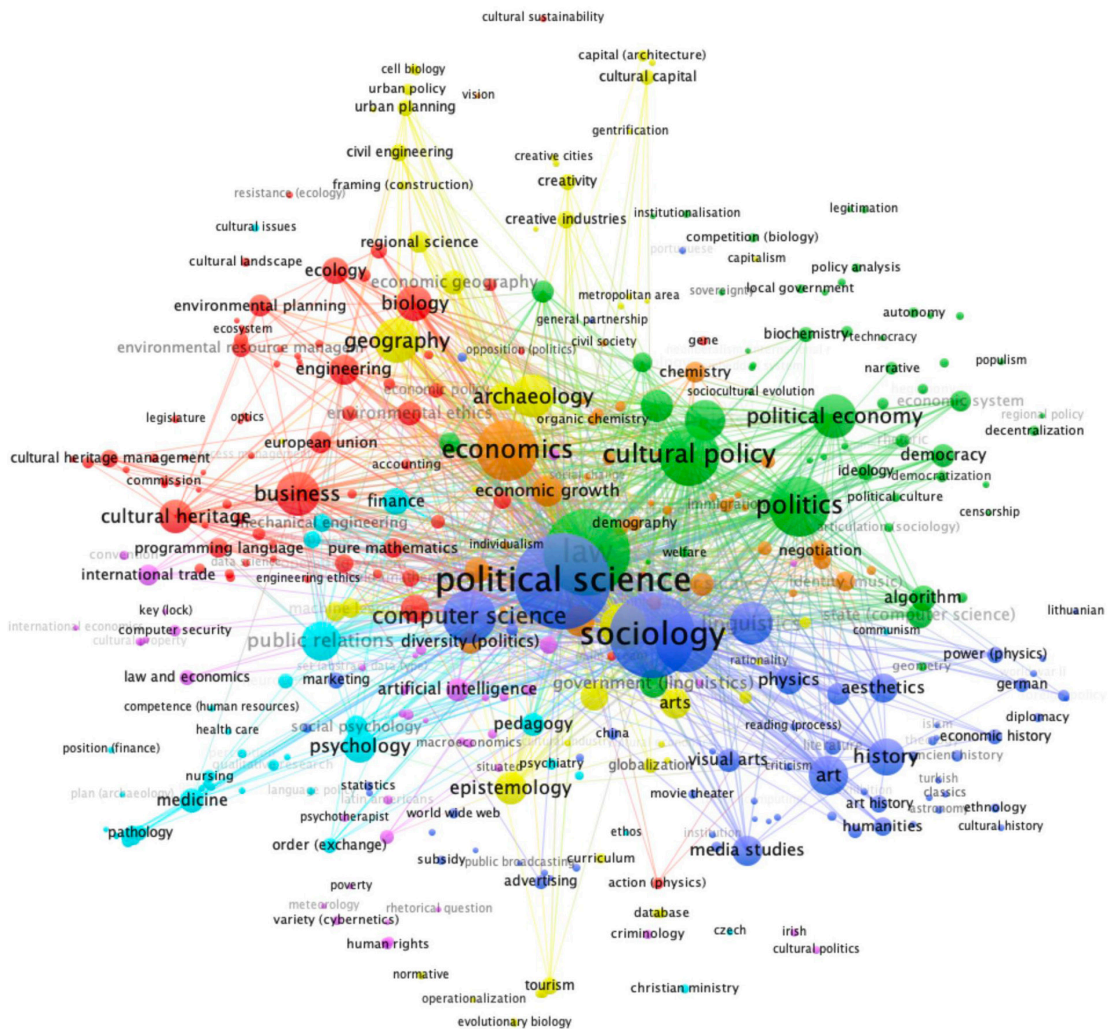| Cluster	Main concepts (with occurrences)	Number of concepts
1. Sciences, engineering, and heritage	archaeology (212), biology (147), ecology (82), geography (229), cultural heritage (131), cultural heritage management (38), civil engineering (36), digitization (5), computer security (17)	42
2. Arts, humanities, and aesthetics	art (179), aesthetics (94), art history (37), architecture (10), cultural politics (9), advertising (24), censorship (5), ancient history (15), cultural revolution (6), dance (6)	39
3. Social sciences, politics, and philosophy	democracy (64), economic system (51), politics (414), philosophy (393), algorithm (74), autonomy (13), diplomacy (11), authoritarianism (9), democratization (18)	41
4. Creative industries and cultural economy	creative industries (34), creativity (30), creative cities (7), cultural capital (26), cultural economics (6), cultural landscape (10), cultural tourism (11), tourism (35)	27
5. Cultural policy, identity, and cultural studies	cultural policy (410), cultural identity (36), cultural studies (16), cultural rights (12), communication (13), consumption (16), cultural issues (8), affect (8), ambivalence (5)	33
6. Cultural diversity, community, and civil society	cultural diversity (74), diversity (62), multiculturalism (22), ethnic group (23), civil society (6), community cohesion (6), nationalism (14)	29
7. Media, technology, and data analysis	citizen journalism (19), media studies (102), anthropology (108), data science (8), demography (27), development economics (25), computer science (328)	37

Table 4. Main concepts by thematic cluster and number of concepts.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The results of this study reveal that European research in cultural policy exists within an unequal and highly concentrated system, where a small number of countries, institutions, and groups of authors hold significant structural influence. This concentration is indicative of disparities in scientific capacity and the ongoing impact of historical national agendas that continue to shape knowledge production across Europe. The United Kingdom, Germany, France, Spain, and the Netherlands function as epistemic hubs, establishing the primary research directions, interpretive frameworks, and methodological approaches in the field. Consequently, the European landscape of cultural policy research largely mirrors broader structural inequalities related to research funding, academic traditions, and institutional stability. The analysis of co-authorship networks reveals that the development of the field is not

Figure 4. Concepts co-occurrence map.

solely attributable to individual efforts but is also influenced by the presence of well-established intellectual communities. Clusters led by authors such as Joaquim Rius-Ulldemolins or Kate Oakley represent more than mere groups of ongoing collaboration; they also embody recognizable epistemological traditions. In one case, a critical and comparative analysis of European cultural policies viewed through the lens of governance and instrumentalization is presented; in the other, a British approach that has questioned the effects of neoliberalism, the creative industry, and recent changes in the cultural sector is discussed. The presence of these stable nodes indicates that cultural policy in Europe is organized around communities functioning as interpretive "schools." This organizational structure helps solidify the field

but may also restrict the development of alternative approaches.

The thematic structure, in turn, reveals a pluralistic field, though not necessarily a cohesive one. Despite the presence of a common core vocabulary —policy, governance, identity, heritage— the interconnections among thematic clusters suggest an expanding field rather than a unified one. The coexistence of well-established research lines with emerging ones suggests that cultural policy functions as an interdisciplinary space that incorporates themes and issues from various disciplines, thereby enriching the field while concomitantly complicating the establishment of a shared conceptual framework. A fundamental aspect of this dynamic is the endurance of established geopolitical patterns. Countries that possess a robust

institutional foundation in the domain of cultural research have a tendency to occupy pivotal roles. Conversely, those that have recently acceded to the EU or allocate less funding to scientific research remain on the periphery. This distribution is indicative of historical tensions in the development of European cultural identities and prompts inquiries into the EU's capacity to cultivate a more balanced knowledge ecosystem. Indeed, the United Kingdom's pivotal position, even in the aftermath of Brexit, underscores the preeminence of scientific production over formal political structures, guided by long-term academic trajectories. These findings bear implications for the conceptualization of cultural policy as an academic discipline. The existence of stable communities, recurring thematic clusters, and institutional concentration suggests a process of consolidation, while also exposing limits to the geographical and epistemological diversity within the area. It is imperative that future research explore the temporal development of these networks to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of how critical events have contributed to the reshaping of collaborative dynamics and themes. Moreover, comparative studies between European regions or between Europe and other regions of the world would facilitate the evaluation of whether European cultural policy constitutes a unique field or is part of a broader global trend.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

Contribution statement

Conceptualization, investigation, supervision, validation: Temirlan Makhmetov.

Data curation, formal analysis, software, visualization: Asima Nuraly.

Methodology, writing – original draft: Sanat Kushkumbayev, Asima Nuraly.

Writing – review & editing: Temirlan Makhmetov, Asima Nuraly.

Statement of data consent

The data generated during this study have been included in the manuscript.

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