Chapter x *Buen Vivir as an innovative development model (PCSI BOOK)*

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"There is nothing better than imagining other worlds to forget how painful is the world in which we live. At least I thought so then. I had not yet understood that, imagining other worlds, we eventually ending up changing this one."

Umberto Eco

Introduction

This chapter examines the development of Indigenous Community Organisations (ICOs) in Colombia. These ICOs may be seen as a social innovation supporting a process of social change which addresses the needs of marginalized indigenous communities. It links with the 'People Centered Social Innovation: perspectives by critically examining 'northern' understandings of development with Buen Vivir - a community-centric, ecologically-balanced and culturally-sensitive development model which challenges the 'dominant' market-based model of capitalism that has been adopted by Latin American countries post-colonialism.

More specifically, this chapter examines the experiences of the transformation of indigenous peoples' organised groups (IOGs) into indigenous community based organisations (ICOs) within the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE), and linked to the Buen Vivir (BV) development model in Colombia. Although there is not yet a Colombian development model that embodies key tenets of the BV model, Morales (forthcoming) has achieved a conceptual clarification of BV, on which this chapter is based.

Findings from the multiple case study showed that ICOs are transformed through a hybridisation process, influenced by their indigenous cultural practices, and shaped by SSE institutions and norms, which both provide some institutional protection, but at the same time can be a vehicle for legitimising dominant western forms (mimicry).

By drawing upon insights from post-development (Buen Vivir) and postcolonial theories (Bhabha's mimicry and hybridity), this chapter draws upon a multi-level model for

understanding the development of ICOs in Colombia – where IOGs at the micro-level formalise into ICOs in the context of SSE structures and values at the meso-level, shaped by BV at the macro level.

This research draws upon evidence from a multiple case study research with five organisations and five indigenous communities (Curripaco, Puinave, Yanacona, Misak and Wayuu) in three geographic regions (the Amazons, Cauca and Guajira). The methods of data collection used are secondary data sources, video focus groups and semi-structured interviews, observations and field notes.

Introducing Buen Vivir

Buen Vivir, translatable as *Living Well* or *Good Living,* is considered in its purest sense as an ancestral-spiritual phenomenon inspired by indigenous peoples' philosophy (Cubillo-Guevara et al., 2014; Hidalgo-Capitán and Cubillo-Guevara, 2017, 2016). BV is the Spanish translation of *Sumak Kawsay or Suma Qamaña*, an ancestral philosophy exercised by the *Quechuas and Aymaras* (indigenous peoples located in the Andes) since pre-Columbian times, which means a spiritual harmony and balance between *nature* and *community* (Albó, 2009; Guandinango Vinueza, 2013; Huanacuni, 2010; Pilataxi Lechón, 2014; Simbaña, 2012). The *cosmovision* of what *community* is and how it is perceived for the Andean indigenous people rests on the fact that *society* is horizontally bound with *nature*. Thus, for them, *nature*, in the broader sense, is considered an inseparable interconnection between every being: men, women and nature that are part of *Pachamama* (Mother Earth) and *Cosmos* (Father Earth). Hence *community* has an added spiritual dimension, as there is a communion and dialogue based on a common rituality that claims *nature* as a sacred being (Acosta, 2013; Albó, 2009; Huanacuni, 2010; Prada Alcoreza, 2012; Simbaña, 2012).

BV comprises a collective approach to wellbeing that engenders principles of reciprocity, solidarity and complementarity, and promotes collective rights and a localised, community-based model of production (Gudynas, 2011). With this in mind, *BV* is, in effect,

the institutional, socio-economic and political appropriation of the *Sumak Kawsay* or *Suma Qamaña*. It is an on-going project to build a different society sustained by the coexistence of human beings in their diversity and in harmony with oneself (identity), society (equity) and nature (sustainability), and influenced by the diverse cultural values existing in each country and worldwide (Acosta, 2013; Gudynas, 2011).

Although there is no explicit evidence of the existence of values and pillars in the current literature, Morales (forthcoming) identifies the BV values and pillars based on an extensive and in-depth review of more than three hundred bibliographical references of the BV's literature - based on the work of Cubillo-Guevara et al (2014); Hidalgo-Capitán and Cubillo-Guevara (2015; 2017) and Vanhulst (2015). Three values: (i)*community*; (ii) *solidarity and reciprocity*; and (iii) *harmony and complementarity*; and six pillars:(i) *Rights of Nature*; (ii) *community wellbeing*; (iii) *decolonisation*; (iv) *plurinational state*; (v) *economic pluralism*; and (vi) *democratisation* were identified. And Ecuador and Bolivia are used to depict BV implementation in policy. This helps establish a sound basis for the study of BV in Colombia.

BV has been conceptualised in the work of Cubillo-Guevara et al., (2014); Hidalgo-Capitán and Cubillo-Guevara, (2015, 2017, 2016) with three traditions: (I) the indigenist approach, (II) the socialist/statist approach and (III) the ecologist/developmentalist approach.

First, in the *indigenist* approach, the ancient indigenous thought is the core of the BV, particularly the thought of the Andean indigenous people. This tradition prioritises indigenous identity and aims for a more plural and inclusive society in which indigenous people legalise self-determination in their territories and propose a transformation from nation-state to plurinational state (i.e., Dávalos, 2011; Huanacuni, 2010; Pilataxi Lechón, 2014; Simbaña, 2012).

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Second, in the *socialist/statist* approach, societal equity is prioritised and is strongly influenced by *neo-Marxism*. This tradition is led by the intellectuals involved in the institutionalisation of BV in Ecuador and Bolivia (i.e., Coraggio, 2011, 1994; García-Linera, 2010; Ramírez-Gallegos, 2011, 2010; Santos, 2010). Through '*citizen revolution*' in Ecuador and '*democratic and cultural revolution*' in Bolivia, these intellectuals propose to implement a new development model that essentially seeks to improve equity.

Third, in the *ecologist/developmentalist approach*, development theory and praxis are strongly criticised and biocentrism is the final objective (i.e., Acosta, 2013; Escobar, 2010; Gudynas, 2011; Walsh, 2012). This BV tradition relates to the ecological and post-development thinking linked to the critique of development, and different social movements (for example, indigenous, environmentalists, feminists, workers, peasants, pacifists and/or solidarity groups) are important in defining and implementing BV. Civil society is important, through local processes of social participation, so that each community can define its own BV (Cubillo-Guevara et al., 2014).

Despite the differences amongst these approaches, BV can be seen as an alternative or a neo *development* model to reach a completely different set of societal living standards to achieve human wellbeing.

Prior to exploring and discussing the Colombian BV model, it is crucial to understand the BV's interpretations is based on the indigenous communities studied. In a broad perspective, there is a tendency to categorise indigenous people in the same group, ignoring their heterogeneity and plurality (Agrawal, 1995; Gros, 1991). The plurality of indigenous people in Colombia is rooted in factors such as culture, cosmovision (*beliefs*, *values* and *pillars*), historical contexts and geographical location amongst others (i.e., Agrawal, 1995; Gros, 2000; Ulloa, 2004). Thus, BV needs to be interpreted in relation to each studied indigenous community, as they all are very diverse. Research findings indicate that there are five interpretations of BV interlinked to each selected indigenous

community: (i) The *Misak*'s *Latá-Latá*; (ii) the *Yanacona*'s *Sumak Kawsay* (it is a post-Inca indigenous community and their language is rooted in the Quechua); (iii) the *Curripaco*'s *Noapaca Opicio*; (iv) the *Puinave*'s *Muriutún*; and the (v) the *Wayuu*'s *Anaquai.*

The following diagram provides an overview of the relevant *values* and *pillars*. The six-dimensional structure of *pillars* comprises two groups of three. The first group is influenced by their cosmovision: *protection of nature, cultural reinforcement* and *community cohesion* and the second one is driven by a series of negative actions (externalities) historically faced by indigenous communities: *territory*, *self-education* and *autonomy (self-determination)*. All of them are bound by indigenous *values* including: *respect* towards indigenous culture, *equality* for all in the indigenous community and *solidarity* and *reciprocity* as a vehicle that drives their BV. Moreover, the five BV notions, *Latá-Latá, Sumak Kawsay, Noapaca Opicio, Muriutún* and *Anaquai*, appeared to be solely-ubiquitous dimensions that influence indirectly the development of the BV space.

Diagram 7.1 The BV model in Colombia based on the Selected Indigenous Communities

Source: Morales, forthcoming

Amongst all indigenous communities, the *protection of nature* appeared to be a fundamental principle for the development of their society as is considered a spiritual entity. *Nature* in the indigenous context, is the source of life and wellbeing, its protection and conservation was fundamental to accomplish BV. *Cultural reinforcement* was claimed to be one of the backbones in the pursuit of BV. It is the process in which the community is involved in traditional and customary practices. A third pillar, *community cohesion* emphasises that indigenous communities have a common vision and a sense of belonging to their indigenous culture, and were strongly driven by the collective willingness to cooperate with each other in order to survive and prosper.

The second cluster of *pillars* was seen as externalities that either impede or slow down the path towards BV. This included dispossession of ancestral lands, the lack of autonomy to operate and manage own resources and the need of deploying ethno-education

programs to encourage the youngest indigenous generations to re-embrace their culture, aiming to strengthen indigenous identity. *Autonomy* and *territory* - community members highlighted the importance of recovering or holding their ancestral land to exercise their own power and management. Self-education was reported as an important pillar to maintain indigenous culture.

There have been a number of criticisms of the BV theory (Bretón, 2013; Caria and Domínguez, 2016; Lalander, 2016), which is regarded as rooted within different traditions and logics (Cubillo-Guevara et al., 2014; Hidalgo-Capitán and Cubillo-Guevara, 2017). BV can be seen as a polysemic concept that is evoked depending upon different positions (Vanhulst, 2015, Bretón, 2013; Caria and Domínguez, 2016).

Drawing on Cubillo-Guevara et al., (2014) and Hidalgo-Capitán and Cubillo-Guevara, (2017), the three approaches of BV discussed above also face criticisms. The *indigenist approach supporters are* described as *pachamamistas*[1] (Stefanoni, 2011, 2010).

Supporters of the *socialist/statist approach* are considered as practitioners of orthodox or GN approaches to development (Lalander, 2016; Svampa, 2012, 2011), creating a 'socialist version' of development (Acosta, 2015; Caria and Domínguez Martín, 2014; Caria and Domínguez, 2016). Finally, the supporters of the *ecologist/postdevelopmentalist approach*, are accused of lacking political pragmatism, of being trapped in a discourse of a romantic 'ecologism' (Correa, 2008, 2007).

The strongest criticisms are the ones concerning the implementation of BV (e.g. Acosta, 2015), which seen as very distant from the principles of the *Sumak Kawasay/Suma Qamaña. And* Lalander (2016) sees deep contradictions between the BV-oriented Ecuadorian 2008 constitution (SENPLADES, 2012) and the praxis of law protecting the natural resources.

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[1] Pachamamismo is referred to, generally negatively, an indigenous political discourse that only relies on the indigenous peoples' cosmovisión and considered populist as is not coherent with the reality of the society (Stefanoni, 2010).

Other criticisms are concerned with the idealisation of indigenous communities (Correa, 2008, 2007), since the indigenous world is not free of problems, conflicts and various forms of domination and asymmetries.

From Mimicry to Hybridity: The Transformation of IOGs in ICOs
Having established the *raison d'être* of the IOGs to formalise as ICOs (at *meso-level*), the following key characteristics were identified amongst the CSEs, in order to understand the ICOs within the SSE sector in Colombia. Drawing on Bhabha's *mimicry* and *hybridity* (1984) and bringing some insights from *institutional theory* (mainly institutional isomorphisim of DiMaggio and Powell, 2000) , the evidence suggested that the ICOs (i.e., a *hybrid* form) result from creative *resistance* and/or *negotiation* of the two worlds (the *indigenous* and the *western*), in which the IOGs emulate (*adopt* and *adapt*) external variables (i.e. the *SSE norms* and/or *other variables*) within the process of *mimicry* in order to be formalised. The following subsections will discuss the transformation of the IOGs (at informal level) into ICOs (at formal level) by looking at the process of *mimicry* through analysis of local and external variables that led to the current hybrid forms (ICOs). Four themes were identified in the *hybridisation* process: (i) *Legal Status, Ownership and Organisational Structure*, (ii) *Production of Goods and Services*, (iii) *Decision-making* and (iv) *Organisational Strategies*.

Legal Status, Ownership and Organisational Structure

The ICO constitution is best understood as an interweaving of three institutional elements, *legal status*, *ownership* and *organisational structure* which all jointly shaped the IOGs as they formalised. The *hybridisation* process of the organisational constitution is based on a process of *mimicry* in which IOGs, comply with external norms (the SSE norms) influenced by western dominant discourses in order to secure an official and formal status (i.e., *mimetic isomorphism*). SSE norms established as guidelines for organisational behaviour generate isomorphic organisations. IOGs do not need official

registration in resguardo [2]- local groups gather spontaneously and collaborate voluntarily to solve issues or accomplish tasks which are allocated evenly; there is a cultural sense of collectiveness. The ICOs represent a hybrid form in which informal practices of the IOGs deviate from the formal SSE norms through acts resistance to manage the tensions created by mixing of the two ecosystems (i.e., the indigenous institutions shaped by their cosmovision and the SSE institutions and norms).

Almost all of the ICOs were unanimous in reporting that their constitutions were subjected to the norms established by the SSE authority (Supersolidaria) and that the chosen *legal status* shaped the ICOs' *ownership* and *organisational structures* – see the 3 quotes below. And they can draw support from many institutions that encourage and finance SSE forms at national level (i.e. cooperatives, mutual or associations).

> *"by choosing a specific legal status, in our case, an association, we agreed on particular ways to organise and operate our entity.... rules are established internally but following the SSE guidelines and in any case that we failed to comply with those we might lose our formal status"* [General Manager, VICU2, CS3].

And

> *"We decided to develop a cooperative because it was the only way to get access to a loan and recover our lands, we tried first to formalise as a trade union but it did not work, we had a training in cooperativism and decided that was the best collective option"* [GM, VIMK1, CS1].

And:

> *"We are registered as a for profit business but our aim is collective"* [Accountant, YAFG1, CS2].

> *"as a registered NFP association we had to appoint a board of directors, although we all collaborate in any task when is needed, it is an organisational obligation"* [president, VICU1, CS3].

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[2] The body regulating indigenous landholdings

The SSE authority (Supersolidaria) divides SSE organisations into two groups: *Solidarity Economy Organisations* (SEOs) and *Development Solidarity Organisations* (DSOs), which must comply with the rules and regulations set by the SSE authorities including *ownership* and *organisational* structure frameworks (DANSOCIAL, 2010; Serna Gomez and Adolfo Rubio-Rodriguez, 2016; Valderrama, 2005). Three of the ICOs in this study fell into the DSOs category and one in the SEOs. The mission of the DSOs and the SEOs are dissimilar - DSOs are established legally to benefit internal and external actors and are NFPs, while the SEOs are registered to benefit only the internal actors involved and are generally FPs. Accounts of the participants (in the research) about the creation of their entity's statutes, demonstrate that by complying with external norms, as they formalise, ICOs are becoming isomorphic with each other, losing their distinctiveness when they were IOGs.

"the objective of our association is the wellbeing of our members and our community this something we have clearly stated and is part of our rules.... that is why we created this association"

[Fiscal, VICU3, CS3].

From a post-colonial perspective, it can be argued that such narratives are a perfect illustration of the spread of colonising ideology of managerialism founded on western rationality and scientism being imposed on local systems (*i.e. coercive isomorphism*). Although there is a range of motivations in formalising IOGs, once the ICOs are constituted, they must comply with the norms established by the SSE authorities, and are encouraged to improve their division of labour and make an emphasis on professionalization. This leads to more or less homogenised forms of organising and regulating organisational life. As a co-founder commented:

"Within the current economic sector, it does not matter whether we are indigenous or not.... there are norms that we must comply with.... you know, for them (referring to non-indigenous people) there is not difference between our organisations and others established by the white men" [Cofounder, V1MK2, CS1].

The lack of a social enterprise legislation in Colombia may have excluded other forms of entities that shared similar objectives of existence from the SSE sector. Finca Lechera el Paraíso (CS2[3]) was legally registered as an orthodox venture with the objective to benefit all the Yanacona community (31 communities). Although a socially and environmentally-oriented venture, it was not recognised under the SSE umbrella. One of the board of directors of CS2 commented:

> "*our venture is not as any other conventional one…. our objective is collective…. of course, is profit-oriented but the distribution and the benefits are collective, we are 31 communities and all must obtain a benefit from it*" [*Public Administrator*, VIYA2, CS2].

This example shows how a hybrid form may deviate from formal practices to manage the tensions of establishing a more collective organisation. This also illuminates the disadvantaged position of the indigenous people (subaltern group) as their practices are recognised neither in the SSE sector nor in another sector (see Calvo and Morales, 2017). Athough Finca Lechera el Paraíso (CS2) was formalised with a different legal status, it is considered a collectively-owned venture. The development of the ICOs was strongly influenced by the pursuit of the mutual benefit of all its members and the whole community. This could explain the rationale behind of choosing a collective ownership approach. As one of the interviewees who pointed out:

> "*the cooperative and the association was created to benefit the whole community, hence is owned by the whole community. We all put our contribution and have worked in here since foundation …. the collective wellbeing is our purpose that is why that the cooperative is owned by our members and our community. … we are spiritually bound*" [Cofounder, V1MK2, CS1].

Although, Supersolidaria requires that SSE organisations must be owned collectively by their members, collective ownership appears to be embedded in the DNA of each organisation. This links with the traditional view for most cases where territory belongs

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[3] This CSE can be defined as a SE (e.g., Giovannini, 2012).

to everybody on the community and has a spiritual dimension. The Indigenous territory is ruled and governed by the local authorities that are elected by the entire community. But, the research showed that ownership in indigenous people's terms exhibits conceptual tensions between *the ownership of an entity* versus *the ownership of the place in which the entity activities are taking place*. A couple of examples illustrate this. Firstly, a member of the board of directors suggested how the association's actions co-depended on the rules of their *resguardo* and although the association was legally owned by the registered members, the venture was at the disposal of the entire community.

The second example comes from a community member who pointed out how ownership in local terms had different connotations in comparison with the Western view of land tenure and property rights, arguing that their land did not belong to people in the community, as land and natural resources are regarded as sacred and land is part of their past, present and future. Across all the five CSEs, ownership was referred to as a '*white-men*' or a '*foreign*' practice and it was related to the idea of individual property that was imported by the colonisers (*i.e., coercive isomorphism*). Land was claimed to be part of the community rather than being possessed by an individual or a few, and this form of ownership has been one of the indigenous people's struggles in Colombian: *Land Rights* and *Territoriality* was one of the main motivations for setting up formal organisations (Morales, forthcoming).

In almost all of the ICOs, in which business activities were land-based, land belonged to the resguardo that the members of the ICOs were part of. Activities included agriculture, cattle, floriculture and ethno-tourism seemed to be interdependent of the rules of the resguardo where the activities were taken place. In this respect, conceptual tensions arose because while ownership of the ICOs was legally bound to the norms imposed by external institutions giving 'property power' to their registered member over the organisation, at the same time the ICOs were culturally bound to the rules established

by their community, particularly when the business activities were taken place in the resguardo. Thus, ICOs seemed to be caught in between external and internal norms.

For example, in the Cooperativa las Delicias (CS1), members' main objectives was to develop a formal organisation to generate income and be able to buy the lands that historically were taken away from them. Some of the Misak leaders and authorities never agreed with the strategy of legally buying Misak's territory, arguing that the ancestral land should be given back for free. Such discord has led to the separation of the Cabildo[4] of Guambia from the current Cabildo San Fernando, where the Cooperativa las Delicias and their members are located - *coercive isomorphism* generating conflict amongst the members of the community when formalisation occurs. And to manage the tensions (*resistance*), indigenous members adopt informal practices which deviate from the formal requirements.

A second stream of evidence showed that the *organisational structure* of the ICOs is a hybrid deviation from the SSE norms for both types of organisations, DSOs and SEOs. Although, the SSE norms require that SSE organisations must be structured according to their legal form (e.g. having a board of directors), two types of organisational structure were identified amongst the CSEs in which external norms adapted their forms (i.e., through *negotiation*). First, (i) the *autonomous form*, that operates as a '*flatarchy*' organisation, where responsibilities and tasks were allocated evenly and internally amongst the members and even though the board of members play managerial and senior roles, they tend to be actively involved in the operations of the company; although periodically the board of directors must be renewed and elected. Second, (ii) the *quasi-autonomous form*, that functions as a combination of '*flatarchy*', at internal level, and hierarchical, at external level, organisations, when ICOs were interdependent on an external entity(ies) (i.e., usually the cabildo or the community).

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[4] local government council

The collective dimension can also be seen in the way that planning and organising was at times either performed or directed by the indigenous authorities for the collective the collective benefit of the community, independently of the ICO's autonomy. This can be linked with the indigenous literature (reference Chapter 5), which suggests that indigenous communities tend to be organised in horizontal structures where the authority is chosen by the community, and the governor of the resguardo plays a community role working on a voluntary basis.   Some ICOs have flat organisational structures with the board of directors elected by members, but board members also play team roles at an operational level. Similarly non-registered members were also involved in the operations of the ICOs following cultural values of solidarity and collaboration.

"Despite the fact that tasks are allocated evenly amongst the members of our association .... our community sometimes is also involved.... it is required, because we need to outsource some of the services...that was the commitment with the people here in the resguardo. everybody wins.... also, sometimes we need to report to the cabildo and inform the community of any activity"
[Treasurer, VIPU3, CS4].

To summarise: With regard to *organisational structure*, the ICO process of internalising organisational structures, based on the SSE norms, is moderated by an emancipation practice which creates a hybrid version (*creative resistance* in postcolonial terms), through the implementation of cultural practices at an organisational, but informal, level (i.e., deviating formal practices) (Claeyé and Jackson, 2012).

Production of Goods and Services

The production of goods and services varied amongst all the CSEs. Evidence suggested that the ICOs' process of production was determined by IOGs adopting external business practices (process of *mimicry*) that was transformed into *hybrid* forms of production. Some of the challenges faced may be summarised as follows:

- Developing farming practices combining local and external knowledge.
- Managing operations strategies strongly influenced by western dominant discourses (i.e., management, business operations).

- Exploiting the land sustainably to protect mother earth.
- Exploitation of the natural resources for sustainable floriculture.
- Managing Marketing strategies for both community advocacy and commercialisation.
- Commercialisation of ancestral products, Indigenous medicine, and traditional cuisine.   Weaving and handicraft are improved by external methods (i.e., technology or assembly line strategy).

Two examples of the latter are as follows:

> *"We understood that the only way to be competitive was to improve our handicraft production was to implement the assembly line strategy, breaking the work into small deskilled tasks"*   [President, VIWA1, CS5].

> *"we tried to implement technology in our ancestral ways of productions, we are depended on the demand, thus we need to adapt to improve our production cost"*   [Accountant, YAFG1.5, CS2].

Research identified some similarities at informal level to establish the nature of the ICOs' *modus operandi* in order to illustrate the hybridisation process. The resulting hybrid forms are determined by an element of innovation in which the traditional practices are 'enhanced' (or transformed) to meet organisational objectives and improve organisational practices. For instance, the Cooperativa Indígena las Delicias, very often use bartering, a traditional practice, as a strategy to manage the production left overs (the goods that could not be sold). Bartering also enables the exchange of products from one region to another within the Misak community. Generally, products that are produced in the cold areas are exchange with the products produced in the hot areas[5].

ICO's informal activities may be differentiated between two types: *land-based* production of mainly agricultural goods, and *culture-based* production of goods and services (including: traditional handicrafts production, traditional medicines, local cuisine, fishing

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[5] See the importance of bartering for the Misak community in the following link: https://youtu.be/CroUSFEzRiE.

and hunting), both complemented with other mainly collective types of activities, as well as by external variables that influenced the process of production. For example, Akayu (CS3), commercialises an ancestral product called mañoco (Amazonian yam). Traditionally, mañoco is cooked fried or is eaten in soups, but, Akayu transformed it into a crisp form, and commercialised it as a snack product. There were similarities and differences amongst the ICOs during the hybridisation process when *emulating* external methods. Similarities can be found between the ICOs practices at formal level and the informal practices influenced by their indigenous culture. And by exploring the mimicry process and creative resistance to strengthen identity, and how this leads to a *hybrid* form. A member of an ICO commented:

> *"we currently offer services that entails the ancestral practices of our culture, the role of our Shamans as healers in our community has been present for centuries, we have clients that are interested to try alternatives to heal themselves from different illnesses, particularly cancer"* [Member, VIPU4, CS4].

And as a community member explained:

> *"there is no way to understand indigenous organisations, but to understanding where our organisational practices are coming from, in all our organisational practices there is a cultural feature"* [Member, MKFC1.7, CS1

ICOs participants reported that there were advantages and disadvantages of combining both local indigenous and external knowledge. There is an intrinsic dilemma between mimicking or disregarding external practices (influenced strongly by western managerial and entrepreneurial dominant discourses).

> *"we acknowledge that by making our dairy production more efficient we have to embrace both worlds, the western and our knowledge to improve our productivity... we bring professional that support us for the operation of the finca and so far, results are quite good"*

But, during the production of videos (Participative Video research approach), some of the participants were reluctant to highlight the advantages of appropriating western practices that could benefit their organisational activities, rather they wanted to report the importance of bringing local cultural aspects into the process of production and how by re-implementing ancestral knowledge, production processes could be improved (i.e., *agroforestry*, *crop rotation, polyculture* and *water harvesting*) (*i.e. countering normative isomorphism*).

Tensions in emulating external practices were observed in those CSEs that conducted *land-based* activities (in 3 of the cases), when production processes either followed local knowledge or used a combination of both: western and local. With the objective of enhancing farming processes, achieving sustainable agricultural methods and improving income generation, some of the ICOs implemented external farming methods using all or most of the following: high-yield varieties of seeds, chemically derived fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides, irrigation and mechanisation. For example, there was a community concern about how the land was used and how the use of pesticides and the genetically modified seeds (GMS) were impacting negatively on the wellbeing of the environment and their families. A community leader noted:

> *"there are a lot of issues of implementing white men's methods of farming production.... with them (referring to the methods), cancer and other types of illness appeared......the excessive use of pesticides and other chemicals upon our lands, is*

delivering some health issues and is affecting the wellbeing of the community" [Accountant, YAFG1.8, CS2].

Similarly regarding modern business practices (marketing, economies of scale, professionalisation):

> *"we realised that in order to be more productive we have to be professionalised, we learnt a lot of strategies that could be useful for our business" [Fiscal, VICU3, CS3].*

Thus, not all the members were unenthusiastic towards appropriate external farming methods or knowledge, but rather were not only willing to use them, but also partnered with other institutions to improve agricultural production (an *innovative* approach in indigenous practices). For example, Cooperativa Las Delicias partnered with a local university to conduct research to use the land sustainably, free from pesticides and improve organic seeds production. A partner researcher from a local university pointed out the importance of working in partnership with the indigenous communities, to enrich scientific knowledge with the indigenous one (i.e., hybridisation arising from innovation, to counter isomorphism). She stressed:

> *"we came here to conduct a research on an onion's plague that was affecting the local production.... we are now working hand in hand with them and the results have been amazing.... their knowledge is unique and I have learnt so much from them ... we work in a really horizontal way...I think many universities should stop patronising them and appreciate what they have to offer" [Researcher, V1MK3, CS1].*

Here, the evidence showed that *hybrid* models of production emerged from seeking sustainable and productive agricultural methods (*resistance*). Although many participants often blamed external approaches for agricultural problems and environmental catastrophe, many others acknowledged the advantages of combining both knowledges.

Two other important aspect of the hybridisation transformation process, from informality to formality, must be mentioned. Firstly pressure from the regulatory environment:

"There are norms that we have to comply with according to the tourist industry of the country" [Treasurer, VIPU3, CS4].

And secondly, how collective traditional work complements the modern production of goods and services; this includes bartering to manage over production; and the importance of indigenous *collective work* - Minga of work when labour is needed to manage high demand). In almost all the ICOs, *collectiveness* was an *innovative* approach for improving the production process. Since the ICOs' capital resources were scarce (tools, equipment, buildings, and machinery), their key assets were human resources capabilities. And indigenous *collectiveness, particularly* the *minga,* was seen as crucial in developing a more participative, proactive and engaged work behaviour. In this context, indigenous people perceived work as a cultural tradition rather than an organisational duty.

"The collective work that the 31 communities did to start the Finca el Paraiso was crucial to be at the stage that we are today.…. this land belongs to all of us, thus we have to protect it and preserve it.… When a big job is needed, we call out for mingas of work …. And people have to come… it is a cultural duty… we cannot simply to outsource the labour that we need knowing that we've got such communitarian commitment" [Accountant, YAFG1.5, CS2].

This also shows how collective practices provided the motive power to organisations, particularly, when the organisations faced an economic challenges or were in a great need and increased labour was required. Thus *collectiveness* amongst indigenous people is not only a cultural feature, but also nurtures social cohesions, and benefits the ICOs. However this could also mean that *collective work* was seen as more of a communal duty, than voluntaristic. In some CSEs, it was reported that by not participating and getting involve in collective activities, individuals were disrespected and sometimes punished:

"collective work is something that is embedded in our community is part of our DNA, it is a collective responsibility.… the cooperative belongs to everybody.… thus

everybody has the duty to contribute to it…. People who do not collaborate disrespect their family and their community….in everyday basis we have to honour our people" [Member/Co-founder, V1MK2, CS1].

The indigenous entrepreneurship literature suggests that volunteerism and collectivism are common characteristics amongst indigenous groups (R. B. Anderson et al., 2006; Giovannini, 2012; Peredo, 2001; Vázquez Maguirre et al., 2017, 2016).

Although, *volunteerism* appears in the literature of the SSE as an organisational strategy to enhance internal practices (e.g. Coraggio, 2007), indigenous *collectiveness* appears as an embedded cultural element in the mimicry and hybridity process. Irrespective of geographical location (referred to as *mingao* (= minga) in the Guainia region), *minga* practice was commonly used by the majority of the ICOs, and is one form of indigenous *collectiveness* is frequently manifested spontaneously. For instance, during the participatory video process, many participants who were not members of the ICOs, joined the video activity to collaborate with the other members of their community - strengthen social bonds and reinforce social cohesion.

Governance: Decision-making Process

In order to understand the informal to formal organisational transformation, within the process of *mimicry* and *hybridisation*, it is important to recognise that pre-colonial *ancestral* practices have influenced post-colonial *present-day* practices which contextualise the SSE and its hybridisation. These are diverse and include elements of the following:

-Community governance subjected to the rules of the resguardo.
-Governors of each resguardo (evolved from the chief-led Cacicazgos).
-General assembly (from all resguardos).
-Substantial degree of autonomy with self-determination rights.
-Cabildo authority (sometimes ruling over the clan)
-The council of traditional authorities.
-Some Indigenous Councils as part of territorial government.

-Some clan-led bodies, with board of members.
- morning and afternoon community meetings - age-led, with unanimity amongst the members,
- Some hierarchical systems led by Abuelo (The eldest), shaman (Payé) and the chief (captain)

Two types of governance forms were identified as hybrids arising from the transformation process: *autonomous and quasi-autonomous decision-making* process. Similar to the *ownership* theme, above, some of the ICOs *decision-making* processes were internal to the ICO, and some external – influenced by the indigenous authorities (cabildo), and the community (in the resguardo). Informal governance forms *complement* the formal organisational practices conforming to the SSE norms, and strength the resulting organisational practices.

Findings indicated that *governance* was a neology introduced to the indigenous communities by external bodies, such as the Supersolidaria. The *decision-making* phrase was widely used when referring to the collective process of selecting a course of action amongst different options to attain a goal or goals. While the Supersolidaria required that all SSE types, SEOs and DSOs, should adopt democratic governance approaches giving legal rights to their members, ICOs were in fact culturally bound to governance by their communities. And similarly indigenous communities tend to prioritise common ends over private ones (including for local organisations). For example CS4 is legally registered as an association, but organisational power is extended to the cabildo and the community in the resguardo. This resulted in a *hybrid* governance form:

> *"The objectives of our associations are ruled by the statutes that the members created…. however, the statutes are ruled by our indigenous authorities…… the interest our organisation simply cannot be over the interest of our people"* [Vice-President, VIPU2, CS4].

Formally, the new organisational practice (hybrid form of governance) can be understood as the organisational contestation in the interplay of local and external variables internalised in the process of *mimicry*. This contestation is the act of resisting external

governance forms and strengthening indigenous culture by complementing formal practices with the informal ones. The paradox of the ICOs in complying with the SSE governance norms and following the rules of local institutions, can be seen as Bhabha's (2012) third space, where subaltern groups resist and negotiate their local and external variables, so creating a hybrid form.

Despite the fact that different governance forms were adopted by each ICOs, there was evidence of high community engagement, particularly when general assemblies were taken place (as it creates social cohesion). Collectiveness was a common feature that became an important part of *decision-making*. Associates' family may also be owners, and tasks may be distributed with all members of the community. The fact that 24% of the participants were community members (all the ICO's associates are community members[6], but the 24% are non-associates of the ICOs), community indicated the level of engagement with the ICOs. A community member that is actively involved in the activities of the organisation reported:

> *"although we are not registered as members (referring to his family), we feel that we are part of the organisation...... we participate in the minga that they call out and we come to the assemblies, our friends and relatives are part of the organisation... thus so we are"* [Teacher / Community Member, WAFG 1.19, CS5].

This corroborates the work carried out by Peredo, (2001; and Peredo and McLean, (2013) that suggests that trust and community ties are both key elements of *decision-making* processes in indigenous entrepreneurship. The role of the community in any entrepreneurial activity is crucial as wider participation generates a system of trust that facilitates *decision-making* processes when large numbers are involved.

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[6] Community members: Individuals that are part of the indigenous community.
Associates or Members: Individuals that are part of an indigenous' association or cooperative.

The transformation process with regard to governance and decision-making shows how the SSE may accommodate a community hybrid (Peredo, 2001). But at the same time formalisation processes may distort the community practices by being more selective of key community stakeholders, and by introducing conventional democratic practices (1 person=1 vote).

Thus, hybrid forms are developed when *decision-making* process combines local and external variables: i.e. *decisions* are made collectively following cultural traditions, but also made democratically (one person one vote) complying with external norms. For instance, in one of the ICOs, children were encouraged to be part of the *decision-making* process by participating in general assemblies from the age of thirteen. In other cases, organisational unanimity was widely practiced and *decisions* were made collectively and usually with great participation. Thus, decisions were not made under majority basis but rather when there was not a convincing argument to block a decision. Generally, some ICOs reported making *decisions* while doing a *minga* of thinking, i.e. when a group extensively discusses the same topic:

"General assemblies are really important for us …. over there we have the opportunity to meet and discuss about topics…. Sometimes we take hours to make decisions because it is really important for us that everybody agrees or there is not enough reasons to stop doing things, We make decisions unanimously…. That's why is so important to make mingas of thinking" [Member, MKFG1.1, CS1].

Several factors enabled good *governance* practices amongst the ICOs. Firstly in almost all CSEs, members shared the same conditions of being affiliated to the same indigenous community. Participants shared in (inter)-personal relationships, culture, political affiliation, traditions and rules, history, social and economic conditions and common interest. This sense of homogeneity amongst the members enabled better governance practice. In both *governance* forms: *autonomous* and *quasi autonomous*, collective practices was linked to the shared community conditions, and wider participation was apparent. It was also seen as important to increase participation outside their ICOs, to set an example for similar initiatives:

"we always seek to widening participation, as it legitimises the process of decision-making and make much easier the process when implementation is taking place, we all have common goals as we shared the same socioeconomic and historical conditions.... we need to have our duck in a row to ensure that there is a general consensus at implementation level" [Prosecutor, YAFG1.3, CS2].

And;

"Our decisions are made by the 31 community Yanacona, they are their owner, it is their right. We do also invite our clientele to be part of the assemblies, it is important to include our stakeholders" [Prosecutor, YAFG1.3, CS2].

Nevertheless, organisational issues emerged when widening participation, and inclusive *governance* took place. A number of ICOs reported having experienced a "*difficult*" time during general assemblies and saw the disadvantage of grouping associates and community members, as Some community members lacked information about their organisations, and there was a 'slowness' in the process. However, by implementing inclusiveness and democratic governance, ICOs improved implementation processes in the organisation. Nonetheless some weaknesses were highlighted:

"Gathering and making decisions together is great because it creates a community cohesion, as our assemblies are taken place in community celebrations...... but sometimes.... we (referring to the board of directors) struggle in pleasing everybody......there is a very fine line in between the social and the economic outcome" CS1 [General Manager, VIMK1, CS1].

The ICO's good practice of *decision-making*, was subject to their capacity for effectively integrating and managing the tensions of local and external governance forms. These cases show that informal governance practices (shaped by their cosmovision) were implemented to improve the formal ones, and so this *complementarity* extends classic ideas of SSE governance forms. This corroborates Peredo and McLean (2013) who argued that indigenous entrepreneurship revises and extends the concept of entrepreneurship, because not only in terms of the *decision-making*, but also the ideological basis on which these *decisions* are made. All ICOs organisations (including the *autonomous* ones) drew

on their cultural values in the *decision-making* process, which led to the majority of them including the wider community in their *decision-making*.

Organisational Strategies: Grant Seeking, Diversification, Capacity Building, Networking and Partnerships

A range of strategies were used by the ICOs to achieve short, medium, and long-term goals of the organisation (Table 6.6). All CSEs adopted external methods, combining them with informal practices as a hybrid strategy to enhance organisational practices. By emulating external methods (*process of mimicry*), the ICOs generated a 'bricolage' of strategies with indigenous cultural elements that enhanced their repertoire of actions to meet organisational objectives (i.e., capital, institutional and organisational).

The analysis divided organisational strategies into different categories: *grant seeking, capacity building, diversification, networking and partnerships,* to examine how ICOs and their managers are influenced by external dominant discourses to overcome organisational challenges. Financial issues were the main obstacle identified in the five cases, and may be seen as one of the main drivers of mimicry. And *grant seeking* was most reported by the board of directors[7] of ICOs as a key strategy to address this. Grant funding issues were more common at start-up but was also important during later development. Although in some of the ICOs, initial funding was complemented by members' inputs, either in kind or in money. Only one of the ICOs used financial credit or a loan to start-up and develop their business.

"grant seeking had helped and may help us to meet our economic needs…. sometimes is really hard to cope with our financial responsibilities…. and money is something that we always need … it is not crucial but sometimes infrastructure is needed and we don't have enough financial resources …. In fact, I applied for a national award called mujer Cafam and I won, with the money that we got we reinvested everything into the organisation…. Also, we have received some help from national and international institutions …. we applied for different grants and we got some of them… we planned to seeking for those opportunities as we demonstrated that we could manage it perfectly"

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[7] NB 32% of the participants were either part of the board of directors or were directly involved in the management process

[President and Cofounder, CUFG1.1, CS3].

However some tensions arose from the strategy of grant seeking. Attracting financial aid and other resource contributions (i.e., equipment, infrastructure and IT) from external bodies, could lead to high levels of aid dependency, and contribute to organisational idleness and lack of managerial productivity:

> *"The problem on relying on grant seeking and aid so much is that the members of the organisation may become a little lazy, if one only thinks of seeking for aid tend to forget how to improve the business with other strategies"* [President and Cofounder, VICU1, CS3].

On the other hand, dominant discourses may be imposed upon ICOs, since typically grants, funding and donations are subject to certain conditions and agendas that legitimate the colonised vs colonisers subjectivity amongst indigenous people. As a result ICOs are obliged to change, because of this (*coercive)* isomorphic pressure:

> *"aid and external support are the disguised of neo-colonial forms of power, by falling into these strategies our communities are doomed to extinction…. everything has an agenda behind, I remember in here before, they (referring to national entities) gave us financial help for local development and later they were privatising our natural resources in our territory"* [GM and Cofounder, V1MK6, CS1].

Additionally in the majority of the ICOs, a key aspect for tackling economic issues *was business diversification* which enhanced economic performance allowing the surplus to be reinvested in the organisation and the community. For example, in Cooperativa Las Delicias (CS1), their main activity was agriculture, nonetheless, they identified that there was a lack of transport in the area where they were located, and saw the opportunity to improve their income generation, by operating a bus service from Guambia to Silvia. Similarly, Akayú Association (CS3) which started as an association providing recycling services, but in order to include the rest of the members and improve economic performance, three more business activities were developed: *retail*, *education* and *floriculture*.

"we started with the recycling business and it went really well, but other necessities were needed for the association, that's why we developed the other three services that today are really important for the economic performance of the organisation.... we have to admit also, that when we started, we had something different in mind for the other three services, but we improve them according to the necessities of our organisation and the demand of the public" [President and Cofounder, VICU1, CS3].

ICOs that diversified their businesses reduced the risks of relying on sales of only one type of product and ensured the survival of the company by cost-cutting whilst increasing their level of production in other businesses, when one of their markets collapsed e.g. particularly in agriculture, a sector with the most difficulties in the Colombian context.

An example that illustrate a hybridity strategy in business diversification, was Cooperativa Las Delicias (CS1), which diversified their businesses by using informal ancestral practices - bartering to reduce wastage and manage food over-production. This resulted in CS1 controlling the entire supply chain - not only producing goods with their own seeds, but also commercialising them in their local store in Silvia (where they also sell other products):

"bartering help us to connect with our culture, plus help us to reduce wastage and manage the surplus of production of some products.... also, is a really good strategy because we have access to products that we do not produce over here, our Misak community in the hot areas of Guambia also operates similarly... thus we complement to each other" [Fiscal, MKFG1.5, CS1].

This can be linked with the BV pillar of plural economy, in which both economic practices (ancestral and orthodox) can complement each other and deliver a more efficient outcome (Hidalgo-Capitán and Cubillo-Guevara, 2017, 2016). It also shows hybrid models of production, where informal indigenous practices complement western ones.

Capacity building was also important - the majority of ICOs tried to improve their competitiveness by embracing professional training and education[8] for their members (*normative isomorphism* in DiMaggio and Powell's (2000) terms).

> *"We have seen the advantages of professionalised our members, myself I am educated I know how much I can contribute to the organisation"*
> [Assistant GM, CUFG 1.3, CS3]

The majority of respondents (focus groups) highlighted the benefits for the ICOs of having members with different educational backgrounds and skills. Although they stressed the importance of education and professional training they asserted that ethno-education also strengthened capacity building. And in all the ICOs, members were associated with ethno-education, either as teachers or as students:

"If, for example, we have the model of collective milk production......and there are already 31 communities that already are benefited out of it here in Cauca.... despite having many things that are adopted from the west such as the technique of milking, the shepherding management and the operation of the equipment, we are creating an ecosystem and an eco-working space in which our young people can learn from and develop other techniques to enhance our performance.... the oldest are in charge of educating the youngest in our ancestral techniques"
[Educator, YAFG1.7, CS2].

Another important aspect was that by appropriating western education, indigenous people could guard against being deceived. One of the oldest members and a cofounder of the CS1 stressed:

"when we started, we knew that we had to be educated...... our parents and grandparents were deceived by the white men because they did not know anything about land rights and even the language.... they (referring to the landowners) became friend of the indigenous people and then they made them sign documents assuring that this was the part of the process of buying and getting right over the land.... they did know the language, they didn't know what a contract was and they

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[8] Remarkably, 58% of the participants were either professionally trained (vocational or technical courses) or educated in universities.

> *lost everything...that is why is so important to compete in their own terms"* [Member/Co-founder, V1MK2, CS1].

These findings seemed to reflect the hybridisation process where internal and external knowledge is appropriated to enhance the performance of the ICO. By appropriating indigenous knowledge, local education is reinforced, leading the organisation towards better practices.

> *"the combination of ethno-education with western education has been fundamental for the improvement of our products. At the end of the day we commercialise our art, thus is important that the majority of the members know how to make our art while thinking about business"* [Treasurer, VIWA2, CS5]

And capacity is also enhanced through community collaboration to reduce labour cost, such as minga of working, or seed swapping.

The majority of the ICOs studied reported that two other aspects improved strategic planning and performance: *partnerships* and *networking*. The ICOs networks were constituted by internal and external actors including: local and regional authorities, international entities, local businesses, the local community, local suppliers, educational institutions, Cabildos and indigenous people advocators. ICOs in the study highlighted the importance of widening their venture's networking and identifying key partnerships to enhance their organisation's performance.

"Our objective is to generate an alliance with other tourist agencies, to create a tourist chain here in the region..... we have done it already here in the resguardo .... the association is in charge of finding the tourists and we connect them with other services here in the community... we do offer traditional medicine ... thus we have a network of shamans here in the resguardo ... they do not actually work with us ... but we outsource the work" [Treasurer, PUFG 1.3, CS4].

"our objective is to reinforce our culture by investing time and economic resources to research.... How we operate and how we could work the land and treat the livestock sustainably, with our traditional knowledge .... That is why we partner with the local agricultural schools here in the resguardo to encourage students to come to la Finca

Lechera el Paraiso and do some fieldwork. … at the end of the day this enterprise belongs to all of us"
[Public Administrator, VIYA2, CS2].

Concluding Remarks
This chapter has provided original evidence about the hybrid characteristics of the selected ICOs, and how they remain strongly affiliated with their indigenous values. The approach has been to examine the interplay of local and external variables influencing the development, nature and operations of ICOs in the Colombian context. The first step was examining the ICOs' *raison d'être* as a combination of internal and external *motivations* that led IOGs to formalise their initiatives, where the community played a strong role.

Next, by drawing on Bhabha's (1984, 2012) *mimicry* and *hybridity* and bringing some insights from culturalist and *institutional theory* (e.g., DiMaggio and Powell, 2000), this chapter illuminates the characteristics of the ICOs at meso-level. The CSEs explore the extent to which ICOs' hybrid forms are the result of creative *resistance* and/or *negotiation* of the two worlds (the *indigenous* and the *western*), in which the IOGs *adopt* and *adapt* external variables (i.e., the *SSE norms* and/or *other variables*) within the process of *mimicry* as they become formalised. At meso-level, despite some similarities ICOs cannot be considered an isomorphic organisation and be compared with any other SSEOs; instead, ICOs characteristics are shaped by the set of values and practices of each organisation's ecosystem and the adaptation of foreign practices into their business persona.

Four conceptual categories encapsulate how the tensions and conflicts inherent in the hybrid forms are managed. First, the *deviant* informal practices, which differ from the formal ones to enhance organisational praxes. Ownership was one of the examples that illuminates this phenomenon, where one of the CSEs adopted cooperativism to recover the land that was taken during colonialism. Second, the transformation of informal practices through *innovation* that helped ICOs to meet their organisational objectives

and improve the formal praxes. Many CSEs improved their production of goods and services by commercialising indigenous products. Most saw a business opportunity to diversify their offer while strengthening their indigenous culture. Third, *complementarity* where informal ancestral praxes enhance formal practices. SSE governance forms were enhanced by widening participation to the community and similarly complementary processes enhance organisational productivity; and fourth, the implementation of informal practices as a *strategy* to enhance the repertoire of actions to meet the needs of the organisation. Many of CSEs implement traditional practices to achieve organisational goals. For example, CS1 implemented bartering in order to manage wastage and reduce production cost.

The formalisation process to meet legal requirements has led to organisational struggles to balance the needs, values and interests between the ICOs' members, the ICOs' affiliated community, and the internal and external institutions (Cabildos, local and national state authorities and SSE related institutions). This is in line with a study conducted by Vázquez Maguirre et al. (2017) that identified a conflict of interest between managers and other members of ISEs in Mexico and Peru. However, the internal and external values of each entity, appeared to be drivers for setting organisational objectives and goals. But external institutional norms may push ICOs to follow organisational standards that lead to an eventual transformation of their indigenous values. Nonetheless, there remain some gaps that require further investigation concerning the influences of BV upon each ICO.