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Cultural Perspectives on Ownership: Resonances between Steward Ownership Principles and Indigenous Practices in Latin America

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THESIS APPROVAL

I, *Prof. Alessio Surian*, as supervisor of the student *Vanessa Vogel*, hereby APPROVE the thesis entitled *Cultural Perspectives on Ownership: Resonances between Steward-Ownership Principles and Indigenous Practices in Latin America*.

Padova, 23 November 2025

Signature____________________

Declaration of Mobility

This thesis is the result of the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's degree in Climate Change and Diversity: Sustainable Territorial Development (CCD-STeDe).

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This program has a duration of 24 months. The course started at UNIPD in Italy, for the first semester. The second semester was spent at Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar in Quito (Ecuador). The third semester was blended with the international Winter School in Kenya. The fourth semester was spent for internship and thesis with Purpose Stiftung gGmbH (remote from Germany) under the supervision of Università degli Studi di Padova.

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Abstract

This thesis explores how the principles of steward-ownership resonate with ownership models and practices of Indigenous organizations in Latin America. Rather than classifying these organizations as steward-owned, it examines shared orientations and differences through a dialogical and decolonial lens. The analysis follows five dimensions: purpose and the collective good, control and responsibility, profit and surplus logic, relationship with land and nature, and the intergenerational horizon. Using a multiple case study design, the research draws on interviews, field notes, and document analysis from three Indigenous organizations in Chile and Colombia: Küme Mogen, Mapu Lahual, and Seynekun. The findings show that although these cases do not replicate steward-ownership structures, their practices resonate with its two core principles of purpose orientation and self-governance and its emphasis on long-term responsibility. The study contributes to debates on alternative ownership by presenting a context-specific, relational framework for understanding ownership, governance, and the commons.

Resumen

Esta tesis explora cómo los principios del steward-ownership resuenan con los modelos y prácticas de propiedad de organizaciones indígenas en América Latina. En lugar de clasificarlas como steward-owned, analiza orientaciones compartidas y diferencias desde una perspectiva dialógica y decolonial. El análisis sigue cinco dimensiones: propósito y bien colectivo, control y responsabilidad, lógica del excedente y las ganancias, relación con la tierra y la naturaleza, y horizonte intergeneracional. Mediante un diseño de estudio de caso múltiple, la investigación se basa en entrevistas, notas de campo y análisis documental de tres organizaciones indígenas en Chile y Colombia: Küme Mogen, Mapu Lahual y Seynekun. Los hallazgos muestran que, aunque estos casos no replican las estructuras del steward-ownership, sus prácticas resuenan con sus dos principios centrales de orientación al propósito y autogobernanza y su énfasis en la responsabilidad a largo plazo. El estudio contribuye a los debates sobre formas alternativas de propiedad al presentar un marco relacional y situado para comprender la propiedad, la gobernanza y los bienes comunes.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

Ownership plays an important role in shaping how economic activities are organized and how benefits and responsibilities are distributed. In numerous Western contexts, the concept of ownership has developed around ideas of individual control and the right to use assets for personal advantage. These traditions have frequently been linked to profit maximization and the assumption that owners may dispose of their property as they choose.

In recent years, new models have emerged that challenge these assumptions and suggest different ways of organizing economic activities. Steward-ownership is one of these methods. It stresses that organizations should serve a clear purpose and that decision-making should stay with those who are actively involved in and connected to the organization. The model challenges the idea that ownership is mainly a financial right and instead offers it as a way to protect long-term missions and responsibilities.

At the same time, Indigenous communities across Latin America have historically maintained their distinct conceptualizations of ownership. These perspectives are relational and collective, establishing strong links between individuals, land, territory, community, and future generations. In the cases presented in this thesis, ownership is characterized as a responsibility rather than a mere right. It is intrinsically connected to care for families, ecosystems, and the preservation of cultural continuity. Land is not regarded as a commodity. Instead, it forms part of a shared relational community that requires protection and collective decision-making. In this thesis, the term relational community describes a network of relationships where humans, land, other beings, and future generations are connected through shared responsibilities.

These ideas differ from dominant Western property concepts, but they also show points of contact with the principles of steward-ownership. Both approaches challenge the idea that property should primarily serve individual accumulation. They prioritize purpose, responsibility, and long-term continuity at the center of organizational life.

Despite these similarities, there has been limited research examining the relationship between steward-ownership and Indigenous ownership practices. Academic discourse on steward-ownership has predominantly focused on Europe, whereas research on Indigenous organizations has developed independently, emphasizing cultural, territorial, and political dimensions. Consequently, the potential links between these two areas have not been explored in depth. This gap in the literature limits the understanding of alternative ownership models that address social and ecological responsibilities. It also reduces the visibility of Indigenous perspectives within broader debates on economic models and organizational governance.

Research on steward-ownership has grown in recent years, characterizing ownership as a framework that safeguards a well-defined purpose, places decision-making to those who are responsible for the organization, and directs economic benefits towards long-term continuity rather than private profit (Nipkow, 2022; Purpose Foundation, 2020; Sanders, 2022).

At the same time, extensive literature explores Indigenous ownership systems, demonstrating that numerous communities manage economic activities through collective responsibilities, relational ties with land, and intergenerational obligations that integrate social, ecological, and cultural well-being (Henriques et al., 2020; Kelly & Woods, 2021; McDonald et al., 2019). Research on commons governance emphasizes collective decision-making and shared resource stewardship as fundamental principles in numerous community-based systems. In this thesis, the term commons refers to shared resources and socio-ecological systems cared for in common, while collectivity refers to the organizational and social practices through which communities manage and sustain these commons.

Although these areas provide valuable insights, they are typically examined separately. Existing scholarship on steward-ownership predominantly concentrates on European contexts and rarely engages with Indigenous perspectives. Studies on Indigenous ownership systems primarily analyze community-based economies but do not address potential parallels with steward-ownership principles. No research identified in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 integrates these two areas of scholarship. Consequently, there is a limited understanding of how concepts such as purpose, governance, surplus use, relationship with nature, and intergenerational horizon might relate to Indigenous practices rooted in their own histories and connections to land. It does not aim to equate the two fields but rather to explore where meaningful points of connection appear and to recognize where differences remain important.

Steward-ownership describes an approach in which organizations protect a clear purpose, connect decision-making to those responsible, and direct economic activities toward long-term continuity rather than private gain. Indigenous ownership systems, as discussed in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, emphasize collective responsibilities, relational ties to land, and commitments to future generations.

Rather than demonstrating that Indigenous organizations follow steward-ownership models, this study examines how their concepts of purpose, governance, surplus use, relationship with nature, and intergenerational horizon relate to the broader discussions introduced in Chapter 2. It thereby contributes to a more nuanced and respectful discourse on ownership, responsibility, and autonomy across different cultural and institutional contexts.

The research is guided by a central research question that directs the analysis and links the conceptual, empirical, and methodological foundations developed in Chapters 2 to 6. The main question of this thesis is: *How do the principles of steward-ownership, purpose orientation and self-determination resonate with ownership models and practices developed by Indigenous communities in Latin America?* This question focuses on different understandings of ownership rather than direct comparison or evaluation. It enables the exploration of shared orientations while recognizing the unique contexts from which these practices emerge.

To answer the main question, four subquestions structure the inquiry. The first subquestion examines similarities and differences between Indigenous ownership models and the principles of purpose and self-determination. The second subquestion explores how Indigenous leaders and community members describe ownership in their everyday organizational practices. The third subquestion identifies cases that illustrate resonances or tensions between Indigenous ownership and steward-ownership principles. The fourth subquestion addresses the methodological and ethical challenges that arise in conducting research in intercultural settings. Together, these questions provide a clear framework for the analysis.

This study is intentionally limited in several ways in order to maintain a clear analytical focus. It assesses only three Indigenous organizations. These cases were selected because they provide comprehensive insights into ownership practices, yet they do not represent the full diversity of Indigenous communities in Latin America. Consequently, the study emphasizes depth over breadth.

Additionally, the geographic scope is limited to Latin America. The aim is to understand ownership within these specific historical, cultural, and territorial contexts rather than to generalize findings to Indigenous organizations in other regions of the world. The research concentrates on the resonances between steward-ownership principles and Indigenous ownership traditions. It does not seek to establish equivalence nor classify the organizations as steward-ownership models. Rather, it aims to identify shared orientations regarding purpose, governance, surplus use, relationships with nature, and intergenerational horizon.

Another delimitation is that the study analyses organizations rather than entire groups of people. Consequently, the findings are specific to particular organizational settings and do not describe all practices within the participating communities. Finally, the study concentrates on ownership logics, including purpose, governance, surplus use, relationship with nature, and intergenerational horizon. It does not investigate all economic activities or development strategies of the organizations. These delimitations ensure that the research question remains manageable and that the analysis remains closely aligned with the methodological framework presented in the thesis.

This thesis is organized into six chapters that build on one another to answer the research question. Chapter 2 presents the theoretical foundation by introducing steward-ownership, Indigenous ownership cosmologies, the concept of resonance, and decolonial perspectives on cultural appropriation. Chapter 3 describes the methodological approach. It explains the case study design, the data sources, and the ethical and reflexive considerations that structure the research process. Chapter 4 presents the empirical findings from the three Indigenous organizations and shows how their ownership practices unfold across the five dimensions of purpose, governance, surplus, relationship with nature, and intergenerational responsibility. Chapter 5 discusses these findings concerning the theoretical framework and highlights the resonances between steward-ownership principles and Indigenous ownership logics. Chapter 6 concludes the thesis by summarizing the main insights, outlining contributions and limitations, and indicating directions for future research.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Steward-Ownership Principles

Concept and Background

Steward-ownership is utilized in this thesis as a concrete model of corporate ownership that uniquely associates power, profit, and responsibility, distinct from traditional shareholder systems. In steward-owned structures, two fundamental principles are central. Firstly, profits are regarded as a means to support the organization's purpose. Secondly, control over key decisions remains with individuals or entities actively committed to that purpose and cannot be tradable on capital markets as ordinary private property (Purpose Foundation, n.d., 2020). In practical application, this often necessitates the separation of voting rights from economic rights, ensuring that those who receive financial returns are not necessarily the same individuals or entities responsible for strategic decision-making.

This model addresses the structural issues outlined in critiques of shareholder primacy, which is the idea that corporations should primarily aim to maximize shareholder value. Traditional corporate structures associate capital investment, voting rights, and profit entitlement. Shares are easily bought and sold. Stout (2015) and the Purpose Foundation (n.d.) demonstrate how this can promote short-term decision-making that prioritizes immediate financial gains, even when such choices conflict with long-term stability, workers' interests, communities, or ecosystems. Building on this critique, Nipkow (2022) argues that conventional ownership structures often reproduce a separation between capital providers and those engaged in daily work, which can diffuse responsibility for the social and ecological consequences of corporate decisions. Sanders (2022) and the Purpose Foundation (2020) describe steward-ownership as a mechanism to counteract these tendencies by tying control to individuals who are actively engaged in or structurally connected to the organization's mission and by restricting opportunities for speculative exit.

The contemporary discourse surrounding steward-ownership is rooted in established European traditions. Enterprises owned by foundations, such as Bosch and Zeiss, employed legal structures whereby a foundation retained controlling shares to ensure independence and public benefit over multiple generations. The Purpose Foundation (n.d.) and Sanders (2022) regard these historical precedents as significant reference points. More recently, scholarly debates concerning social enterprises and benefit corporations, alongside critiques of shareholder value maximization, have rekindled interest in ownership models that safeguard public benefit and long-term objectives through mechanisms such as purpose clauses, asset locks, and specific governance regulations (Möslein & Sanders, 2023; Stout, 2015). This historical perspective indicates that steward-ownership is one legal approach that has emerged within Western contexts to address specific economic and ethical concerns. In this thesis, it is therefore not treated as a universally applicable model, but as a paradigmatic example of how legal frameworks can be used to align purpose, control, and profit.

Within this research, steward-ownership functions as a structured comparison lens. It provides clear questions that can be asked of any organization. These include who holds decision-making power, how profits are used, how the mission is defined and protected, and how independence is secured over time (Purpose Foundation, 2020; Sanders, 2022). At the same time, decolonial authors warn against treating Western frameworks as neutral standards. Mignolo (2009) introduces the term epistemic disobedience to describe the decision to recognize many valid ways of knowing instead of assuming a single intellectual authority. Dussel (2012) argues for a transmodern horizon in which different traditions and rationalities enter into dialogue without hierarchy. Following these perspectives, this thesis uses steward-ownership as one voice among others. It is a tool to ask systematic questions about ownership and purpose, while Indigenous organizational forms are approached as equally grounded and authoritative in their own contexts.

Principle 1: Profits Serve Purpose

The first core principle of steward-ownership is that profits are subordinate to purpose. Within this context, the phrase refers to binding regulations that prioritize the organization's mission over private accumulation of gains. According to the Purpose Foundation (n.d.), steward-owned companies use surplus income predominantly towards enhancing their work and supporting those impacted by it. Common applications include reinvestment into the enterprise, fair participation for employees or communities, and limited, explicitly defined returns for investors who support the mission. The unrestricted extraction of profits for personal benefit is explicitly prohibited.

To make this principle effective, the company's purpose is documented within its founding documents or trust arrangements. These texts specify why the organization exists, who it aims to serve, and the activities that are aligned with its objectives. Purpose Foundation (2020) and Sanders (2022) demonstrate that modifications to such clauses are usually only under strict conditions or with the approval of independent supervisory entities. In many models, a separate foundation or guardian board monitors adherence to the purpose and possesses the authority to intervene should decisions undermine it. Consequently, purpose is not only an ethical aspiration. It becomes a legal and institutional commitment that shapes how profits may be used.

A central technical component is the capital or asset lock. Möslein and Sanders (2023) characterize asset locks as provisions that limit the distribution of assets in circumstances such as sale or liquidation. In steward-owned settings such clauses require that residual value be transferred to another purpose-aligned entity rather than being distributed freely among owners. Sanders (2022) explains that this measure diminishes incentives to sell the company for short-term gains and supports the preservation of its mission-oriented focus. The lock ensures that capital remains linked to the organization's field of activity, which may include employees, local communities, or public interest objectives, depending on the specific design.

Empirical evidence derived from Danish foundation-owned and steward-like companies suggests that such organizational structures can facilitate long-term investment, promote resilience, and enhance competitive performance, all while upholding a strong mission focus (Purpose Stiftung gGmbH, 2022). Stout (2015) argues that when opportunities for immediate value extraction are limited, the pressure to externalize costs to workers or ecosystems diminishes. In steward-owned enterprises, financial surplus is regarded as a shared resource that should be allocated toward maintaining the stability and integrity of the organization.

For this thesis, the principle that profits should serve purpose is translated into four analytical questions for the case studies. Firstly, it examines how purpose is defined and concretized within each organization. Secondly, it investigates how surpluses or alternative forms of value are utilized, considering whether explicit or implicit limitations on private gain exist. Thirdly, it explores the manner in which financial decisions are linked to responsibilities towards communities, territories, and future generations. Lastly, it assesses how organizations balance economic viability with their ethical and social commitments. These questions facilitate a careful comparison between steward-owned companies described in the literature and the Indigenous organizations examined in this study, without assuming that both follow identical logics.

Principle 2: Self-Governance

The second core principle is self-governance. In steward-ownership, self-governance signifies that authority over central decisions rests with individuals or entities dedicated to the organization's mission and engaged with its reality, rather than with external capital owners. The Purpose Foundation (n.d.) and Purpose Foundation (2020) describe models wherein voting rights are exclusively allocated to stewards. These stewards may include founders, employees, independent experts, or representatives from related organizations who satisfy specific criteria concerning competence and alignment with core values. Their responsibility is to act in the best interest of the enterprise and its mission.

A fundamental aspect of this principle is the segregation of voting rights and economic rights. In traditional corporations, shareholders possess both rights. In steward-owned structures, investors may be entitled to capped returns or interest-like payments, but they do not automatically acquire the authority to direct the organization. Sanders (2022) and the Purpose Foundation (2020) explain that this design safeguards the organization from control shifts driven solely by financial transactions. Möslein and Sanders (2023) connect this logic to the broader category of asset lock mechanisms that prevent mission-drifting takeovers.

Nipkow (2022) reads steward-ownership as an attempt to bring decision-making authority closer to those who are involved in the organization’s activities or explicitly mandated to protect its mission. In this regard, the model can be interpreted as challenging the strict divide between capital and labor that typifies traditional corporations. Stewards are not owners in the conventional sense who may do as they wish. Their role is closer to that of trustees or caretakers. Their authority is limited by the founding documents and by oversight from guardian entities where these exist (Sanders, 2022).

Non-transferable voting rights and the exclusion of automatic inheritance serve as fundamental safeguards. Purpose Foundation (2020) and Sanders (2022) describe how steward shares are typically linked to the individual or role of the steward. When a steward leaves the role or breaches their mandate, these rights expire and may be reallocated. Such measures prevent the prolonged concentration of control within families or investor groups and diminish incentives to treat control rights as assets for speculative purposes. Stout (2015) posits that these restrictions can support more stable and patient decision-making.

From a broader ethical perspective, self-governance within steward-ownership reflects concepts of collective self-determination. Dussel (2012) emphasizes the significance of communities being able to structure their institutions in accordance with their own values. Mignolo (2009) advocates for institutional designs that do not merely replicate dominant external priorities. This perspective is pertinent to this thesis, as numerous Indigenous organizations also emphasize autonomy, responsibility to their communities, and protection from external influence. Consequently, self-governance in steward-ownership serves as a reference framework to examine how various organizational forms seek to oversee their own development.

The empirical analysis draws five categories derived from this principle. These are: the association between engagement and decision-making power, the processes for selecting and replacing stewards or leaders, the mechanisms employed to safeguard organizations against hostile or misaligned takeovers, the organization of succession without automatic inheritance, and the balance between internal autonomy and accountability to members or communities. These categories facilitate a comparison between steward-owned corporations and Indigenous organizations along concrete questions of governance without assuming that one must mirror the other.

Implications for this thesis

The discussion of steward-ownership in this section defines how the concept is employed throughout the thesis. Steward-ownership is not posited as a universal paradigm that Indigenous organizations should follow. Instead, it provides a well-defined and limited set of dimensions that facilitate systematic comparison.

Five dimensions guide the subsequent analysis. The first is purpose orientation, which examines how organizations define their mission and the extent to which this mission influences decision-making processes. The second dimension concerns self-governance, focusing on the distribution of power and how control is linked to responsibility for the mission. The third dimension involves profit logic, analyzing the management of surplus and value, and whether private gains are restricted in favor of collective or long-term objectives. The fourth dimension addresses the time horizon, evaluating whether organizational structures support continuity and consider future generations. The fifth dimension is accountability, analyzing the formal and informal mechanisms that ensure alignment between stated values and daily practices. The selection of these dimensions is grounded in descriptions of steward-ownership practices (Purpose Foundation, n.d., 2020), legal and governance analyses (Nipkow, 2022; Sanders, 2022), and broader critiques of shareholder-value orientations (Stout, 2015).

These dimensions constitute the steward-ownership reference framework that forms one pole of the comparative resonance analysis developed in Section 2.3. Drawing on Mignolo (2009) and Dussel (2012), the thesis views theoretical models as part of a diverse, ongoing conversation. Steward-ownership is presented as one such model, originating from Western discourses on corporate law and responsibility. Indigenous ownership cosmologies, as shown in the empirical cases, are regarded as equally valid knowledge systems, reflecting different histories and relationships to land, community, and economy.

By explicitly framing steward-ownership as a dialogical reference point, the thesis aims to mitigate two potential risks. The first is using steward-ownership as a hidden standard for evaluating Indigenous practices. The second is romanticizing either framework. Instead, the analysis concentrates on the resonances, differences, and productive tensions between the two. The objective is to comprehend how various traditions conceptualize ownership and governance in ways that safeguard purpose, autonomy, and the well-being of communities and territories. These dimensions form one side of the comparative framework and are examined in relation to Indigenous ownership cosmologies outlined in the subsequent section.

2.2. Indigenous Ownership Cosmologies

Relational Worldviews

In the Indigenous contexts discussed in the referenced literature, ownership is often described less as a purely individual right to exclude others, and more as a collective relationship of care and responsibility. Land, water, beings, and people form an interconnected network that sustains community life. Gudynas (2011) describes Andean conceptions of community, wherein humans, animals, plants, and spiritual forces are considered part of a single living entity. Under this perspective, possessing rights to land or resources means assuming duties aimed at maintaining harmony within this community. This differs from dominant Western property models that often link ownership with control, transfer, and private benefit.

The community, ancestors, territory, and future generations constitute essential components of this relational community, which is characterized by shared responsibilities and ethical principles. McDonald and colleagues (2019) demonstrates that collective claims to land and resources reflect spiritual connections to place and carry duties across generations. Land is not solely a productive space but also embodies memory, identity, and the future of the community. Kelly and Woods (2021) portrays Indigenous economies as ethical frameworks striving for harmony with local ecologies. The utilization of resources is assessed based on its capacity to sustain cultural continuity and ecological integrity. Consequently, decisions concerning extraction or commercialization are never purely individual. They are evaluated in the context of relationships that link past, present, and future.

Given this relational orientation, various scholars have noted that the term "ownership" can be misleading when it implies complete control without associated obligations. Kelly and Woods (2021), along with Henriques and colleagues (2020) describe specific practices that can be interpreted as forms of stewardship, guardianship, and responsibility, whereby authority is exercised on behalf of a wider collective rather than as an unrestricted private entitlement. Stewardship refers to the caretaking of land, knowledge, or institutions on behalf of a broader community. Guardianship emphasizes that authority is held in trust and governed by collective norms. Rights are regarded not as permanent entitlements but as duties that must be renewed through reciprocity, accountability, and care.

These perspectives influence decision-making and accountability within Indigenous organizations. Henriques and colleagues (2020) observe that Indigenous entrepreneurs frequently depend on consultation and inclusive dialogue to uphold accountability to community expectations and the land. McDonald and colleagues (2019) note that, in place-based economies, economic governance is closely linked with cultural and political institutions. Accountability is preserved through relationships of trust rather than solely through formal contracts. Decisions that neglect community or territorial considerations risk being regarded as illegitimate, even when they are formally valid.

Decolonial theorists interpret these practices as challenges to dominant concepts of property. Mignolo (2009) contends that modern regimes of ownership have their origins in histories that transformed territories and peoples into objects of control. Indigenous relational worldviews resist this reduction by emphasizing mutual dependence as a fundamental source of knowledge and authority. Dussel (2012) proposes an ethic in which diverse civilizations coexist without hierarchy, prioritizing the protection of life. These perspectives support an understanding of ownership as rooted in relationships that extend beyond the individual and beyond the human.

Buen Vivir

Buen Vivir, frequently translated as living well, constitutes a political and philosophical proposal originating from Latin America that draws on Indigenous and communal cosmovisions. Gudynas (2011) explains that it places collective well-being, harmony with nature, and respect for ecological limits at the core of social organization. Well-being is assessed through balanced relationships within the community of humans and non-human beings, rather than through perpetual economic growth. Nature is regarded as an integral part of the social and spiritual community, rather than as a separate reservoir of resources.

This perspective stands in contrast to development models that equate progress solely with material growth, even when it damages ecosystems and communities. Gudynas (2011) criticizes these paradigms for assuming that extraction and consumption can continuously expand without constraints. Conversely, *Buen Vivir* associates prosperity with sufficiency, reciprocity, and care. Kelly and Woods (2021) supports this approach by describing Indigenous economies that aim to coexist harmoniously with their ecological environments and recognize limits as expressions of respect.

Dussel (2012) interprets *Buen Vivir* within a broader ethical framework whereby various cultural initiatives coexist without hierarchy, and in which responsibility extends to all forms of life. Economic activities are assessed by whether they support conditions for communities and ecosystems collectively. In this context, purpose and responsibility are inseparable.

Mignolo (2009, 2011) treats *Buen Vivir* as an example of epistemic disobedience. He interprets this as the effort to think and act beyond the development paradigms established by colonial power. *Buen Vivir* redefines discourse on progress through the lenses of relationality, coexistence, and dignity. Consequently, it exemplifies how Indigenous and communal philosophies enrich global dialogues on sustainability without being reduced to Western standards.

Buen Vivir is neither a singular Indigenous doctrine nor a universal formula. Gudynas (2011) emphasizes that it originates from particular Andean histories and struggles. Various Indigenous communities articulate their own notions of a good life and harmony. In this thesis, *Buen Vivir* is employed in a cautious and limited manner as one articulated expression of relational ethics. It serves to exemplify how community, ecology, and purpose can be interconnected within this regional context.

Land and Commons

Relational worldviews and *Buen Vivir* converge in understanding land, water, forests, and knowledge as commons that require shared care. Gudynas (2011) notes that territory is part of the community of life that must be protected to secure present and future well-being. Kelly and Woods (2021) and McDonald and colleagues (2019) describe how livelihoods, identities, and social relations are rooted in specific places.

Access to and utilization of communal resources are frequently regulated by principles of reciprocity and restraint. Henriques and colleagues (2020) demonstrate that Indigenous enterprises structure their activities to support families, cultural connections, and ecosystems. Kelly and Woods (2021) provide examples wherein hunting, fishing, or harvesting are conducted in accordance with traditional regulations that prevent overexploitation. These regulations associate rights to utilize with responsibilities to restore and share.

Collective responsibility for the commons involves a temporal dimension. McDonald and colleagues (2019) emphasize that numerous communities evaluate developmental decisions based on their effects on future generations and the preservation of relationships with the environment. Commons are regarded as legacies to be preserved and transmitted in a dignified manner, rather than as resources to be exhausted.

These logics differ from property regimes that define land and knowledge primarily as individual and fully transferable assets. Mignolo (2009, 2011) argues that such regimes originated from colonial histories and frequently disconnect control from responsibility. In contrast, the perspectives summarized here impose restrictions on the right to exclude and insist that control is inherently linked to duties of care. Gudynas (2011) emphasizes that *Buen Vivir* necessitates ecological limits that challenge unlimited extraction. Razeto (1999), writing from the perspective of solidarity economics in Latin America, similarly criticizes property arrangements that separate economic power from social obligations, thereby providing a complementary lens on the social responsibilities attached to ownership.

For this thesis, three principles are drawn from this discussion. Firstly, key resources are associated with collective well-being. Secondly, rights to utilization are connected to obligations of protection, reciprocity, and forward-looking care. Thirdly, decisions relating to the commons are integrated within social and cultural institutions. These guiding principles guide the analysis of how the case organizations define purpose, manage resources, and distribute benefits.

Organizational Forms

The values outlined above are expressed in varied organizational structures. Kelly and Woods (2021) along with Henriques and colleagues (2020) examine Indigenous enterprises that integrate economic activities with cultural, social, and territorial responsibilities. These organizations may resemble cooperatives or community associations, yet their foremost objective is to uphold collective well-being. Razeto (1999) recognizes similar characteristics in solidarity-based organizations, where production and exchange are oriented towards community needs and social justice.

Decision-making is frequently a participatory process. Henriques and colleagues (2020) report that entrepreneurs engage with elders, families, and communal bodies. Assemblies and councils serve as platforms for discussion and collective decision-making. McDonald and colleagues (2019) observe that governance is linked to local customs and ceremonies, which reinforce a sense of belonging and responsibility. Implementing shared leadership and rotating roles can mitigate the risk of power concentration and promote accountability.

Surpluses are frequently reinvested to strengthen community and environmental initiatives. Kelly and Woods (2021) describe how income may finance cultural events, education, or environmental projects. Henriques and colleagues (2020) emphasize enterprises that channel part of their earnings toward social welfare or ecosystem preservation. Razeto (1999) interprets such practices as expressions of solidarity, where profit is valued based on its contribution to the common good.

Spiritual and territorial dimensions also guide these forms. Gudynas (2011) and McDonald and colleagues (2019) observe that economic activities are evaluated in relation to sacred sites and ecological boundaries. Mignolo (2009, 2011) interprets such practices as alternative ways of knowing that affirm harmony, reciprocity, and continuity.

There is no universal organizational model that represents all Indigenous peoples. Udah (2024) warns against broad generalizations that overlook local specificities. The patterns presented herein are intended as illustrative frameworks rather than definitive typologies. They indicate which features of collective governance, reinvestment, and cultural accountability are relevant to the case studies.

Implications for this thesis

Based on this literature, five analytical dimensions are identified. Together, these dimensions constitute the Indigenous Ownership reference framework, which forms the second pole of the comparative resonance analysis developed in Section 2.3. The first is collectivity, meaning that ownership, labor, and surplus are oriented toward community benefit rather than only individual gain (Kelly & Woods, 2021; Razeto, 1999). The second is relational responsibility, which extends obligations to land, water, and other beings as members of the relational community (Gudynas, 2011; McDonald et al., 2019). The third is intergenerational continuity, which emphasizes responsibility for the effects of decisions on future generations (Dussel, 2012; McDonald et al., 2019). The fourth is reciprocity, understood as a balanced exchange that sustains social and ecological relations (Gudynas, 2011; Kelly & Woods, 2021). The fifth is embeddedness in place and culture, recognizing that organizational practices emerge from specific territories, histories, and languages (McDonald et al., 2019; Mignolo, 2009).

This thesis treats these dimensions as autonomous anchors for analysis and as equally valid in relation to the steward-ownership framework. They are not derived from steward-ownership concepts and are not presented as steps toward Western models. Following the approaches of Mignolo (2009) and Dussel (2012), the study seeks dialogue without hierarchy. Indigenous and steward-ownership frameworks are regarded as distinct modalities of connecting purpose, power, and responsibility. Their points of resonance and difference are examined without diminishing one perspective to the terminology of the other.

To avoid essentializing Indigenous peoples, two guiding commitments inform the analysis. Firstly, in accordance with Udah (2024), the thesis recognizes that there is no singular Indigenous worldview. The dimensions outlined here describe recurring themes documented in selected sources. Secondly, these dimensions are treated as working hypotheses that are refined through empirical investigation of Küme Mogen, Seynekun, and Mapu Lahual. The cases are analysed on their own terms and subsequently contextualized within both Indigenous and steward-ownership dimensions.

The dimensions of collectivity, relational responsibility, intergenerational continuity, reciprocity, and cultural embeddedness guide the interpretation of empirical data and support reflection on how organizations can demonstrate care for community and territory. They establish a foundation for examining the extent to which the practices of the case organizations align with stewardship ownership principles and where they represent distinct pathways of ownership and purpose. Accordingly, these Indigenous dimensions form the dialogical counterpart to the steward-ownership framework, and the subsequent section introduces the concept of resonance as the analytical bridge between them.

2.3. Resonance as Analytical Lens

According to Rosa

In this thesis, resonance is described as a relationship of mutual responsiveness between individuals and their environment. Hartmut Rosa interprets resonance as a way of relating in which subjects and their surroundings influence each other in ways that can effect transformation on both sides (Rosa, 2019). It involves three fundamental elements. Firstly, the environment addresses a person, group, or institution. Secondly, there is an authentic response. Thirdly, this exchange has the ability to bring change and remains inherently uncontrollable (Lijster et al., 2019; Rosa, 2019). When these elements are absent, relationships are characterized by either indifference or instrumental control, phenomena which Rosa refers to as alienation. Consequently, resonance is defined as the opposite of silent control.

Rosa's concept can be utilized to analyze social structures. Institutions and organizations support resonance when they enable individuals to be heard, participate, and influence decision-making processes. Conversely, they become alienating when relationships are shaped only by pressure, measurement, or unilateral commands (Rosa, 2019). Susen (2020) interprets Rosa's work as a critical sociology of global interactions and emphasizes that resonance may serve as an indicator of the quality of connections among individuals, institutions, and their environment.

Applied to ownership and organization, resonance emphasizes whether those wielding power are accountable to others. Steward-ownership associates control with responsibility, rather than with tradable shares, by linking decision-making authority to individuals or entities dedicated to a specific purpose (Purpose Foundation, n.d.; Sanders, 2022). This framework can create conditions whereby stewards attend to the voices of workers, communities, and other stakeholders, and direct decisions toward long-term objectives rather than short-term gains. Indigenous and solidarity-based perspectives describe leadership as accountable to land, ancestors, and the community, suggesting that authority arises from relationships founded on trust, reciprocity, and care (Gudynas, 2011; Kelly & Woods, 2021; McDonald et al., 2019). In both contexts, resonance helps to describe situations where ownership is exercised as a listening and responsive practice, rather than as distant command.

Resonance is also relevant for human interactions with the natural environment. Contemporary patterns of utilization can be interpreted as efforts to render the world entirely accessible and predictable, which frequently results in mute relationships with land, water, and ecosystems (Rosa, 2019). In contrast, many Indigenous philosophies, as examined by Gudynas (2011) and Kelly and Woods (2021), perceive nature as a living entity that communicates with human communities and must be respected. The concept of resonance makes it possible to describe these responsive relationships without undermining their distinctions.

Simultaneously, resonance has its limitations. Rosa emphasizes that resonance cannot be methodically planned, purchased, or imposed, and it remains partially beyond control (Lijster et al., 2019; Rosa, 2019). Susen (2020) warns that viewing resonance solely as a harmonious ideal could weaken its critical significance. Real resonant relations include tension and vulnerability. Conflicts over land, employment, or identity can remain impactful when actors recognize each other and stay open to influence. Decolonial scholars such as Mignolo (2009) and Udah (2024) emphasize that analytical frameworks derived from European theory should not serve to silence other epistemologies.

Resonance is therefore regarded as a careful analytical approach. It invites questions about whether the relationships among organizations, communities, and territories are reciprocal and accountable, or unilateral and extractive. It preserves an awareness of power dynamics and inequalities, as the absence of material security or political voice may hinder resonance.

Between Steward-Ownership and Indigenous Cosmologies

In this thesis, the term "resonances" pertains to potential correspondences between steward-ownership and Indigenous relational cosmologies. It does not assert that the two frameworks are identical, nor that one validates the other. Instead, it identifies areas where ethical orientations appear to align, such as prioritizing purpose over profit, commitments to long-term continuity, and conceptualizations of ownership as responsibility. These resonances are understood as the researcher's interpretation, grounded in the respective literatures.

One overlap concerns purpose and responsibility. Steward-ownership links control to a specific mission and limits profit extraction so that gains benefit the enterprise and its broader stakeholders (Purpose Foundation, n.d.; Sanders, 2022). Indigenous perspectives described by Kelly and Woods (2021) and McDonald and colleagues (2019) define the right to use land and resources through duties toward community, ancestors, and territory. In both cases, the legitimacy of control depends on serving a wider collective.

A secondary resonance appears in relation to time. Stout (2015) and Sanders (2022) demonstrate that steward-ownership frameworks are constructed to safeguard organizations from short term speculation and to secure continuity. Indigenous perspectives, as articulated by Gudynas (2011) and Dussel (2012), emphasize intergenerational responsibility and evaluate actions based on their long-term impacts on the community of life. Both orientations treat economic activities to be accountable to future generations.

A third area relates to governance. Steward-ownership depends on stewards and guardian bodies that are expected to act with integrity and maintain accountability to the stated purpose (Nipkow, 2022; Purpose Foundation, 2020). Indigenous organizations, as discussed by Henriques and colleagues (2020) and Kelly and Woods (2021), frequently utilize participatory decision-making through assemblies, consensus procedures, and shared leadership. In both contexts, decision-makers are embedded within relationships that can question and correct their actions.

Simultaneously, significant tensions constrain resonance. Steward-ownership remains rooted in corporate law and market-based economies. Even when profits are aligned with purpose, companies operate within competitive environments shaped by global capitalism (Möslein & Sanders, 2023; Purpose Foundation, n.d.). In contrast, many Indigenous economies are based on collective land relations, spiritual ties to territory, and norms that do not regard nature as a commodity (Gudynas, 2011; McDonald et al., 2019). Indigenous cosmologies also incorporate spiritual and beyond-human dimensions into economic and political life, whereas steward-ownership articulates its ethics within secular legal frameworks. These disparities highlight dissonances that must remain visible.

Decolonial scholars advise caution in the use of resonance language, warning against transforming Indigenous practices into mere illustrations for Western reforms. Mignolo (2009, 2011) and Udah (2024) emphasize that Indigenous epistemologies must be recognized as autonomous and not simply used as supporting evidence for external models. Following this guidance, the thesis does not propose that Indigenous worlds serve to validate steward-ownership. Rather, steward-ownership and Indigenous cosmologies are presented as distinct participants in a dialogue about responsible ownership. In this context, resonance signifies the potential for principles such as responsibility, reciprocity, or long-term care to communicate across traditions while preserving their unique differences.

Operationalizing Resonance

Building on the steward-ownership and Indigenous Ownership reference frameworks developed in Sections 2.1 and 2.2, this subsection explains how resonance operates as the analytical bridge between them. To use resonance in a concrete and transparent manner, this thesis develops a set of analytical dimensions that integrate the theoretical discussion with case studies. These dimensions draw on literature on steward-ownership, Indigenous and solidarity-based economies, and resonance theory. Each dimension has two reference poles: steward-ownership principles on one end and Indigenous relational orientations on the other.

The first dimension is purpose and the common good. Concerning steward-ownership, this emphasizes the dedication to a well-defined mission and the principle that profits are directed towards supporting this mission rather than external shareholders (Purpose Foundation, n.d.; Sanders, 2022). Regarding Indigenous perspectives, it relates to notions of communal well-being, whereby economic actions are evaluated based on their contributions to the community and ecological harmony (Gudynas, 2011; Kelly & Woods, 2021).

The second dimension is control and responsibility. Steward-ownership separates voting rights from economic rights and assigns control to stewards committed to the company's mission (Nipkow, 2022; Purpose Foundation, 2020). Indigenous frameworks emphasize collective decision-making and leadership accountable to kinship networks, land, and cultural commitments (Henriques et al., 2020; McDonald et al., 2019).

The third dimension concerns profit and surplus logic. In steward-owned firms, surplus is primarily reinvested, utilized for capped returns, or allocated to social purposes, thereby constraining private accumulation (Purpose Foundation, n.d.; Sanders, 2022). Indigenous and solidarity perspectives, as presented by Kelly and Woods (2021) and Razeto (1999), interpret surplus as a resource for redistribution, community support, and cultural preservation.

The fourth dimension is the relationship with land and nature. Steward-ownership does not automatically alter human nature relations, but its focus on long-term independence and the safeguarding of missions can bolster environmental initiatives where they are integral to the purpose. Indigenous cosmologies, as described by Gudynas (2011) and McDonald and colleagues (2019), view land and ecosystems as members of a relational community.

The fifth dimension is temporality and the intergenerational horizon. Steward-ownership instruments, such as asset locks and foundation ownership, are designed to ensure continuity and to safeguard companies against speculative sale (Möslein & Sanders, 2023; Purpose Foundation, 2020; Stout, 2015). Indigenous perspectives emphasize responsibilities to future generations and the preservation of relationships with territory and culture (Dussel, 2012; McDonald et al., 2019).

These five resonance dimensions function as comparative categories within the Case Study Protocol (Annex D) and constitute the analytical framework that guides the entire case study analysis. Within each category, resonance is employed as an ethical and analytical question about whether relationships are characterized by mutual responsiveness and responsibility or by unilateral control.

Throughout this process, resonance is regarded as a two-way encounter. Following Rosa (2019), Lijster and colleagues (2019), Susen (2020), and decolonial perspectives (Dussel, 2012; Mignolo, 2011; Udah, 2024), this thesis does not presume that one framework offers a standard and that the other must adapt accordingly. Instead, steward-ownership principles and Indigenous cosmologies are regarded as distinct yet equally significant sources of critique and insight. The operationalization of resonance aims to maintain this balance visibly and to create space in which similarities and differences can be articulated with precision, without transforming Indigenous practices into evidence for Western theories or presenting steward-ownership as a universal solution.

In simple terms, these dimensions help clarify the analysis for both academic and non-academic readers. They turn abstract debates into specific questions that bridge the two reference frameworks introduced in Sections 2.1 and 2.2. For example, they ask who benefits from an organization, who makes decisions, how money is spent, how land and nature are treated, and how far into the future responsibilities extend. By addressing these questions for each case, the thesis can highlight where steward-ownership initiatives and Indigenous organizations move in similar directions and where they diverge. In this way, resonance remains a useful tool for dialogue and acknowledges that each community and model speaks from its own history and experience. It also emphasizes that meaningful connection always involves taking responsibility for others.

2.4. Cultural Appropriation

Concept and Relevance

In this thesis, cultural appropriation refers to the unacknowledged and decontextualized application of Indigenous concepts, values, or knowledge systems by individuals outside the communities from which these ideas emerge (Mignolo, 2009; Smith, 2021; Tuck & Yang, 2012). It is particularly problematic when notions such as communal responsibility, reciprocity, spirituality, or harmony with nature are extracted from their original contexts and employed to give ethical legitimacy to Western models of ownership or organization without proper consent, dialogue, or accountability. Tuck and Yang (2012) caution that such practices often transform Indigenous struggles into symbolic resources for non-Indigenous initiatives. They contend that decolonization is not merely a metaphor for general social improvement but constitutes a material and political project that involves the restitution of land and authority to Indigenous peoples. When concepts such as *Buen Vivir* or relational economy are utilized solely to enrich Western narratives, without engaging with these concrete demands, this becomes a continuation of colonial patterns.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2021) demonstrates that this issue is profoundly embedded in research methodologies. She explains that Western academia has historically regarded Indigenous peoples as sources of data, while denying them the status of theorists and decision-makers. Appropriation in research occurs when Indigenous knowledge is extracted, simplified, and reinterpreted without regard for the relationships and responsibilities from which it arises. In numerous Indigenous traditions, knowledge is not regarded as an individual asset but as part of a network of obligations to the community, ancestors, land, and future generations. When removed from this network, it loses its meaning and may reinforce hierarchical structures established through colonization. For this thesis, this implies that Indigenous organizations are considered as holders of knowledge in their own right, rather than merely as illustrations of steward-ownership or Western concepts of resonance.

Mignolo (2009) describes such one-sided use of non-Western knowledge as a component of a colonial pattern of control over knowing. He calls for epistemic disobedience, which means refusing to translate all knowledge into Western frameworks and acknowledging other traditions as equivalently valid sources of theory. Similarly, Dussel (2012) calls for a pluriversal horizon whereby diverse civilizations and peoples contribute their own ethical and communal understandings without being hierarchically ranked. Building on these insights, this thesis understands Indigenous economies discussed by Kelly and Woods (2021), along with McDonald and colleagues (2019) as grounded in place, kinship, and spirituality, and therefore at risk of being reduced to technical models for 'sustainability' within existing market logics. Such reductions can transform complex relational systems into tools for optimizing capitalism, rather than recognizing their distinct ethical and political foundations. Udah (2024) characterizes this dynamic as epistemic violence, given its tendency to silence the political demands and lived realities of Indigenous communities.

In this thesis, cultural appropriation is therefore conceptualized as a violation of relational ethics. It occurs whenever Indigenous concepts are used to support Western frameworks without fully acknowledging their origins, meanings, and political implications. To prevent this, the study makes its own position explicit and regards Indigenous perspectives as autonomous.

Epistemic Disobedience

Walter Mignolo's concept of epistemic disobedience provides guidance on how this thesis engages with multiple knowledge systems. In "Epistemic Disobedience" (2009), he argues that modernity established a power structure rooted in colonial history that defines what is considered rational, scientific, and universal. This matrix privileges European experiences and categories. Epistemic disobedience involves detaching from this hierarchy and affirming the right of communities to think from their own histories, languages, and relationships. It does not reject Western knowledge, but it refuses to recognize it as the sole or superior standard.

In "Geopolitics of Sensing and Knowing" (2011), Mignolo characterizes border thinking as knowledge that originates from the spaces where different worlds meet. People and communities residing in these border zones retain memories of colonization and develop perspectives that are not entirely compatible with dominant frameworks. For Mignolo, it is an ethical task. It requires listening attentively without absorbing them into pre-existing theoretical frameworks. This approach is fundamental to this thesis. Indigenous organizations involved in this study are regarded as producers of concepts, rather than as case material to be interpreted through Western categories.

Smith (2021) and Udah (2024) reinforce this viewpoint by arguing that decolonizing research involves transitioning from extraction to establishing relationships. Knowledge should be generated in collaboration with communities, with careful attention to their priorities and interpretations. Tuck and Yang (2012) further emphasize that decolonization cannot be simplified to merely adopting Indigenous languages while maintaining existing power structures. Consistent with these perspectives, this thesis does not regard steward-ownership as a framework that explains Indigenous practices. Instead, it interprets steward-ownership and Indigenous cosmologies as interconnected. Each framework is permitted to question the other, with resonance, as developed in Chapter 2.3, serving as a means to describe these moments of mutual questioning and learning.

Practicing epistemic disobedience in this thesis therefore has two main consequences. Analytically, it signifies that concepts such as *Buen Vivir*, collective guardianship, or relational responsibility are not regarded as preliminary or incomplete adaptations of steward-ownership. Instead, they are approached as comprehensive ethical and political systems rooted within their respective cultural contexts. Ethically, this approach ensures that the thesis avoids speaking on behalf of Indigenous organizations. Instead, it accurately presents their words and practices as originally shared, recognizes the boundaries of interpretation, and remains open to correction.

Transmodernity and the Ethics of Liberation

Enrique Dussel's work introduces an ethical dimension to the decolonial framework. In "Transmodernity and Interculturality" (2012), he argues that modernity is historically associated with conquest and exclusion. Claims of universal reason and progress frequently disregarded or suppressed the knowledge of colonized populations. Dussel advocates for transmodernity as an alternative horizon. Transmodernity does not entirely reject aspects of modern life, but it creates space for a pluriverse, a world characterized by diverse centers of experience and reflection. Within this pluriverse, no single tradition defines what counts as valid knowledge or ethical life.

Dussel's Ethics of Liberation begins with listening to marginalized populations. He writes that ethical responsibility starts with hearing the cries of those suffering under unjust systems (Dussel, 2012). This is not only as a moral statement, but also as a methodological guideline. It implies that research and theoretical development should be oriented by the perspectives of individuals affected by economic and political decisions. Smith (2021) and Udah (2024) reinforce this point when they argue that research must be accountable to Indigenous communities and should align with their priorities, rather than solely serving academic debates.

For this thesis, transmodernity provides a methodological approach to conceptualizing comparison as a form of cooperation. It proposes that steward-ownership and Indigenous ownership cosmologies can engage in a shared discourse concerning responsibility, purpose, and sustainability without necessitating the reduction of one framework into the other. This supports the importance of resonance as a central concept. Resonance, comprehended as mutual responsiveness, is regarded as a transmodern practice when it facilitates the interaction of diverse traditions without hierarchical imposition. The theories of Mignolo's epistemic disobedience and Dussel's transmodernity collaboratively promote an interpretive framework whereby each tradition maintains its integrity while simultaneously engaging in dialogue.

Dussel also contributes to guard against two risks identified in this thesis. The first risk involves prioritizing steward-ownership over Indigenous practices, as if legal innovation in the Global North were the standard benchmark for ethical organization. The second risk is romanticizing Indigenous communities as pure alternatives to capitalism. Both viewpoints neglect to acknowledge Indigenous peoples as complex political actors. Transmodern ethics rejects such simplifications. Kelly and Woods (2021) and McDonald and colleagues (2019) demonstrate that Indigenous economies integrate care for land

and community with participation in broader markets and state structures. Acknowledging this complexity is integral to the ethics of liberation.

Analytical and Ethical Consequences

This final subsection clarifies how the decolonial principles outlined above influence the analytical decisions of the thesis. The research is guided by four fundamental commitments: epistemic humility, accountability, consent, and contextual interpretation. Epistemic humility means that the author does not claim a neutral or absolute perspective. Following Mignolo (2009) and Dussel (2012), the thesis presents its theoretical framework as inherently situated and open to question. Accountability refers to the obligation to represent Indigenous organizations in a manner that accurately reflects their self-description and aims (Smith, 2021; Udah, 2024). Consent implies that participation in the research and the sharing of knowledge are entirely voluntary and must be respected. Contextual interpretation necessitates that essential concepts such as ownership, purpose, or community are consistently interpreted in relation to their cultural and historical contexts.

These commitments influence the manner in which the thesis addresses Indigenous organizations. They are regarded as autonomous subjects who reflect upon their own practices, propose concepts, and evaluate external models. Their narratives are not employed to validate steward-ownership, but rather to facilitate dialogue with it. Similarly, steward-owned companies are not idealized but examined through the same ethical framework. The comparison seeks to examine how each framework allocates power, defines responsibility, and engages with land, community, and future generations. Resonance operates here as an interpretive instrument that highlights where relationships of mutual responsiveness appear and where silence or tension remains.

Language constitutes a vital component of this practice. In accordance with Smith (2021), the thesis avoids terms that implies dominance or deficit. When terms such as cosmology, ownership, or stewardship are used, their meanings are explained in clear and unambiguous language. Descriptions are centered on relationships of care, responsibility, and connection rather than technical formulations. This methodology aims to render the text accessible to a broader readership beyond academic circles, including the Indigenous organizations engaged in the study.

From an analytical perspective, the decolonial commitments outlined in this section are integrated as an cross-cutting category of challenges and tensions. It is applied across all cases and resonance dimensions, not as an isolated normative benchmark, but as an interpretative lens to identify where relationships may become exploitative, instrumentalized, or silencing. Consequently, the ethical commitments articulated here directly influence the interpretation of empirical findings.

The decolonial framework also influences the manner in which boundaries are recognized. Tuck and Yang (2012) emphasize that decolonization cannot be simplified to metaphors of inclusion or acknowledgment. Similarly, this thesis does not claim to resolve colonial histories or to represent all Indigenous peoples. It presents its findings as partial and specific to the cases examined. By integrating steward-ownership literature with Indigenous perspectives through the concept of resonance, the thesis aims to facilitate a thoughtful and respectful discussion of economic alternatives. Its ethical orientation can be summarized by a single expectation: knowledge should serve to strengthen relationships founded on responsibility rather than systems of extraction. These commitments inform the analysis of all case studies in subsequent chapters and constitute the core of the framework. The next chapter translates these ethical and theoretical commitments into the research design and explains how they directed data collection and analysis.

3. Methodology

3.1. Case Study Design

This study adopts Robert K. Yin's methodology for case study research (Yin, 2018). Yin (2018) describes the case study approach as an empirical method for examining a contemporary phenomenon within its real-world environment, particularly when the boundary between the phenomenon and its context is unclear. Case studies are effective when there are more variables than data points, when multiple evidence sources are utilized, and when the researcher formulates theoretical frameworks prior to data collection and analysis.

According to Yin (2018), three conditions suggest the appropriateness of case study research. Firstly, the research question begins with “how” or “why.” Secondly, the researcher has limited or no control over events or behaviors. Thirdly, the focus is on contemporary issues. This study fulfills all three conditions. The guiding question is a “how” question, as it seeks to trace processes and relationships as they develop. The research does not attempt to control behavior. The data include both current interviews and recent organizational materials.

Yin’s approach is traditionally based on realism and presumes a singular objective reality (Yin, 2018). Nonetheless, case studies may also be undertaken from a relativist perspective that acknowledges multiple realities and viewpoints (Harrison et al., 2017). As this research addresses cultural appropriation, Indigenous worldviews, and various interpretations of ownership and purpose, a relativist stance is adopted. Within this framework, the research design adheres to Yin’s methodology: initially determining whether to employ a single-case or multiple-case approach, followed by a decision on whether to examine the case in a holistic manner or employing embedded units of analysis. Although the structure resembles a single-case design, this investigation is classified as a multiple-case study due to the examination of several organizations, each encompassing multiple levels of analysis.

Multiple sources of evidence were gathered, including interviews, field notes, public sources, and registry records (Annex D, B2). Reviewing the issue from different angles helps identify important details that a single source might miss (Baxter & Jack, 2008). These sources support multiple levels of analysis (Annex D, C5), based on the resonance framework from Section 2.3: purpose and the common good, control and responsibility, profit and surplus logic, relationship with land and nature, and temporality and the intergenerational horizon. Furthermore, a cross-cutting category of challenges and tensions, informed by the decolonial-ethical considerations in Section 2.4, is used to capture conflicts, risks of appropriation, and contextual constraints. The resulting research design is a multiple embedded case study. In an embedded design, the case constitutes the organization, and the subunits represent the analytical facets mentioned above. This approach enables analysis within subunits, between subunits, and across subunits, all whilst maintaining an overarching view of the case (Baxter & Jack, 2008). A common error is to concentrate solely on subunits, thereby losing sight of the case as a whole. Such an error is explicitly avoided in this instance.

The three cases share a common analytical framework. Each is an Indigenous organization that puts ownership, purpose, and autonomy into practice. Using Yin's (2018) replication logic for multiple case studies, these cases were selected to facilitate similar findings under comparable conditions, a process known as literal replication. This approach enables analytic generalization, which involves linking findings to theoretical concepts rather than making statistical claims about a larger population (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2018). The comparison categories are uniformly applied across the cases: (1) purpose and the common good, (2) control and responsibility, (3) profit and surplus logic, (4) relationship with land and nature, and (5) temporality and the intergenerational horizon which are complemented by a cross-cutting category of challenges and tensions (Annex D, C5).

The unit of analysis is the organization. Individual people provide data about the organization but are not the units of analysis themselves. Case selection followed clear criteria to support literal replication, ensuring that similar patterns could be examined under comparable conditions. Criteria included Indigenous affiliation, regional and sectoral diversity, accessibility, willingness to participate, and conceptual fit. Initial contact was made through an internship network. Final decisions were made independently and recorded in the protocol (Annex D, A4). The selected cases are comparable in key aspects, allowing the identification of recurring patterns of resonance between steward-ownership principles and Indigenous ownership cosmologies.

The study is primarily explanatory as it aims to comprehend how ownership, autonomy, and purpose operate within organizations. It is also exploratory in nature because it maps conceptual connections between steward-ownership and Indigenous practices that have not been extensively examined. According to Yin (2018), case studies serve to test and refine propositions through analytic generalization rather than statistical inference. This methodology necessitates theoretical groundwork before field research. The resulting findings may then serve to refine, expand, or challenge initial hypotheses, and, if necessary, integrate new concepts that arise from the cases.

Yin (2018) highlights three key quality criteria for case studies. Construct validity relates to whether the study truly measures the intended concepts. External validity addresses whether the results can be applied to broader theories. Reliability concerns whether the procedures are transparent and consistent enough for another researcher to replicate the study steps.

Construct validity was supported by using multiple sources that converge on the same issue and maintaining a transparent chain of evidence (Yin, 2018). Triangulation, which involves comparing interviews, documents, and public records regarding the same point, improves construct validity by cross-checking meanings from different perspectives. External validity was bolstered by applying literal replication logic across the three cases, assessing whether similar patterns appeared under comparable conditions.

Reliability is assured by the Case Study Protocol (Annex D) and the Case Study Database, which promote transparency and procedural consistency (Yin, 2018). The database serves as a systematically organized record of case materials, including structured folders and an Excel tracking log for cases, contacts, communications, and evidence (Annex D, B2). As Yin (2018, p. 176) states, “the creation of a case study database markedly increases the reliability of your entire case study”.

Methodological transparency is maintained through the protocol, the database, and clear reporting. The protocol sets out research questions, criteria for case selection, data collection procedures, and analysis methods. The database systematically organizes materials in a retrievable format and is described within the protocol. The database is not provided as an annex because of confidentiality and ethical reasons. This method follows guidelines for internet research, considering different legal, privacy, and contextual standards (Eynon et al., 2017). It balances confidentiality with traceability by maintaining an auditable chain of evidence within the protocol and methods narrative. The report offers enough evidence, considers alternative views, and shows how the conclusions can be traced to their sources.

Cross-case analysis synthesizes results from Küme Mogen, Seynekun, and Mapu Lahual. Individual participants remain anonymous. Patterns are examined across cases to identify literal replications, defined as similar findings observed under comparable conditions. This approach facilitates analytic generalization to the study's theoretical ideas (Yin, 2018).

3.2. Data Collection and Analysis

Data Collection

Data collection followed Yin's (2018) principle of utilizing multiple sources to understand a phenomenon within its context comprehensively. A significant advantage of case study research is that the conclusions are more compelling when they are based on converging lines of evidence. Consequently, this study incorporated semi-structured interviews, field notes, public sources, and registry records (Annex D, B2 & C3). This approach facilitated triangulation, which involves verifying whether different sources point to the same conclusion.

Participant access and case selection followed Yin's (2018) replication-oriented design and the procedures outlined in the Case Study Protocol. Each case was bounded at the organizational level. Individuals served as sources of evidence, rather than cases. Selection criteria were predefined (Annex D, A4): Indigenous affiliation, diversity across regions and sectors, accessibility, willingness to participate, and conceptual fit. The objective was to facilitate literal replication by selecting cases where similar patterns could be anticipated under comparable conditions. To preserve analytical depth, the screening process was designed to exclude the collection of "mini cases" outside the designated sample.

The access procedures (Annex D, B1) combined formal and relational steps. Initial contact was made through email with the Introductory Letter (Annex A). To ensure communication, a reminder email and, if needed, a follow-up email were sent, along with messages via WhatsApp, Facebook, or LinkedIn. Once interest was confirmed, participants received the Informed Consent Form (Annex B) and were informed of their right to withdraw at any time. Most later interactions took place via WhatsApp. All interviews were conducted online using platforms like Zoom, Google Meet, or WhatsApp Video. Verbal consent was obtained at the beginning of each interview.

Interviews were semi-structured and were guided by the Interview Guide (Annex C), which was developed in accordance with Yin's (2018) principles for case study interviews. The guide consisted of three sections. The initial section provided an introduction to the study, along with details regarding consent and confidentiality. The second section contained key questions concerning purpose, autonomy, ownership values, and challenges. The final section invited participants to share closing reflections. This framework maintained consistency across different cases while allowing for adaptability based on context.

Each interview was conducted in Spanish with prior consent. It lasted between 45 and 60 minutes and it was recorded. Handwritten field notes were used to capture context and non-verbal cues. Following the Standards for Reporting Qualitative Research of O'Brien and colleagues (2014), each transcript included metadata such as date, medium, participant code, language, and duration. Transcripts and notes were stored in the Case Study Database (Annex D, B2) and coded for retrieval and analysis. Consistent with Baxter and Jack (2008), interviews were considered as one perspective among several. Public sources and registry records were utilized to verify and deepen the information obtained from interviews.

Ethical conduct and data security were prioritized throughout the data collection process. Procedures followed Yin's (2018) principles to maintain a chain of the evidence and the development of a comprehensive case study database. This database included recordings, transcripts, field notes, and related documents. All files were stored securely in restricted-access folders, with participant identifiers anonymized to protect confidentiality.

Participants were provided with written details about the study's goals, confidentiality measures, and their right to withdraw (Annex A and B). This procedure aligns with the EU Guidelines for Ethics in Social Science and Humanities Research (Rauhala & Kalokairinou, 2021) and the EU Guidance on Research Ethics in Ethnography/Anthropology (Iphofen, 2021). Verbal consent was also reaffirmed at the beginning of each interview. Files will be securely deleted after thesis evaluation in accordance with the specified retention period.

The study drew on Udah (2024) and Billo and Hiemstra (2013) to highlight the importance of relational accountability, community benefit, and reflexivity within the context of cross-cultural research. Ethical considerations were approached as an ongoing relationship characterized by respect and care, rather than merely a set of procedural requirements. Consistent with the approach by Eynon and colleagues (2017), online platforms were selected and utilized in ways that aligned with participants' preferences and contextual considerations.

Triangulation supported construct validity and credibility. In accordance with Yin (2018), evidence derived from interviews, field notes, public sources, and registry records was systematically compared within each analytic category. Each documented finding is supported by at least two independent sources where feasible. Field notes provide contextual information, and the Case Study Database associates each excerpt with the pertinent question and analytic theme. This methodology ensures a transparent linkage from raw data to interpretations.

Triangulation also proved effective across multiple cases. Consistent with literal replication logic, the analysis examined whether patterns identified in one organization re-emerged under similar circumstances in other organizations. The integration of within-case triangulation and cross-case synthesis enhanced internal coherence and reinforced the strength of analytic generalization (Yin, 2018).

Data Analysis

The analysis integrated three logical approaches recommended by Yin (2018) for case studies. Pattern matching was employed to compare anticipated patterns with observed data. Explanation building involved progressively refining causal hypotheses in accordance with emerging evidence. Cross-case synthesis compared whole-case patterns across different organizations.

Pattern matching served as the primary analytical logic. Prior to fieldwork, provisional sequences of conditions and outcomes were established. During the analysis phase, these anticipated sequences were systematically compared to the observations obtained from each case. Rival explanations were explicitly considered, which entailed identifying and testing alternative interpretations of the same pattern.

The process of explanation building complemented pattern matching. Initially, the study commenced with certain hypotheses regarding the potential functioning of the cases, which were subsequently compared with the actual findings. When the data indicated discrepancies, these hypotheses were revised and subjected to further testing in subsequent analysis cycles. Yin (2018) characterizes this as an iterative process, implying that the researcher moves back and forth between theory and data multiple times. This methodology integrates two reasoning approaches: deductive, which involves starting from an existing theory or idea and verifying its support through evidence, and inductive, which entails deriving new insights directly from the data. By alternately applying these two reasoning strategies, the resulting explanations attain both logical validity and a clear linkage to the observed phenomena in the cases.

The cross-case synthesis concentrated on literal replications, investigating whether similar outcomes occurred under comparable conditions across the three organizations. The analysis remained case-oriented rather than variable-oriented. The objective was to achieve conceptual generalization through reasoned interpretation rather than through statistical aggregation.

The analytical process was conducted through interconnected phases. Initially, each case was coded thematically. Codes were derived from the data and aligned with the predefined analytical categories, thereby generating within-case patterns that maintained the integrity of each case's narrative. Subsequently, pattern matching was executed for each individual case. Observed sequences were compared against initial expectations, with rival explanations documented and evaluated. Where helpful, simple benchmarks were established to enhance clarity. Next, explanation building was achieved through iterative comparison between theoretical frameworks and data, resulting in refined explanations of the mechanisms underlying specific outcomes. Finally, the cross-case synthesis employed structured word tables with consistent dimensions across all cases (Annex D, C5). This facilitated a methodical comparison across cases. Throughout the entire process, emphasis remained on comprehensive pattern comparison.

Transparency was ensured through the utilization of various tools. A comprehensive audit trail documented analytic decisions, iterative processes, and alternative explanations. An Excel tracking matrix interconnected codes, quotations, and sources across different cases. Version-controlled files preserved the progression from raw data to final conclusions. The codebook delineated each code, specified inclusion and exclusion criteria, and provided exemplary evidence. The codebook was subjected to review to ensure consistency across iterations.

Ethical transparency and accountability adhered to the EU Research Ethics guidelines in Ethnography/Anthropology as outlined by Iphofen (2021). Participants' rights to confidentiality, withdrawal, and informed consent were respected. Interpretations were documented transparently to enable future review or discussion if desired by participants. Reflexivity, as emphasized by Billo and Hiemstra (2013), was incorporated through reflective memos addressing positionality, emotions, and constraints. Methodological flexibility was regarded as an ethical asset, as it facilitated sensitive adaptation to field realities while maintaining clear documentation.

Cross-case synthesis extended triangulation from data collection to interpretative analysis. Adhering to Yin's logic of literal replication, patterns identified in one organization were subsequently examined in other organizations operating under comparable conditions (Yin, 2018). The primary aim was to achieve conceptual generalization that remains grounded in the authentic contexts of Indigenous organizations.

The resulting structure comprises four hierarchical layers. Firstly, within-case explanations supported by converging evidence and explicit testing of rival hypotheses. Secondly, cross-case patterns identified through literal replications. Thirdly, higher-level theoretical concepts that arise from recurring mechanisms. Lastly, ethical and reflexive considerations that ensure methodological rigor and social responsibility. Where rival explanations remain unresolved, they are documented transparently as open issues for future investigation, in accordance with Yin's recommendation to address plausible rivals and report unresolved ones (Yin, 2018).

3.3. Limitations and Ethical Considerations

Methodological and Contextual Limitations

This study is qualitative, interpretive, and case-based. These choices shape what the study can and cannot claim. Case studies provide rich context, but they limit statistical generalization (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2018). Choosing a small number of cases allows for depth but restricts the ability to make broad claims about the population. Qualitative case work also relies on the researcher's interpretive skills. Therefore, the researcher's position is part of how data are generated and understood, not an external influence (Harrison et al., 2017).

Dependence on semi-structured and online interviews introduces certain limitations. Online environments diminish opportunities for observing non-verbal cues and complicate the process of rapport building. O'Brien and colleagues (2014) emphasize that transparent reporting can assist readers judge the credibility of these methodological choices. Variations in language, local expressions, and digital accessibility occasionally influence how questions are interpreted. According to Billo and Hiemstra (2013), this inherent "messiness" should not be regarded as a flaw. Rather, it constitutes a reflexive space that shows how knowledge is negotiated under unequal conditions.

Another limitation concerns the social and cultural diversity among participants. Udah (2024) argues that decolonizing research necessitates sensitivity to diverse knowledge systems. The translation between local epistemologies and academic terminology is inherently imperfect. The interpretive framework employed herein was developed within Western academic settings and may have privileged certain concepts. Consequently, the findings should be regarded as context-specific insights rather than universally applicable truths.

Ethical Integrity and Cultural Sensitivity

Ethics in qualitative and decolonial research extend beyond formal procedures and approvals. They fundamentally concern the establishment of respectful and trusting relationships. Consistent with Iphofen's (2021) guidelines on informed consent, participants were provided with comprehensive information, retained the right to withdraw at any point, and were offered the option to use pseudonyms for their organizations. Consent was regarded as an ongoing process rather than a singular event, a consideration of particular importance when interviews are conducted in multiple stages or involve sensitive cultural matters.

Data confidentiality was safeguarded through restricted access, explicit retention limits, and the elimination of direct identifiers. O'Brien and colleagues (2014) emphasize that transparent data management enhances credibility. Anonymized transcripts were retained solely for as long as ethically and legally required. Care was exercised to prevent harm arising from misrepresentation. This aligns with Iphofen's perspective that researchers bear responsibility for the curation and dissemination of "gifted" data (Iphofen, 2021).

Cultural sensitivity was upheld through ongoing reflexivity and respectful dialogue. Consistent with Udah (2024), the study acknowledged participants as co-producers of knowledge rather than mere data sources. Interviews were conducted as open conversations that appreciated Indigenous and local epistemologies. Mignolo's (2009) concept of epistemic disobedience served as a reference point for challenging hierarchical structures between researcher and participant.

Power asymmetries represent an unavoidable source of tension. Iphofen (2021) and Billo and Hiemstra (2013) warn that rapport may evolve into undue influence if the researcher is perceived as an authoritative figure. To mitigate this risk, communication was culturally attuned, the researcher's role and boundaries were articulated transparently, and measures were taken to prevent "over-rapport" in order to safeguard autonomy. The overarching aim was to cultivate relationships rooted in respect, transparency, and mutual benefit.

Transparency, Accountability, and Reflexive Practice

Transparency necessitates comprehensive documentation of methodologies and sincere reflection on interpretative processes. O'Brien and colleagues (2014) advocate for detailed reporting of sampling procedures, data collection methods, and analytical techniques to enable readers to understand the derivation of results. Accordingly, this study maintained detailed field notes and an audit trail documenting decision rationales, emerging themes, and reflections. These materials facilitate readers in tracing the formulation of conclusions. Furthermore, it is acknowledged that achieving complete objectivity is neither feasible nor desirable in interpretive research.

Reflexivity was treated as an ethical requirement. Billo and Hiemstra (2013) describe reflexivity as an awareness of how emotion, location, and identity influence fieldwork. The researcher maintained a reflective diary during the course of the study. Entries documented shifts in perception, instances of discomfort, and recognition of bias. Yin (2018) advocates for case researchers to record both data and self-interpretation to enhance internal validity. This practice adheres to that recommendation.

Accountability extends to dissemination. Following Iphofen (2021), findings were communicated in ways that minimize harm and recognize contributions. All identifiable details were removed. The principle of reciprocal knowledge sharing guided the return of insights to the communities involved. This frames dissemination as an ethical act rather than a one-way extraction.

As a researcher not belonging to Indigenous communities and educated within European academic environments, I approach this study with a dedication to supporting alternatives to extractive, shareholder-centric corporate models, while recognizing that the application of ownership structures must remain context-specific. My interest in steward-ownership is founded on its potential, but my position also risks reproducing Western concepts as implicit standards. In accordance with the perspectives of Mignolo (2009), Dussel (2012), and Smith (2021), I explicitly position steward-ownership as one among a diverse range of options, recognizing Indigenous organizations as expressing their own comprehensive frameworks rather than as candidates to be adapted.

Finally, transparency in this study also involves being forthcoming about its limitations rather than asserting definitive conclusions. This approach aligns with the philosophy of liberation, which challenges universal assertions of truth and advocates for openness to alternative perspectives of understanding the world (Dussel, 2012). In this context, the researcher is not regarded as entirely separate from the field but as accountable for careful and respectful representation of participants and their communities. The following chapter presents the empirical findings for the three case organizations.

4. Results

4.1. Within-case findings

The following subsections present the results for each case.

Case KM

Küme Mogen (KM) is a Mapuche savings and credit cooperative based in Temuco, within the Araucanía region of southern Chile. It provides financial assistance to members who are excluded from conventional banking systems. The data suggest that the organization frames its mission around community well-being rather than individual profit. Interviews and public statements indicate that the founders established the cooperative so that people who could not access bank credit would have an alternative that is fair and safe for them (KM Interview, 2025; Prensa Opal, 2021). Members characterize KM as an inclusive entity that welcomes anyone in need of financial support while preserving Mapuche cultural identity (KM Interview, 2025). The statutes confirm this mission and formally define the cooperative as an institution dedicated to promoting social, cultural, family and economic well-being among its members (Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Endógena Mapuche Kume Mogen Ltda., n.d.). Public sources also present KM as a collective initiative aimed at enhancing economic independence within Mapuche communities (Prensa Opal, 2021). Collectively, these sources describe KM's purpose as being collective and inclusive, with a strong connection to cultural values.

Decision-making within KM follows cooperative principles that integrate formal regulations with community-based expectations. The statutes specify that the General Assembly is the highest authority, functioning through a one member, one vote system that necessitates personal participation (Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Endógena Mapuche Kume Mogen Ltda., n.d.). Interviews indicate that members engage in assemblies and other governance spaces and underline the significance of these collective platforms for the cooperative's operation (KM Interview, 2025). Leadership responsibilities are centralized within the Council, which establishes credit policies and monitors members' adherence to their obligations (Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Endógena Mapuche Kume Mogen Ltda., n.d.). Additionally, interview notes reveal stricter regulations for council members (KM Interview, 2025). Membership procedures emphasize responsibility, as new members must formally accept the statutes and agree to communication protocols (Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Endógena Mapuche Kume Mogen Ltda., 2023). KM is also part of the national federation of savings and credit cooperatives (Federación Chilena de Cooperativas de Ahorro y Crédito, n.d.). Collectively, the data demonstrate a governance system that combines formal cooperative regulations with expectations of active member participation.

KM's financial practices are shaped by a non-profit cooperative framework with limits on capital concentration and rules for reinvestment into the cooperative. The statutes define the cooperative as a non-profit entity and prevent any member from holding more than ten percent of cooperative capital (Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Endógena Mapuche Kume Mogen Ltda., n.d.). Surpluses are used to strengthen the cooperative through legal reserves, voluntary reserves, and limited interest on member capital, with remaining benefits distributed among members. Public descriptions clarify that members' savings circulate within the community rather than leaving it and that KM does not impose entry fees or require substantial minimum contributions (Prensa Opal, 2021). The evidence indicates that KM's financial structure is organized such that surplus and capital are managed according to cooperative regulations that prioritize shared benefits for members.

The relationship between KM and land is rooted in cultural and ethical principles, grounded in Mapuche understandings of territory. Interviews reveal how community members recall working the land collectively and refer to this memory as integral to the cooperative's contextual framework (KM Interview, 2025). Public sources associate KM's mission with the Mapuche concept of *Küme Mogen*, which refers to the philosophy of good living in harmony with nature. These sources emphasize that KM functions within a worldview that values harmony with *Ñuke Mapu*, or Mother Earth (Mapuexpress, 2016; Prensa Opal, 2021). The membership application form further reinforces this connection by inquiring about ancestral knowledge, territorial resources, and local skills, thereby demonstrating that KM considers these elements as essential capacities contributed by its members (Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Endógena Mapuche Kume Mogen Ltda., 2023). The data therefore present KM's financial activities as connected to land, territory, and Mapuche cultural values.

KM's work is predominantly directed towards ensuring long-term continuity. The statutes specify that the cooperative is established for an indefinite duration, thereby establishing a structural commitment to long-term existence (Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Endógena Mapuche Kume Mogen Ltda., n.d.). The organization has an Education Committee dedicated to ongoing training, which supports the transmission of cooperative knowledge and prepares members for active participation in governance. Interviews indicate that members associate KM's mission with the obligation to contribute something meaningful to future generations (KM Interview, 2025). Public sources highlight KM's engagement in projects concerning water recovery and seed preservation, presenting these as long-term ecological initiatives (Prensa Opal, 2021). Collectively, these elements demonstrate that KM links its present activities with the interests of future generations.

The data also reveal several challenges and tensions that shape KM’s work. One central challenge is that, according to the interviewee, under current Chilean regulations the cooperative cannot provide credit for the purchase of land (KM Interview, 2025). This limitation affects KM’s ability to support certain needs of its members. Operational challenges include managing financial debt, implementing new software, and meeting the administrative requirements expected of financial institutions. Public sources report that KM finances needs of Mapuche families that are not covered by state programs (Prensa Opal, 2021). These tensions involve legal restrictions, resource constraints, and institutional demands that influence KM’s daily work.

Case ML

The data indicate that Mapu Lahual (ML) organizations operate with the primary aim of promoting the well-being of the territory and its inhabitants, rather than serving individual project owners. In the interview, the participant explains that the corporación was established to contribute to the territory and not for personal gain, thereby framing its mission as collective (ML Interview, 2025). Field notes describe tourism initiatives as efforts to safeguard the territory and to support the local economy, establishing a connection between income with care for land and community (ML Fieldnotes, 2025). Public sources support this perspective. WWF Chile (2014) characterizes ML as a conservation area where communities combine forest preservation with ecotourism activities. Verde Tour (n.d.) describes community-based tourism in ML, organized by several Mapuche Huilliche communities within a coastal conservation zone. Collectively, these sources emphasize the importance of ecosystem conservation, economic support for families, and the reinforcement of territorial continuity.

The data indicate that governance in ML is founded on community participation and formal regulations. Field notes describe territorial governance as collective but decentralized, wherein communities mobilize in response to external threats (ML Fieldnotes, 2025). They also explain that the corporación is used to navigate legal requirements and manage project resources while prioritizing territorial interests. During the interview, the participant states that younger people created the corporación to manage tourism, and that this structure has enhanced trust by facilitating transparent resource use (ML Interview, 2025). State regulations also influence responsibility. The decree establishing the marine and coastal protected area defines the protected area and objectives, constituting part of the legal framework for its management (Declara Área Marina y Costera Protegida 'Lafken-Mapu-Lahual': Sector de la costa de Osorno, X Región de Los Lagos, entre Punta Tiburón y Punta Lobería y terrenos de playa fiscales de la Isla Hueyelhue [Decreto N.º 517], 2006). Registry entries record the AMCP-MU Lafken ML as a marine and coastal protected area (Mapcarta, n.d.). These sources portray a layered governance system wherein territorial actors assume responsibility within a legal framework.

The economic logic focuses on sustaining livelihoods and the safeguarding of the territory rather than maximizing private profit. Field notes describe tourism as a livelihood that enables families to remain in the territory and avoid extractive industries (ML Fieldnotes, 2025). In the interview, tourism is characterized as a means of generating income perceived as less harmful for the territory and as vital for helping people stay (ML Interview, 2025). Public sources confirm this pattern. Equipo LS (2021) explains that tourism supports families while also contributing to forest and marine conservation efforts. The MMA report (n.d.) describes livelihoods in the region as interconnected with the sea, forest, and surrounding landscapes, situating tourism within this broader context of activities. The report by Arce and colleagues (2016) states that ecotourism has emerged as a sustainable alternative to artisanal fishing during economic decline, although a rise in visitors introduces new pressures. A Wikiexplora passage (n.d.) observes that certain campsites are managed for the benefit of the community. Overall, the data indicate that income derived from tourism is used to support families and conservation initiatives.

Land and nature are described as ancestral, shared, and protected. Public sources characterize ML as an Indigenous conservation territory established by coastal Huilliche communities to safeguard land and manage it in accordance with cultural values (Aylwin & Cuadra, 2011). INDH (n.d.) describes these communities as custodians of biodiversity who use culturally grounded territorial practices. Wikiexplora (n.d.) emphasizes the size, biodiversity, and protected status of the area, which highlights conservation as a fundamental aspect of its identity. Equipo LS (2021) places tourism within ancestral territories that remain inhabited and maintained by Indigenous families. Field notes indicate that ownership is relational and rooted in a sense of belonging and responsibility rather than formal documentation (ML Fieldnotes, 2025). The interview affirms that tourism was selected because it enables individuals to remain in the territory without causing harm (ML Interview, 2025). These patterns describe land as a living space that ties people, culture, and ecological care together.

The case illustrates a long-term orientation dedicated to maintaining community life within the territory. According to WWF Chile (2014), communities are developing a master plan for sustainable tourism and providing training for youth, thereby integrating planning with generational continuity. Field notes indicate that tourism serves as a means for young people to remain in the territory rather than relocating to urban areas for employment (ML Fieldnotes, 2025). An interview recounts a moment when people considered leaving due to perceptions that the territory could not sustain them, which shows the significance of stable livelihoods for future generations (ML Interview, 2025). The MMA report (n.d.) describes a collective memory that communities must transmit and adapt to evolving circumstances, thereby linking cultural continuity to territorial life. These sources show that current actions are linked to whether families can remain in ML over time.

The data reveal various structural and ecological tensions. Field notes indicate that legal and bureaucratic obstacles hinder Indigenous self-governance, while extractive actors receive more state support, which creates unequal conditions (ML Fieldnotes, 2025). The corporación is described as a response to these constraints, as it facilitates access to funding but necessitates operating within state systems. Public reports acknowledge that the Red de Parques Indígenas arose partially because conservation initiatives led by the state and non-governmental organizations did not adequately respect local decisions (Aylwin & Cuadra, 2011). Subpesca documents authorize specific management measures for marine resources within the AMCP-MU Lafken ML (Resolución Exenta: Autoriza Medidas de Manejo En El Área Marina y Costera Protegida de Múltiples Usos Lafken Mapu Lahual, 2025). The MMA report (n.d.) highlights internal inequalities created by the commercialization of alerce wood. The interview mentions difficulties in ensuring that certain funds are directly allocated to communities due to administrative requirements (ML Interview, 2025). Taken together, these tensions are characterized by unequal access to state support, ecological pressures, and the necessity of operating within external frameworks while maintaining accountability to the territory.

Case SY

The data indicate that Seynekun's (SY) purpose is grounded in supporting Indigenous and peasant families in Pueblo Bello. Field notes describe the association as an Indigenous Arhuaco organization with eighteen years of experience that began with coffee and later incorporated cacao and cane, showing that it operates as a collective productive project (SY Fieldnotes, 2025). The interview confirms that the founders focused mainly on social impact for families when the organization was created (SY Interview, 2025). Public sources describe similar aims. The ADR Osaka profile (n.d.) presents agricultural practices based on ancestral knowledge that support families while protecting ecosystems. Across these documents, SY's purpose is described as sustaining livelihoods, cultural identity and territory through agricultural production.

Field notes describe a governance framework wherein the general assembly functions as the highest authority, supported by a board and committees responsible for organizing producer families and women (SY Fieldnotes, 2025). The interview reinforces this structure by indicating that decisions are primarily made within the assembly and are guided by the participation of mamos, the spiritual authorities (SY Interview, 2025). Both field and reflexive notes emphasize that collective land ownership and Indigenous governance practices shape the understanding of responsibilities (SY Fieldnotes, 2025; SY Reflexive Notes, 2025). Formal records demonstrate how these practices are aligned with legal obligations. The Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural registry (n.d.) lists a legal representative, and ConnectAmericas (n.d.) confirms that the organization is legally constituted. The Semana article (n.d.) highlights that the community members established the organization to facilitate the collective commercialization of products.

Field notes indicate that approximately ninety percent of SY's activities are financed through its own production and sales, which shows a model grounded in internal income generation (SY Fieldnotes, 2025). Interview notes mention fair pricing and support for producer families (SY Interview, 2025). Semana (n.d.) explains that SY was established to enable producers to sell at fair prices rather than accept undervalued offers, reflecting a surplus logic oriented toward community benefit. Registry data identify SY as a non-profit association dedicated to coffee cultivation (INFORMA COLOMBIA S.A., n.d.). Organic certification is documented through the SISORGÁNICO registry (Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural, n.d.). Limited equity and challenges in accessing bank credit due to the absence of comprehensive financial statements constitute structural constraints impacting economic stability (INFORMA COLOMBIA S.A., n.d.; SY Interview, 2025).

Field notes indicate that the land is collectively owned and that members possess usage rights, but are prohibited from selling it, demonstrating a non-commodified relationship to the territory (SY Fieldnotes, 2025). Reflexive notes link this directly to responsibility and continuity (SY Reflexive Notes, 2025). Public profiles highlight ecological care. The ADR Osaka profile (n.d.) describes agricultural practices founded on ancestral knowledge that safeguard ecosystems for future generations, while the Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural registry (n.d.) identifies SY as a certified organic producer. ConnectAmericas (n.d.) describes the production activities of Indigenous families rooted in a specific rural territory.

Reflexive notes describe institutional strengthening and financial independence as part of a long-term vision that guides decisions (SY Reflexive Notes, 2025). The ADR Osaka profile (n.d.) explains that SY's practices aim to protect ecosystems for many generations. The interview expresses concern that without preparing new leaders, future administrators could change the organization's direction (SY Interview, 2025). Semana (n.d.) recounts SY's trajectory over time, and the ADR act (2023) lists the association among organizations selected in a national cooperative program. Together, these sources show that SY's activities are connected to a long-term outlook.

Reflexive notes highlight a conflict between market access and the safeguarding of Indigenous knowledge (SY Reflexive Notes, 2025). Interview notes show efforts to balance product strategies with support for families (SY Interview Notes, 2025). Public sources describe structural poverty, initial organizational challenges, and climate impacts on crops (Semana, n.d.). Registry and interview data reveal limited financial capital and difficulties in obtaining credit (INFORMA COLOMBIA S.A., n.d.; SY Interview, 2025). The Funpromorural document indicates SY's participation in a rural development project executed by an external organization (Fundación para la Promoción y el Desarrollo Rural (FUNPROMORURAL), n.d.). Together, these data illustrate tensions influencing SY’s daily work across markets, finance, culture, and climate.

4.2. Cross-case synthesis

Following the individual presentation of each case, this section compares the three organizations across key dimensions. Table 1 offers an overview of these dimensions for KM, ML, and SY.

Table 1: *Cross-case overview of key dimensions*

Dimension	Küme Mogen	Mapu Lahual	Seynekun
Purpose & commmon good	• Inclusive financial support • Mapuche well-being • Access for people excluded from banks	• Contribution to the territory • Indigenous conservation • Community-based tourism • Protection of ecosystems + livelihoods	• Support for Indigenous producer families • Fair commercialization • Sustainable production • Social impact + cultural identity
Control & responsibility	• One-member-one-vote assemblies • Council sets credit policy • Collective ownership • Member of national federation	• Collective, decentralized governance • Corporación manages tourism/resources • Indigenous communities recognized as operators of protected area	• General assembly (with mamos) • Board + committees • Legal representative • Delegation of powers to project partners when needed
Profit & surplus logic	• Non-profit cooperative • Limits capital concentration • Surpluses to reserves + member benefits • Internal circulation of savings • No entry fees	• Tourism as complementary, non-extractive livelihood • Supports families staying in territory • Some facilities benefit whole community	• Non-profit producers' association • ~90% self-financed via production/sales • Created for fair crop prices • Organic & Fair Trade standards
Land & nature	• *Buen Vivir* + harmony with *Ñuke Mapu* • Collective memory of working the land • Ancestral knowledge as asset • Territorial resources as member assets	• Indigenous protected territory (high biodiversity) • Communities as guardians (forest + marine ecosystems) • Tourism chosen to reduce environmental impact	• Collective land ownership • Use rights, no sale of land • Ancestral + organic ecological practices • Protection of Mother Earth
Intergenerational horizon	• Indefinite duration • Yearly governance cycles • Cooperative education (training) • Long-term projects (water recovery, seed banks) • Focus on cultural continuity	• Long-standing conservation instruments (AMCP-MU since 2005) • Long-term master plan + youth training • Shift from extraction to conservation/tourism for future continuity	• Long-term vision: autonomy + institutional strengthening • Practices for "many generations" • Preparing future leaders
Challenges & tensions	• Legal limits on financing land • Internal debt + institutional pressures • External "ownership" concepts mismatch members' own framing	• Barriers to Indigenous self-governance • Unequal state support vs. extractive actors • Historical alerce-related inequalities • Ecosystem degradation • Funding restrictions • Growing tourism pressures	• Structural poverty + discrimination • Climate impacts • Low equity • Restricted access to bank credit • Balancing market access and Indigenous knowledge • Reliance on intermediaries for some projects

Purpose and the common good

The three cases present purpose as oriented toward the common, rather than only toward individual members. In KM, the statutes describe the objective of the cooperative as promoting cooperative principles and the personal, social, economic, family, and cultural well-being of its members, with a focus on people who are excluded from formal banks (Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Endógena Mapuche Kume Mogen Ltda., n.d.; KM Fieldnotes, 2025). In ML, the interviewee explains that the corporación was created for the territory and not for the private benefit of a few individuals, and public sources describe Territorio ML as an Indigenous conservation area where communities combine forest protection with community-based tourism to support local families (ML Interview, 2025; WWF Chile, 2014). In SY, field notes and the interview reveal that the association was established as an Indigenous producers' organization to improve the circumstances of families involved in coffee, cacao, and cane production, with social impact and cultural identity at the core of its mission (ADR Colombia, n.d.; SY Fieldnotes, 2025; SY Interview, 2025). Across all three cases, purpose is therefore described in relation to communities, territories, and producer families.

Simultaneously, the specific focus of this collective purpose varies across the cases. In KM, the purpose is grounded in financial cooperation. The statutes and interviews emphasize inclusive savings and credit at the centre, with the aim of giving fair financial support to both Mapuche and non-Mapuche members and building economic autonomy based on Mapuche worldviews (Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Endógena Mapuche Kume Mogen Ltda., n.d.; Prensa Opal, 2021). In ML, the purpose is framed through territorial conservation. The primary concern involves an ancestral coastal territory that communities seek to protect, with tourism serving as a practical strategy to preserve native forests and marine ecosystems while generating income to enable families to remain in the territory (ML Fieldnotes, 2025; Verde Tour, n.d.; WWF Chile, 2014). In SY, the purpose is defined by the daily activities of producer families. The association functions as a means for producers to organize themselves in order to secure better prices, enhance their capacities, and practice agriculture that is both economically sustainable and rooted in ancestral knowledge (ADR Colombia, n.d.; Semana, n.d.; SY

Fieldnotes, 2025). Overall, the three organizations orient their objectives toward the collective good, each approaching this goal through distinct pathways: inclusive finance in KM, territorial conservation in ML, and producer family livelihoods in SY.

Control and responsibility

Across the three cases, control and responsibility are consistently described as collective and formally organized. In KM, the statutes state that the General Assembly is the highest decision-making body, where each member has one vote, and the Council is responsible for setting credit policy and overseeing its application (Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Endógena Mapuche Kume Mogen Ltda., n.d.; KM Interview, 2025). In ML, field notes and the interview describe territorial governance as collective and rooted in communities, and legal records show that Indigenous communities are formally recognized as the operators of the marine and coastal protected area (Declara Área Marina y Costera Protegida ‘Lafken-Mapu-Lahual’: Sector de la costa de Osorno, X Región de Los Lagos, entre Punta Tiburón y Punta Lobería y terrenos de playa fiscales de la Isla Hueyelhue [Decreto N.º 517], 2006; Mapcarta, n.d.; ML Fieldnotes, 2025; ML Interview, 2025). In SY, the interview and field notes explain that decisions are taken first in the general assembly, together with the mamos, and that a board and several committees organize day-to-day work, while registry entries identify a named legal representative who carries formal responsibility (Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural, n.d.; SY Fieldnotes, 2025; SY Interview, 2025). In all three cases, governance combines collective forums such as assemblies with clearly assigned roles.

Simultaneously, the concrete forms of control and responsibility differ between the cases. KM functions as a financial cooperative whose statutes and federation listing place it within a national cooperative framework, whereby a council of administration formulates credit policies and enforces cooperative regulations concerning savings and loans (Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Endógena Mapuche Kume Mogen Ltda., n.d.; Federación Chilena de Cooperativas de Ahorro y Crédito, n.d.). ML is organized at the level of a coastal territory, where communities describe their governance as collective yet decentralized, with younger leaders establishing a corporación to manage tourism and resources. Additionally, government decrees mandate a comprehensive management plan for the protected area (Declara Área Marina y Costera Protegida 'Lafken-Mapu-Lahual': Sector de la costa de Osorno, X Región de Los Lagos, entre Punta Tiburón y Punta Lobería y terrenos de playa fiscales de la Isla Hueyelhue [Decreto N.º 517], 2006; ML Fieldnotes, 2025; ML Interview, 2025). SY is a producers' association in which the general assembly and mamos direct the principal decisions, while the board and committees coordinate producer families and women. Furthermore, certain project responsibilities are temporarily delegated to external organizations such as Funpromorural through specific contractual arrangements (Fundación para la Promoción y el Desarrollo Rural (FUNPROMORURAL), n.d.; SY Fieldnotes, 2025; SY Interview, 2025). Overall, control across all three cases is characterized as a shared responsibility, adapted to various organizational structures, yet remaining rooted in collective decision-making and formal accountability.

Profit and surplus logic

Across the three cases, profit and surplus are predominantly regarded as mechanisms to support families, communities, and territories. KM is registered as a non-profit credit cooperative and its statutes limit how much capital one person can hold, require that annual surpluses go first into legal and voluntary reserves and benefits for members, and describe how members' savings within the cooperative without imposing high entry costs (Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Endógena Mapuche Kume Mogen Ltda., n.d.; Prensa Opal, 2021). In ML, tourism appears in field notes and public reports as a complementary livelihood designed to enable families to remain in the coastal territory while simultaneously promoting forest and marine conservation (Equipo LS, 2021; Ministerio del Medio Ambiente de Chile, n.d.; ML Fieldnotes, 2025). SY is characterized in registry documents as a non-profit producers association primarily engaged in coffee cultivation, and field notes and media coverage emphasize that it was established to enable Indigenous producer families to obtain fair prices for coffee, cane, and cacao, rather than accepting undervalued offers (INFORMA COLOMBIA S.A., n.d.; Semana, n.d.; SY Fieldnotes, 2025). Furthermore, SY operates under organic and Fair Trade certifications, which impose external standards for environmental and social practices

(ConnectAmericas, n.d.; Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural, n.d.). Taken together, all three organizations generate income, yet they frame surplus in relation to community benefit, territorial care and fair conditions.

At the same time, the specific methods through which this surplus logic is organized differ between the cases. KM has established detailed internal regulations concerning capital and surplus, laid out in its statutes as part of a formal cooperative system. These rules spell out how much each member can contribute, how yearly results to reserves and member benefits, and the implementation of credit policies within the cooperative ("Company record: Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Endógena Mapuche Kume Mogen Ltda.," n.d.; Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Endógena Mapuche Kume Mogen Ltda., n.d.). In ML, the emphasis is placed on tourism as a supplementary, non-extractive livelihood, with an emphasis on defining which campsites and services provide benefits to the entire community, within a broader mix of activities that still encompasses small-scale fishing and other work related to the sea and forests (Arce et al., 2016; Equipo LS, 2021; Ministerio del Medio Ambiente de Chile, n.d.). SY occupies an intermediate position between these two models. It relies predominantly on its own production and sales for approximately ninety percent of its activities, utilizing collective organization to achieve better prices within certified value chains, functioning as a producers' association rather than as a financial cooperative or a territorial tourism initiative (ConnectAmericas, n.d.; Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural, n.d.; SY Fieldnotes, 2025). Overall, the three cases describe income and surplus in relation to shared livelihoods and territorial initiatives, despite the fact that the specific mechanisms vary among a credit cooperative, a tourism-based conservation territory, and an agricultural producers' association.

Relationship with land and nature

In all three cases, land and nature are described through relationships and shared responsibilities. In KM, interview and media sources characterize the mission as part of *Küme Mogen* or *Buen Vivir*, a Mapuche idea of good living with *Ñuke Mapu*, Mother Earth, and with other people (Mapuexpress, 2016; Prensa Opal, 2021). The cooperative recalls earlier times of collective land cultivation and regards ancestral knowledge and territorial resources as vital assets contributed by members, which are documented in the membership form alongside financial information (Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Endógena Mapuche Kume Mogen Ltda., 2023; KM Fieldnotes, 2025). In ML, public sources and field notes describe the coastal forests and sea as an Indigenous protected territory with high biodiversity, where communities serve as custodians of native forests and marine ecosystems, and where tourism is adopted to mitigate environmental harm (Arce et al., 2016; Equipo LS, 2021; Instituto Nacional de Derechos Humanos (INDH), n.d.; "Mapu Lahual," n.d.; ML Fieldnotes, 2025; ML Interview, 2025). SY is based on collectively owned land where families possess rights to use their cultivated plots but are prohibited from selling them, and where agricultural practices are characterized as ancestral and organic, aimed at maintaining ecosystems and the fertility of Mother Earth for future generations (ADR Colombia, n.d.; Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural, n.d.; SY Fieldnotes, 2025). All three cases associate their economic activities with collective responsibilities toward land and territory.

Simultaneously, the nature of the relationship with land and nature takes different concrete forms. In KM, the cooperative functions primarily as a financial instrument rather than a landholding body, so the connection to territory is articulated through Mapuche concepts of ethics, harmony with *Ñuke Mapu*, and the acknowledgment of ancestral knowledge and territorial resources as part of the contributions made by members to the organization (Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Endógena Mapuche Kume Mogen Ltda., 2023; Mapuexpress, 2016). In ML, the territory is officially recognized as a marine and coastal protected area, and community-based tourism operates directly within this landscape of forests and sea (Arce et al., 2016; Declara Área Marina y Costera Protegida 'Lafken-Mapu-Lahual': Sector de la costa de Osorno, X Región de Los Lagos, entre Punta Tiburón y Punta Lobería y terrenos de playa fiscales de la Isla Hueyelhue [Decreto N.º 517], 2006; Equipo LS, 2021; Ministerio del Medio Ambiente de Chile, n.d.). In SY, the primary focus is on everyday agricultural practices within a specific rural municipality, with collective land tenure rules and standards of organic and Fair Trade production that emphasise care for ecosystems and the fertility of Mother Earth (ADR Colombia, n.d.; ConnectAmericas, n.d.; Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural, n.d.; SY Fieldnotes, 2025). Overall, across the three cases, land and nature are described in collective and cared-for terms, even though the scale and activities involve a financial cooperative, a conservation territory, and a producers' association.

Temporality and the intergenerational horizon

Throughout the three cases, time is consistently conceptualized as something that extends beyond a singular project or leadership cycle. KM is legally characterized as an organization with indefinite duration, and its statutes establish a permanent education committee responsible for training members in cooperative values, thereby fostering intergenerational learning (Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Endógena Mapuche Kume Mogen Ltda., n.d.). Public descriptions indicate that current initiatives, such as water recovery and seed banks, are explicitly oriented towards the long-term preservation of Mapuche territory and culture (Mapuexpress, 2016; Prensa Opal, 2021). In ML, the establishment of the marine and coastal protected area in 2005 is presented as a lasting conservation instrument rather than a temporary programme (Declara Área Marina y Costera Protegida ‘Lafken-Mapu-Lahual’: Sector de la costa de Osorno, X Región de Los Lagos, entre Punta Tiburón y Punta Lobería y terrenos de playa fiscales de la Isla Hueyelhue [Decreto N.º 517], 2006; Mapcarta, n.d.). WWF Chile (2014) reports that communities are engaged in developing a master plan that includes training local guides and youth in sustainable tourism, thereby linking daily work with future generations expected to continue these practices. SY’s intergenerational focus manifests similarly. The ADR producer profile states that agricultural practices are designed to preserve the fertility of Mother Earth “for many generations”, and reflexive notes emphasize that institutional strengthening and financial autonomy form part of a long-term vision (ADR Colombia, n.d.; SY Reflexive Notes, 2025). During the interview, the representative expressed concern that, without adequately preparing others now, future administrators may alter the organization’s direction, thereby linking present decisions to future continuity (SY Interview, 2025).

Simultaneously, each case organizes this long-term horizon through various instruments. In KM, the primary tools are institutional, including legal provisions regarding indefinite duration, annual approval of accounts, and a formal education structure, which are employed to maintain the stability of the cooperative over time while transmitting values and practices to new members (Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Endógena Mapuche Kume Mogen Ltda., n.d.). In ML, the emphasis is placed on territory and livelihood change. Sources describe a transition away from the traditional extraction of alerce wood towards community-based tourism and conservation efforts, enabling families to remain within their territory (Equipo LS, 2021; Ministerio del Medio Ambiente de Chile, n.d.). SY's intergenerational strategy is closely linked to leadership and organizational roles within broader programs. The ADR call for associative rural development in 2023 indicates that SY is part of a national process capable of supporting its trajectory, while internal sources highlight the necessity of training new leaders who can safeguard its mission in the future (ADR Colombia, n.d.; SY Interview, 2025). Overall, KM, ML, and SY demonstrate a commitment to ecological conservation, cultural preservation, and organizational continuity across generations, despite utilizing different organizational and territorial pathways.

Cross-cutting challenges and tensions

Across the three cases, several shared challenges influence how the organizations pursue their objectives and execute their activities. A primary common issue involves limited access to external financing and unequal state support. In KM, the interview indicates that Chilean regulations do not allow the cooperative to provide credit for land and that they inherited a significant internal debt, which is reinforced by regulations that categorize overdue credits as losses for the cooperative (KM Interview, 2025; KM Reflexive Notes, 2025). In ML, field notes describe bureaucratic obstacles that hinder Indigenous self-governance and reveal that extractive entities within the same territory benefit from greater state support (Arce et al., 2016; ML Fieldnotes, 2025). SY describes restricted access to bank credit and limited resources for long-term capitalization as constraints (SY Interview, 2025). Registry data document Seynekun's equity and sales levels (INFORMA COLOMBIA S.A., n.d.), whereas UNDP identifies the territory as structurally disadvantaged (Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, 2020).

A secondary theme relates to navigating markets while safeguarding cultural and territorial practices. In ML, community-based tourism generates income but also creates pressures linked to increasing tourism in the territory (Equipo LS, 2021; ML Fieldnotes, 2025). SY encounters a similar balance as it markets to both national and international buyers while demonstrating that its production is rooted in ancestral knowledge and ecological care (Semana, n.d.; SY Reflexive Notes, 2025).

A third common theme concerns administrative and procedural burdens. KM must comply to the obligations of a regulated financial cooperative, which entails additional internal work and the development of software and reporting requirements (Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Endógena Mapuche Kume Mogen Ltda., n.d.; KM Interview, 2025). In ML, various legal instruments, such as the decree establishing the marine and coastal protected area and later management regulations, necessitate interaction with multiple government agencies (Declara Área Marina y Costera Protegida 'Lafken-Mapu-Lahual': Sector de la costa de Osorno, X Región de Los Lagos, entre Punta Tiburón y Punta Lobería y terrenos de playa fiscales de la Isla Hueyelhue [Decreto N.º 517], 2006; Resolución Exenta: Autoriza Medidas de Manejo En El Área Marina y Costera Protegida de Múltiples Usos Lafken Mapu Lahual, 2025; Ministerio del Medio Ambiente de Chile, n.d.). SY participates in rural development projects that involve reporting responsibilities and coordination with external partners who execute activities on its behalf (Fundación para la Promoción y el Desarrollo Rural (FUNPROMORURAL), n.d.; SY Reflexive Notes, 2025).

A fourth theme concerns persistent historical and territorial inequalities. KM is described in external reports as a response to the longstanding exclusion of Mapuche communities from formal banking structures (KM Fieldnotes, 2025; Prensa Opal, 2021). ML documents the long-term consequences of alerce extraction, which led to ecological degradation and social imbalances that continue to impact the territory (Aylwin & Cuadra, 2011; Ministerio del Medio Ambiente de Chile, n.d.). In SY, discrimination and climate-related production impacts reinforce vulnerabilities for Indigenous producer families (Semana, n.d.; SY Fieldnotes, 2025). Together, these tensions are presented as structural constraints that the three organizations must navigate when strengthening collective ownership, supporting livelihoods, and maintaining the integrity of their territories over time.

5. Discussion

5.1. Interpretation of Findings considering the Research Question

This chapter examines the research question: “How do the principles of steward-ownership, purpose orientation and self-determination resonate with ownership models and practices developed by indigenous communities in Latin America?” It analyzes the cross-case patterns from Chapter 4 in the context of the theoretical frameworks on steward-ownership, Indigenous ownership cosmologies, and resonance introduced in Chapter 2.

Restating the main cross-case patterns

Across the three cases, purpose is consistently defined in collective terms. KM aligns its mission with the social, cultural, family and economic well-being of members who face exclusion from formal banking systems, as well as with Mapuche conceptions of well-being within the community (Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Endógena Mapuche Kume Mogen Ltda., n.d.; KM Interview, 2025; Mapuexpress, 2016; Prensa Opal, 2021). In ML, considerations of territorial well-being and conservation guide activities, with tourism positioned as a strategy to support families while safeguarding the coastal ecosystem (ML Fieldnotes, 2025; ML Interview, 2025; WWF Chile, 2014). In SY, the purpose is centered on assisting Indigenous and peasant producer families in Pueblo Bello through agricultural practices that sustain livelihoods, cultural identity, and territorial integrity (ADR Colombia, n.d.; SY Fieldnotes, 2025; SY Interview, 2025). In all three cases, purpose is directed toward communities, territories, and producer families rather than individual interests.

Governance within the three organizations is characterized by a collective and formally structured approach. KM functions through a General Assembly, where each member possesses one vote, and a Council that establishes credit policies in accordance with cooperative statutes (Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Endógena Mapuche Kume Mogen Ltda., n.d.; Federación Chilena de Cooperativas de Ahorro y Crédito, n.d.). Governance in ML is characterized as collective, and legal documents identify the participating communities as the entities responsible for the Indigenous conservation territory and the marine and coastal protected area (Aylwin & Cuadra, 2011; Declara Área Marina y Costera Protegida 'Lafken-Mapu-Lahual': Sector de la costa de Osorno, X Región de Los Lagos, entre Punta Tiburón y Punta Lobería y terrenos de playa fiscales de la Isla Hueyelhue [Decreto N.º 517], 2006). Fieldnotes and interviews describe collaborative decision-making among communities, which aligns with this structure (ML Fieldnotes, 2025; ML Interview, 2025). SY is governed by a General Assembly, a Board, committees, and the guidance of Mamos, within a legal framework that acknowledges it as a non-profit producers' association (ConnectAmericas, n.d.; Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural, n.d.; SY Fieldnotes, 2025; SY Interview, 2025). Across all cases, decision-making authority is associated with participation in collective bodies and roles that entail responsibility.

The surplus logic in each case links income to shared benefit. KM is a non-profit cooperative with limits on capital concentration and rules that direct surpluses to reserves and member benefits. It circulates savings within the community rather than extracting them (Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Endógena Mapuche Kume Mogen Ltda., n.d.; Prensa Opal, 2021). In ML, tourism is presented as a complementary livelihood that enables families to remain in the territory while supporting forest and marine conservation (Arce et al., 2016; Equipo LS, 2021; Ministerio del Medio Ambiente de Chile, n.d.; ML Interview, 2025). SY finances most activities through its own production and sales, and was created so that producers could obtain fair prices for coffee, cacao, and cane instead of accepting undervalued offers (INFORMA COLOMBIA S.A., n.d.; Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural, n.d.; Semana, n.d.; SY Fieldnotes, 2025). In all three organizations, surpluses are regarded as resources to sustain families, organizations, and territories.

All three cases establish a connection between economic activities and land and nature as shared responsibilities. KM contextualizes its initiatives within the Mapuche concept of

Küme Mogen and recalls collective work on the land (Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Endógena Mapuche Kume Mogen Ltda., n.d.; KM Fieldnotes, 2025; Prensa Opal, 2021). It regards ancestral knowledge and territorial resources as contributions from members alongside financial capital. ML is characterized as an Indigenous conservation territory and a marine and coastal protected area, where communities serve as custodians of forests and sea and tourism is selected as a less harmful livelihood strategy (Arce et al., 2016; Equipo LS, 2021; Instituto Nacional de Derechos Humanos (INDH), n.d.; "Mapu Lahual," n.d.; ML Fieldnotes, 2025; ML Interview, 2025). SY functions on collectively owned land where families possess usage rights but cannot sell their plots. Its agricultural practices are described as ancestral and organic, with the aim of safeguarding ecosystems for future generations (ADR Colombia, n.d.; Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural, n.d.; SY Fieldnotes, 2025). In each instance, land constitutes an element of a relational community that connects people, territory, and the future.

Ultimately, the cases share a long-term and intergenerational perspective. KM is established for an indefinite period and maintains an education committee alongside projects such as water recovery and seed banks that extend beyond immediate financial cycles (Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Endógena Mapuche Kume Mogen Ltda., n.d.; Mapuexpress, 2016; Prensa Opal, 2021). ML combines the longstanding legal status of the protected area with community planning aimed at sustainable tourism and youth training (Declara Área Marina y Costera Protegida 'Lafken-Mapu-Lahual': Sector de la costa de Osorno, X Región de Los Lagos, entre Punta Tiburón y Punta Lobería y terrenos de playa fiscales de la Isla Hueyelhue [Decreto N.º 517], 2006; ML Fieldnotes, 2025; WWF Chile, 2014). SY associates its agricultural practices with the preservation of Mother Earth across numerous generations and emphasises institutional strengthening along with the development of new leaders (ADR Colombia, n.d.; SY Interview, 2025; SY Reflexive Notes, 2025). In all three instances, current decisions are explicitly linked to future generations.

Linking cross-case patterns to steward-ownership principles

The patterns above show several areas of resonance with the steward-ownership principles of purpose orientation and self-governance, as introduced in Chapter 2. In the steward-ownership literature, purpose orientation means that profits are directed towards a clearly defined mission, which is safeguarded through legal and governance instruments such as purpose clauses and asset locks (Purpose Foundation, 2020; Sanders, 2022). Throughout the case studies, purpose is similarly collective and influences the manner in which income is used. Surplus in KM strengthens the cooperative and benefits its members. Tourism within ML is justified when it contributes to territorial conservation. SY uses commercialisation to secure fair prices for families and maintain cultural identity. These practices correspond to a framework wherein financial resources are subordinated to collective purposes, despite their origins being rooted in Indigenous and cooperative histories rather than steward-ownership reforms. In this thesis, the purposes of the three organizations are characterized as collective, as they prioritize the well-being of their own communities, territories, and producer families over individual profit. Nonetheless, the theoretical literature concerning commons and Buen Vivir presents a broader understanding of the common good, which includes care for wider networks of humans, non-human entities, and ecosystems (Gudynas, 2011; Kelly & Woods, 2021). In this sense, commons refers to the shared socio-ecological world, while collectivity describes the social and organizational processes through which this world is governed and maintained. Consequently, the cases examined in this study illustrate locally grounded forms of the collective good that correspond with elements of this broader idea, even though their primary focus remains on the specific communities they serve.

Self-determination in steward-ownership refers to control exercised by stewards who are committed to the mission, rather than by external investors, and to safeguards that prevent speculative transfers of control (Möslein & Sanders, 2023; Nipkow, 2022; Purpose Foundation, n.d.). These three cases resonate with this principle by placing control within collective assemblies, councils, and traditional authorities that are accountable to their members and territories. KM's one member one vote assembly, ML's community-based governance of a protected area, and SY's assembly guided by mamos all express forms of self-governance that link power to responsibility for a shared purpose. Furthermore, collective land ownership and non-transferable use rights in SY reinforce the idea that control over key assets should not become an object of private speculation.

The cases also reflect a long-term orientation that parallels the intergenerational focus of steward-ownership. In the corporate context, this focus is expressed through legal mechanisms that reduce incentives for short-term sale and protect continuity, such as foundation ownership and asset locks (Möslein & Sanders, 2023; Stout, 2015). In the Indigenous and cooperative settings studied here, long-termism appears in commitments to maintain communities on their territories, to protect ecosystems for many generations, and to transmit organizational responsibilities. The concrete instruments differ, yet the ethical orientation toward future continuity shows a strong resonance with the temporal concerns of steward-ownership.

Case specific variations

The way these resonances are shaped by the distinct organizational forms of each case. KM is a savings and credit cooperative that applies cooperative statutes and financial regulations. Its governance and surplus logic are more strictly codified, and self-determination takes the form of member-based financial self-help within a Mapuche ethical framework. ML represents a conservation territory along with a marine and coastal protected area. Here, purpose orientation and self-governance are expressed at the territorial level and must interact with state conservation policies and tourism markets. SY is a producers' association located in a structurally disadvantaged rural municipality. It operates through value chains and certification schemes and focuses on improving prices and conditions for families whilst safeguarding land and cultural heritage. Although these variations do not fundamentally alter the overall orientation towards purpose, self-governance, and long-term sustainability, they indicate that resonances with steward-ownership principles can emerge in diverse institutional contexts when control, surplus, and land are organized around collective responsibilities.

Contextual challenges and tensions

The cross-cutting challenges identified in Chapter 4 form an important context for interpreting these findings. KM faces regulatory barriers that restrict its ability to finance land, along with administrative demands and limited internal capacity that create pressure on its cooperative model (Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Endógena Mapuche Kume Mogen Ltda., n.d.; KM Reflexive Notes, 2025). ML must navigate unequal state support for extractive actors, ecological pressures, and complex legal requirements, whilst trying to maintain Indigenous control over conservation and tourism (Arce et al., 2016; Aylwin & Cuadra, 2011; ML Fieldnotes, 2025; Resolución Exenta: Autoriza Medidas de Manejo En El Área Marina y Costera Protegida de Múltiples Usos Lafken Mapu Lahual, 2025). SY operates under structural poverty, discrimination, climate impacts, and restricted access to bank credit, and sometimes relies on external intermediaries for project implementation (INFORMA COLOMBIA S.A., n.d.; Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, 2020; Semana, n.d.; SY Reflexive Notes, 2025). These conditions do not negate the observed resonances. They show that purpose orientation, self-determination, and long-term care are enacted within asymmetrical legal, financial, and ecological environments. The challenges and tensions do not represent ownership dimensions themselves. Instead, they are contextual conditions that influence how organizations are able to put their ownership practices.

The Indigenous organizations in this study are therefore not examples of steward-ownership, yet their practices move in directions that resonate with steward-ownership principles of purpose orientation, self-governance, and long-term mission protection. The following section reflects on how the research design and process shaped these findings.

5.2. Methodological Reflections

This section reflects on the development of the research process and how methodological decisions influenced the quality of the study. Building upon the Case Study Protocol and Chapter 3, it utilizes fieldnotes, interview notes, and reflexive notes to highlight what worked well, what was challenging, and measures taken to ensure quality.

One central aspect that worked well was the communication established with the participating organizations. As outlined in Chapter 3, initial contact was made through personal networks, and communication was maintained in a respectful and transparent manner throughout all online meetings and research interactions. The fieldnotes describe participants as open and willing to share details about their work, governance, and community priorities (KM Fieldnotes, 2025; ML Fieldnotes, 2025; SY Fieldnotes, 2025). This openness created a setting in which participants could describe ownership practices, land relationships, and community priorities in their own terms. Such an approach was vital, as the study depends on understanding how ownership is interpreted within each community.

Another element that strengthened the research was the inclusion of the interview guide (Annex C). Chapter 3 explains that the guide offered a structured framework while maintaining sufficient flexibility to accommodate the specific context. The interview notes confirm that this methodology facilitated the exploration of topics such as governance, purpose, and land relations, while permitting participants to introduce issues they considered important (KM Interview Notes, 2025; ML Interview Notes, 2025; SY Interview Notes, 2025). The reflexive notes indicate that this flexibility helped avoid imposing external categories.

Triangulation also played a key role in strengthening the findings. Chapter 3 explains how interviews, field observations, statutes, registry records, and public sources were combined. This enabled observations to be cross-checked with documents and vice versa. For example, governance practices discussed during interviews in KM and SY were verified through statutes and registry information (Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Endógena Mapuche Kume Mogen Ltda., n.d.; Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural, n.d.). In ML, public reports supported the observations made in the field regarding conservation and community initiatives (Aylwin & Cuadra, 2011; WWF Chile, 2014). This mix of sources ensured that the cross-case patterns in Chapter 4 reflected consistent themes rather than isolated observations.

A primary challenge concerned language. Spanish is not the researcher's native language, which occasionally complicated the differentiation between colloquial expressions, technical terminology, and concepts expressed in Mapudungun or Arhuaco. Nonetheless, this did not hinder communication. Participants consistently demonstrated patience and a willingness to explain terms, repeat ideas, or provide examples when necessary. Their openness helped reduce the risk of misunderstandings and supported a respectful and careful interpretation of culturally specific concepts.

The time difference also influenced the research process. Interviews and follow-up conversations were coordinated across three different countries, which required flexibility in scheduling and sometimes led to delays. Accommodating participants' availability was essential to maintain respectful communication and did not impose pressure on their routines.

Another challenge was that all interactions took place online. While digital meetings enabled long-distance participation, they limited the personal connection and contextual cues that usually emerge in face-to-face interactions. In-person research often offers additional insights through the environment or informal interaction. Conducting interviews online, therefore, required more focus on verbal explanations and follow-up questions to compensate for the lack of non-verbal and environmental details.

Managing the diversity and quantity of evidence also demanded considerable effort. The study followed Yin's recommendations by maintaining a structured Excel database and an organized folder system. Although this improved transparency and consistency, managing multiple forms of evidence required sustained discipline to avoid confusion among transcripts, field notes, and public documents. Ensuring these materials remained aligned across three cases was time-consuming, yet it ultimately strengthened the reliability of the analysis.

The principles of quality and transparency were supported through various practices described in Chapter 3. The Case Study Protocol provided guidance for preparation, fieldwork, documentation, and analysis. Fieldnotes, interview notes, and reflexive notes functioned as an audit trail that documented how interactions unfolded and the development of interpretations throughout the research process. Reflexive notes were particularly significant, as they documented considerations regarding positionality, relationships with participants, and the potential risk of interpreting Indigenous concepts through external frameworks (KM Reflexive Notes, 2025; SY Reflexive Notes, 2025).

Ethical care formed another part of the methodological framework. Chapter 3 describes that consent was acquired verbally prior to conducting interviews, with participants selecting the medium and times. Fieldnotes confirm that the researcher avoided pressuring participants to discuss specific topics. This methodology aligns with qualitative ethical standards and respects the autonomy of the organizations involved. Additionally, also helped maintain trust, which was essential for collecting reliable data.

The organization of research materials contributed to transparency during the analysis. Chapter 3 explains how documents and notes were stored and coded. This systematic organization enabled the comparison of themes across the three cases. Consistent documentation ensured that the patterns identified in Chapter 4 were grounded in repeated observations rather than isolated comments. The triangulation of sources and clear documentation of decisions reduced the risk of selective interpretation.

Overall, the methodological process benefited from strong communication with participants, a flexible yet structured interview guide, triangulation across multiple sources, and continuous reflexive attention. Challenges related to language, time zone differences, online communication, and the management of diverse evidence required ongoing adaptation, but they did not compromise the quality of the findings. These reflections confirm and complement the quality criteria and procedures outlined in Chapter 3.

5.3. Ethical Considerations Toward Participants

This section reflects on how the ethical measures outlined in Chapter 3 influenced the research process and supported responsible collaboration with the participating Indigenous organizations. It references the Case Study Protocol, as well as fieldnotes, interview notes, and reflexive notes, to demonstrate how the study safeguarded participants' autonomy, honored cultural contexts, and prevented harm.

A fundamental ethical principle in this research was the safeguarding of anonymity and confidentiality. Chapter 3 explains that identifying details do not appear in the thesis, and that transcripts as well as notes were anonymized to prevent recognition of individual participants. The study exclusively references organizational roles or case-specific information. This methodology ensured that participants could discuss topics such as governance, land relations, or economic practices openly, without apprehension that their statements might be personally attributed. Confidentiality was further reinforced through secure data storage measures. All recordings, notes, and documents were stored in password-protected folders, accessible only to the researcher. These practices align with qualitative research ethics (Iphofen, 2021; O'Brien et al., 2014).

Voluntary participation and informed consent formed a fundamental element of the ethical process. Chapter 3 describes that consent was obtained verbally prior to each interview, in accordance with the Case Study Protocol. Participants received explanations regarding the purpose of the research, its academic use, and their rights to pause or stop the interview. The fieldnotes indicate that participants chose the timing and medium of the interview (KM Fieldnotes, 2025; ML Fieldnotes, 2025; SY Fieldnotes, 2025). The reflexive notes suggest that this flexibility was instrumental in maintaining trust and supported an open dialogue during conversations.

The study also avoided collecting sensitive personal information. Chapter 3 shows that the research concentrated on organizational practices, governance arrangements, and land relations, rather than on private matters. Fieldnotes confirm that interviews centred on collective questions, such as how decisions are made, how land is managed, and the purpose of each organization is defined. This approach prevented the disclosure of personal or politically sensitive information and mitigated potential risks. Furthermore, it aligned with the research objective, which aims to understand ownership as a collective practice rather than an individual experience.

A careful and non-evaluative presentation of findings was another ethical consideration. Throughout Chapters 4 and 5, the descriptions of KM, ML, and SY focus on what participants reported and what documents confirm, without judging the organizations' performance. Reflexive notes show that the researcher was alert to the risk of interpreting Indigenous concepts through external categories. To reduce this risk, interpretations were checked against interview notes, field observations, statutes, and public documents. This triangulation helped ensure that the cross-case patterns in Chapter 4 reflected repeated observations rather than selective impressions. Presenting findings in this descriptive manner respects participants' voices and avoids imposing outsider values on their practices.

Culturally respectful interaction formed another part of the ethical approach. Chapter 2 emphasizes the importance of recognizing Indigenous perspectives on land, community, and purpose. This focus is evident in the Case Study Protocol and the reflexive notes, which demonstrate that interviews were conducted in a manner that encouraged participants to express themselves using their own terminology and explanations. Additionally, field notes indicate that prior to each interaction, the researcher explained the purpose of the study. These practices supported respectful dialogue and acknowledged participants as knowledge holders.

The study also took care to avoid creating disadvantages for the organizations. The evidence concentrated on publicly shareable or organizational matters, thereby preventing the disclosure of internal conflicts or strategic information. In Chapter 5.1, contextual challenges are described as external conditions influenced by regulatory, economic, or ecological factors, rather than as shortcomings of the organizations. This framing avoids placing responsibility for structural constraints to the communities and diminishes potential risks associated with negative external interpretations.

The execution of all interactions via online platforms also had ethical implications. While digital communication facilitated participation over considerable distances, it simultaneously constrained the availability of non-verbal cues that often support respectful interactions. The fieldnotes indicate that the researcher used clear explanations, repeated key points, and asked follow-up questions to verify comprehension. Participants were encouraged to interrupt or seek clarification as necessary. These measures helped maintain a careful and respectful environment in the absence of direct face-to-face contact.

Transparency about the use of data was another aspect of ethical care. Chapter 3 states that participants were informed that their contributions would be used only for academic purposes and would remain anonymized in the final publication. The reflexive notes document that the researcher revisited these commitments during fieldwork and considered how interpretations might be perceived by the organizations involved. This ongoing attention ensured that the findings were presented in a manner that would neither harm the communities involved nor attract unwanted attention.

Documentation practices also supported ethical transparency. Chapter 3 explains how interview notes, field notes, and reflexive notes were organized and stored. This systematic approach created a transparent record of the development of interpretations and the decision-making process during analysis.

Overall, the ethical considerations in this study concentrated on safeguarding participants' anonymity, ensuring voluntary engagement, avoiding the collection of sensitive data, promoting culturally respectful communication, and preventing harm. These measures guided the entire research process and influenced the manner in which the findings were analyzed and presented. By following the Case Study Protocol and the principles laid out in Chapter 3, the study maintained a high standard of ethical care and honored the trust placed by the Indigenous organizations that contributed to it.

6. Conclusion

This conclusion synthesizes the main insights developed throughout the thesis and shows how the findings address the research question. It integrates the theoretical perspectives from Chapter 2, the methodological foundations from Chapter 3, and the empirical patterns from Chapters 4 and 5. No new data are presented. Instead, the chapter summarizes how the three cases demonstrate collective purpose, self-governance, and long-term orientation, and how these align with steward-ownership principles. It also highlights the broader relevance of the study by connecting the results to the central research question. Finally, the chapter discusses the contributions and limitations of the research and suggests areas for future study. Its goal is to provide a clear and accessible summary for both academic and non-academic readers.

This thesis investigated the research question: *How do the principles of steward-ownership, purpose orientation and self determination resonate with ownership models and practices developed by Indigenous communities in Latin America?* The analysis in Chapters 4 and 5 shows that the question can be answered by identifying consistent patterns across the three cases rather than through direct comparison. The findings indicate that purpose is defined collectively in all organizations and is connected to the well-being of communities, territories, and producer families. This aligns with the steward-ownership idea that economic activities should serve a clear mission. Governance in all cases is organized around collective assemblies, councils, or traditional authorities, reflecting forms of self-determination that link responsibility and decision-making. The use of surplus in the three organizations follows a shared-benefit logic, strengthening families, organizations, and territories instead of prioritizing individual gain. The cases also connect economic practice to land and nature understood as elements of a shared relational community. This perspective sees land not as a commodity but as a foundation for collective continuity. Across all organizations, decisions focus on the long-term and future generations. This mirrors the intergenerational concern present in steward-ownership, even if expressed through different instruments. The cases do not replicate steward-ownership models but move in directions that share similar values around purpose oriented towards the common, self-governance, relational responsibilities, and long-term continuity.

By integrating the findings of the three case studies and the discussions from previous chapters this thesis makes three main contributions. The first contribution is empirical. The cases of KM, ML, and SY provide a detailed view of how Indigenous organizations in Latin America organize economic activities around collective responsibility. Across all cases, purpose is described as the well-being of communities, territories, and families.

Governance is exercised through assemblies, councils, and traditional authorities that connect decision-making to responsibility and accountability. Surplus is considered a shared resource that supports families, organizations, and ecosystems. Land is seen as a relational element linking people to territory, culture, and future generations. The cases demonstrate that economic and organizational practices are rooted in broader understandings of community and care. These insights enhance current debates on steward-ownership by showing how collective purpose, self-governance, and long-term responsibility emerge within Indigenous contexts through their own histories and priorities.

The second contribution is theoretical. The thesis combines three bodies of literature that are usually discussed separately: steward-ownership, commons scholarship, and Indigenous ownership cosmologies. The findings do not claim that the cases represent steward-ownership models. Instead, they reveal similarities where organizational practices align with steward-ownership principles, especially in prioritizing collective purposes and protecting long-term continuity. Simultaneously, the cases highlight broader ideas of the common good, including land, nature, and future generations. This integrated perspective enhances the understanding of ownership as a social and relational practice rather than a purely legal or financial arrangement.

The third contribution is methodological. The study highlights the importance of a well-designed case study approach that integrates a clear protocol, reflexive awareness, and triangulation. Using field notes, interview notes, and reflexive notes helped document the research process and ensured transparent interpretation of the material. Triangulation across interviews, documents, and public sources contributed to the reliability of the analysis. This methodological approach demonstrates how systematic documentation and ongoing reflexivity can support respectful research in intercultural settings.

The findings of this thesis have several implications for theoretical debates and for actors working with Indigenous organizations. Regarding steward-ownership, the cases show that purpose, self-governance, and long-term orientation align with how the three organizations describe their aims and responsibilities. Each organization guides its activities toward the well-being of communities and territories. Decision-making is connected to collective bodies and forms of accountability rooted in cultural and territorial obligations. The organizations also emphasize long-term continuity and the protection of future generations. These elements mirror key principles of steward-ownership. At the same time, the cases demonstrate that Indigenous practices arise from their own histories and relationships with land and community. They highlight broader ideas of collective responsibility that can enrich ongoing steward-ownership discussions without replacing existing frameworks.

The findings also have implications for research on Indigenous organizations. The thesis illustrates how organizational structures such as assemblies, councils, and community authorities are deeply connected with cultural logics that influence understandings of land, responsibility, and purpose. These connections help clarify why economic practices are inseparable from territorial relations and commitments to families and future generations. Therefore, the study supports scholarship that views Indigenous organizations as relational systems where economic activities are part of a broader social and ecological context.

Finally, the findings provide cautious implications for policy and development actors. The cases show that external programs need to recognize collective and territorial logics when working with Indigenous organizations. Support measures are more likely to be effective if they respect community autonomy and align with existing governance structures and cultural priorities. Policies that focus only on individual entrepreneurship or short-term growth do not match how organizations define purpose and responsibility. This thesis does not propose specific interventions but suggests that approaches based on respect for autonomy and long-term territorial well-being are better suited to the realities documented in the study.

This study has several limitations that arise from the conditions under which the research was conducted. All fieldwork was carried out online, which reduced the chance of observing interactions in their natural environment and limited the informal insights that often emerge in face-to-face settings. Although the conversations were open and respectful, the digital format restricted the ability to perceive non-verbal cues and contextual details. Organizing interviews across different time zones also introduced practical constraints and required a high level of flexibility from both participants and the researcher. Language was another limitation. The study was conducted in Spanish, which is not the researcher's first language. This required careful attention to ensure accurate understanding of expressions and culturally specific concepts. Participants were supportive and clarified uncertainties, but the possibility of misunderstandings cannot be fully excluded. The study includes only three cases, which restricts the scope of comparison. Each organization operates within its own unique historical, cultural, and territorial context. Indigenous knowledge is highly contextual and cannot be separated from the lived experiences of each community. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all Indigenous organizations in Latin America. These limitations are consistent with the nature of qualitative case study research. According to this approach, the goal is not to make universal claims but to develop an in-depth understanding of how ownership practices are shaped within specific settings. The findings therefore offer insights into particular cases rather than conclusions that are broadly applicable across regions or communities.

Future research could build on this study by increasing the number and diversity of cases. The three organizations examined here demonstrate how purpose, self-governance, surplus practices, and land relations are influenced by their specific histories and territories. Studies including Indigenous organizations from other regions of Latin America could deepen the understanding of how these elements vary across different cultural and ecological contexts. Broader comparative studies might also clarify whether the patterns observed in this study appear similarly elsewhere, for instance in Africa and Asia. Future research could also benefit from longer fieldwork periods. Since this study was conducted online, in-person engagement would allow researchers to observe daily practices, decision-making processes, and community interactions in more detail. Extended immersion could provide a better understanding of how ownership practices are carried out at different moments in organizational life. Another direction for future research is comparing Indigenous organizations with non-Indigenous cooperatives or producer associations. Such comparisons could help distinguish which ownership practices are shaped by cultural logics versus those arising from organizational forms or economic sectors. This could lead to more precise insights into the relationship between collective structures and shared responsibilities. Further studies could also investigate the legal frameworks affecting Indigenous organizations. The cases in this thesis show that regulations influence credit practices, territorial governance, and market participation. A closer analysis of legal and administrative conditions could clarify how supportive or restrictive environments influence ownership practices. Lastly, future research could explore the connections between Indigenous ownership practices and broader theories on commons governance. This study has shown that collective purpose, shared responsibility, and long-term care are central elements in the three organizations. Linking these observations with additional theoretical perspectives could deepen understanding of how communities manage resources, responsibilities, and futures.

This thesis shows that the three organizations do not represent forms of steward-ownership, yet their practices align with its core principles. Their approaches to collective purpose, self-governance, shared benefits, and long-term care emerge from their own histories, territories, and cultural understandings. Recognizing these connections without treating them as identical is crucial for appreciating the unique nature of Indigenous ownership practices. The organizations' participation helped reveal how ownership is influenced by responsibilities toward community and territory. Their willingness to share experiences highlights the importance of respectful collaboration and careful interpretation in research. The cases demonstrate that autonomy, collective decision-making, and strong ties to land can support sustainable organizational practices that meet current needs while considering future generations. These insights highlight the value of diverse perspectives on ownership and encourage ongoing reflection on how different traditions contribute to responsible economic practices.

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8. Annexes

Annex A: Introductory Letter

Dear members of [*Name of the organization*],

My name is Vanessa Vogel, and I am currently developing my master's thesis at the University of Padua (Italy).

[*Specific paragraph about how I learned about steward-ownership*]

[*Specific paragraph about how I learned about their organization*]

Objective of the Study

This research examines the interaction between the principles of steward-ownership, specifically self-determination and purpose orientation, and cultural conceptions of ownership and enterprise in Indigenous communities in Latin America. The aim is to identify areas of resonance and difference and to make Indigenous perspectives more visible.

What is steward-ownership?

It is an alternative to conventional ownership models that seeks to secure long-term purpose and independence through two key principles:

- Self-determination: Control remains in the hands of people who are actively engaged in the organization or connected to its purpose (stewards, not absentee owners).
- Purpose orientation: Profits serve as a means for long-term development. They are reinvested, benefit stakeholders, may provide aligned returns to investors or founders, or be dedicated to community-oriented goals.

Invitation to Participate

I would like to invite you to participate in a semi-structured interview lasting approximately 45-60 minutes, conducted in Spanish via video call.

All responses will be treated confidentially and anonymously, unless explicit permission is given to share identifying details.

A short summary of results will be shared with participating individuals and communities.

If you are interested in participating, I would be grateful if you could please indicate:

1. The contact person for the interview and their role.
2. Three possible dates and times (including your time zone).
3. Your preferred platform (Zoom / Google Meet / WhatsApp) and the corresponding contact information.

I propose conducting interviews between October 9 and October 21, between 08:00 and 22:00 (Germany time).

I sincerely appreciate your time and attention and remain available for any questions.

I look forward to your response.

Warm regards,

Vanessa Vogel

[*Email address*]

[*Phone number*]

Annex A.1: Carta de invitación

Estimadas y estimados miembros de [*Nombre de la organización*]:

Mi nombre es Vanessa Vogel y actualmente estoy desarrollando mi tesis de maestría en la Universidad de Padua (Italia).

[*Párrafo específico sobre cómo conocí la Propiedad Responsable*

[*Párrafo específico sobre cómo conocí la organización*]

Objetivo del estudio

Esta investigación analiza cómo interactúan los principios de la Propiedad Responsable (steward-ownership), específicamente la autodeterminación y la orientación al propósito, con las concepciones culturales de propiedad y organización económica en comunidades indígenas de América Latina. El objetivo es identificar resonancias y diferencias, y visibilizar las perspectivas indígenas.

¿Qué es la Propiedad Responsable?

Es una alternativa a los modelos convencionales de propiedad que busca asegurar el propósito y la independencia a largo plazo mediante dos principios centrales:

- Autodeterminación: El control permanece en manos de personas que participan activamente en la organización o que están vinculadas con su propósito (stewards o custodios, no dueños ausentes).
- Orientación al propósito: Las utilidades son un medio para el desarrollo a largo plazo. Se reinvierten, benefician a las partes interesadas, pueden retribuir de forma alineada a inversionistas o fundadores, o destinarse a objetivos comunitarios.

Invitación a participar

Me gustaría invitarles a participar en una entrevista semiestructurada de aproximadamente 45-60 minutos, realizada en español por videollamada.

Todas las respuestas serán tratadas de forma confidencial y anónima, salvo que ustedes autoricen explícitamente lo contrario.

Compartiré un breve resumen de los resultados con las personas y comunidades participantes.

En caso de estar interesados, les agradecería si pudieran indicarme:

1. La persona de contacto para la entrevista y su cargo.
2. Tres posibles fechas y horarios (incluyendo su huso horario).
3. Su plataforma preferida (Zoom / Google Meet / WhatsApp) y el dato de contacto correspondiente.

Propongo realizar las entrevistas entre el 9 y el 21 de octubre, en horarios entre las 08:00 y las 22:00 (hora de Alemania).

Agradezco sinceramente su tiempo y atención y quedo a disposición para cualquier consulta.

Quedo atenta a su respuesta.

Cordialmente,

Vanessa Vogel

[*Correo electrónico*]

[*Número de teléfono*]

Annex B: Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent for Interview

Project Title
Cultural Perspectives on Ownership: Resonances between steward-ownership Principles and Indigenous Practices in Latin America

Principal Researcher
Vanessa Vogel, Universidad de Padua (Italy)
Email: [*email]*

Academic Supervisor
Alessio Surian, Università degli Studi di Padova
Email: [*email*]

Information about the Interview and Data Use

The interview will be conducted online, in Spanish, and will last approximately 45 to 60 minutes. Questions will focus on the organization, its forms of ownership and governance, and how these relate to the principles of steward-ownership, such as self-determination and purpose orientation. Participation is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to answer any question or to stop the interview at any time, without any consequence.

The personal data collected will be used exclusively for scientific purposes within this master's research. All information will be treated confidentially and stored on password-protected devices. The original data (recordings and transcripts) will be kept only by the researcher and her supervisor, in an anonymous and secure format. Only they will have access to the data during the analysis process. The names of participants will be replaced with pseudonyms, and the names of organizations will be mentioned only if explicit authorization is given. Once the thesis and its academic evaluation are complete, all identifiable recordings and notes will be securely deleted. The thesis will include only excerpts that do not allow identification of participants.

The risks are minimal, limited to potential discomfort when discussing personal or community experiences. Potential benefits include increasing the visibility of your organization's work and contributing to an intercultural dialogue on community ownership models. To facilitate transcription, your authorization may be requested to record the interview. If you prefer not to be recorded, detailed notes will be taken instead.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study or the use of your data, you may contact me directly.

Consent Declaration

Please reply to this email or complete and sign this document (if you prefer to send it as a PDF). If responding by email, please copy and mark the selected options and add your name, position, organization, date, and location.

1. Participation
   a. Yes, I agree to participate
   b. I do not wish to participate
2. Identification in the Thesis
   a. I agree that the name of my organization may be mentioned
   b. I prefer to keep the organization anonymous
3. Recording of the Interview
   a. I authorize the recording of the interview
   b. I prefer not to be recorded

Name and position of participant:________________________________

Organization: ____

Place and date: ____

Signature (if sent as PDF): ____

Thank you for your time, trust, and contribution to this research.

Vanessa Vogel

Università degli Studi di Padova

Annex B.1: Formulario de consentimiento informado

Consentimiento informado para entrevista

Título del proyecto
Cultural Perspectives on Ownership: Resonances between steward-ownership Principles and Indigenous Practices in Latin America

Investigadora responsable
Vanessa Vogel, Universidad de Padua (Italia)
Correo: [*correo*]

Supervisor académico
Alessio Surian, Università degli Studi di Padova
Correo: [*correo*]

Información sobre la entrevista y el uso de datos

La entrevista se realizará en línea, con una duración aproximada de 45 a 60 minutos, en español. Las preguntas se centrarán en la organización, sus formas de propiedad y gobierno, y en cómo se relacionan con los principios de Propiedad Responsable como la autodeterminación y la orientación al propósito. La participación es completamente voluntaria. Usted puede decidir no responder alguna pregunta o detener la entrevista en cualquier momento, sin consecuencias.
Los datos personales obtenidos serán utilizados exclusivamente con fines científicos dentro de esta investigación de maestría. La información será tratada de manera confidencial y se almacenará en dispositivos protegidos con contraseña. Los datos originales (grabaciones y transcripciones) serán conservados únicamente por la estudiante y su supervisor, en forma anónima y segura. Solo ellxs tendrán acceso a la información durante el proceso de análisis. Los nombres de las personas serán sustituidos por seudónimos, y los nombres de las organizaciones se mencionarán únicamente si existe autorización explícita. Una vez finalizada la tesis y su evaluación académica, las grabaciones y notas identificables se eliminarán de manera segura. En la tesis se incluirán únicamente fragmentos de información que no permitan la identificación de las personas entrevistadas.
Los riesgos son mínimos, limitados a una posible incomodidad al hablar de experiencias personales o comunitarias. Los posibles beneficios incluyen dar mayor visibilidad al trabajo de su organización y aportar a un diálogo intercultural sobre modelos de propiedad comunitaria. Para facilitar la transcripción, puedo solicitar su autorización para grabar la entrevista. Si prefiere no ser grabado/a, tomaré notas detalladas.
Si tiene preguntas o inquietudes sobre el estudio o sobre el uso de sus datos, puede contactar directamente conmigo.

Declaración de consentimiento

Por favor, responda a este correo o complete y firme este documento (si prefiere enviarlo como PDF). Si responde por correo electrónico, copie las opciones marcadas y añada su nombre, cargo, organización, fecha y lugar.

1. Participación
    a. Sí, acepto participar
    b. No deseo participar
2. Identificación en la tesis
    a. Acepto que se mencione el nombre de mi organización
    b. Prefiero mantener el anonimato de la organización
3. Grabación de la entrevista
    a. Autorizo la grabación de la entrevista
    b. Prefiero que no se grabe

Nombre y cargo de la persona entrevistada: ________________________________

Organización: ____

Lugar y fecha: ____

Firma (si se envía en PDF): ____

Gracias por su tiempo, su confianza y por contribuir a esta investigación.

Vanessa Vogel

Università degli Studi di Padova

Annex C: Interview Guide

1. Introduction and Framing (approx. 3 min)

- Express gratitude and explain purpose of study (Master's thesis on Indigenous and steward-ownership).
- Short self-introduction: background, academic program, and connection to Purpose Foundation internship.
- Clarify voluntary participation and confidentiality.
- Inform about recording and right to stop or skip any question.
- Confirm:
  - willingness to participate
  - consent to recording
  - preference for anonymity or organizational name use

2. Participant Context (approx. 2 min)

- Ask for participant's name and organizational role.
- Note relevant contextual information for case profile.

3. Main Discussion Topics (approx. 30 min)

(1) Purpose (Profits serve purpose)

   a. Explore how the organization defines its long-term mission or contribution.
   b. Who benefits, and in what way?

(2) Decision-Making (Self-determination)

   a. How are important decisions made?
   b. Who participates and how is authority distributed?

(3) Ownership and Values (Indigenous Ownership Cosmologies)

   a. What does ownership mean in this context (resources, knowledge, responsibilities)?
   b. Which values guide stewardship or care?

(4) Challenges and Learnings

   a. Identify obstacles (legal, economic, cultural) in maintaining purpose or autonomy.

b. Discuss lessons learned from these experiences.

(5) Resonances and Differences

a. Explore similarities or contrasts with steward-ownership principles (purpose orientation, self-determination, non-extractive ownership).

b. How do these ideas align or differ?

(6) Reflexive / Ethical Reflection

a. Encourage reflection on the research process:

i. How does the participant feel sharing experiences with an external researcher?

ii. What should be kept in mind to ensure respectful representation?

4. Closing and Follow-Up (approx. 5 min)

- Invite any additional comments or reflections.
- Ask permission to send a short factual summary later (e.g. year of founding, members, legal form).
- Offer to share a short results summary once the thesis is complete.
- Ask if they wish to recommend another organization for participation.
- Express gratitude for their time and trust.

Annex C.1: Guion de entrevista

1. Introducción y encuadre (aprox. 3 min)

- Agradecer la participación y explicar el propósito del estudio (tesis de maestría sobre Propiedad Indígena y Propiedad Responsable / steward-ownership).
- Breve auto-presentación: trayectoria, programa académico y vínculo con la pasantía en la Purpose Foundation.
- Aclarar que la participación es voluntaria y confidencial.
- Informar sobre la grabación y el derecho a detener o saltar cualquier pregunta.
- Confirmar:
  - disposición a participar,
  - consentimiento para la grabación,
  - preferencia sobre anonimato o uso del nombre de la organización.

2. Contexto de la persona participante (aprox. 2 min)

- Preguntar el nombre y el rol dentro de la organización.
- Registrar información contextual relevante para el perfil del caso.

3. Temas principales de la conversación (aprox. 30 min)

(1) Propósito (las utilidades al servicio del propósito)
  a. Explorar cómo la organización define su misión o contribución a largo plazo.
  b. ¿A quién beneficia y de qué manera?

(2) Toma de decisiones (autodeterminación)
  a. ¿Cómo se toman las decisiones importantes?
  b. ¿Quiénes participan y cómo se distribuye la autoridad?

(3) Propiedad y valores (cosmologías indígenas de la propiedad)
  a. ¿Qué significa "propiedad" en este contexto (recursos, conocimientos, responsabilidades)?
  b. ¿Qué valores orientan el cuidado o la administración de esos bienes?

(4) Desafíos y aprendizajes
  a. Identificar obstáculos (legales, económicos, culturales) para mantener el propósito o la autonomía.

    b. Comentar los aprendizajes obtenidos de esas experiencias.

(5) Resonancias y diferencias

    a. Explorar similitudes o contrastes con los principios de la Propiedad Responsable/ steward-ownership (orientación al propósito, autodeterminación, propiedad no extractiva).
    b. ¿Cómo se alinean o se diferencian estas ideas?

(6) Reflexión ética / reflexiva

    a. Invitar a reflexionar sobre el proceso de investigación:
        i. ¿Cómo se siente la persona al compartir su experiencia con una investigadora externa?
        ii. ¿Qué debería tenerse en cuenta para representar su testimonio de manera respetuosa?

4. Cierre y seguimiento (aprox. 5 min)

- Invitar a añadir comentarios o reflexiones finales.
- Pedir permiso para enviar posteriormente un breve resumen con datos básicos (por ejemplo: año de fundación, número de miembros, forma jurídica).
- Ofrecer compartir un resumen de resultados cuando la tesis esté finalizada.
- Preguntar si desea recomendar otra organización interesada en participar.
- Agradecer sinceramente su tiempo y confianza.

Annex D: Case Study Protocol

Section A: an overview of the case study

A1. Case Study Topic

Exploration of how the principles of steward-ownership (purpose orientation, self-determination) relate to concepts of property and organization in indigenous communities in Latin America.

A2. Purpose of the Study

- Conducted as part of a master's thesis at the University of Padua (CCD-STeDe).
- Objective: to understand resonances between steward-ownership and indigenous ownership practices, and to make indigenous perspectives visible.

A3. Responsibility and Audience

- Researcher: Vanessa Vogel (University of Padua, CCD-STeDe Programme)
- Supervisor: Prof. Alessio Surian
- Audience: Master's thesis committee and academic staff of the CCD-STeDe programme

A4. Case Selection Criteria

Selection criteria:

- Clear indigenous connection
- Regional and sectorial diversity
- Accessibility and willingness to participate
- Conceptual fit (initial contact via internship network, independent final selection)

A5. Main Ideas and Research Questions

Both steward-ownership and indigenous models challenge conventional, profit-driven ownership forms. They focus on purpose and autonomy.

Central question: How do the principles of steward-ownership, purpose orientation and self-determination, resonate with ownership models and practices developed by indigenous communities in Latin America?

Subquestions:

1. Similarities and differences between models?
2. Indigenous conceptualizations of ownership?
3. Illustrative examples of resonance or tension?
4. Ethical and methodological challenges?

A6. Methodological Justification

- Yin (2018): case study fits how/why questions; explores real-world phenomena
- The research is qualitative and relativist in orientation
- Boundaries between phenomenon (ownership principles) and context (indigenous community practices) are intentionally left open, to allow a holistic understanding of how both interact in real-world setting.

A7. Connection to Broader Issues

- Contributes to academic debates on ownership, organization, and decolonial perspectives.
- Practical relevance for actors in alternative ownership models (e.g., Purpose Foundation, Purpose LatAm).
- Highlights indigenous approaches to self-determination and collective purpose.

A8. Theoretical and Ethical Frameworks

1. Steward-ownership: Purpose Foundation and Purpose Network literature.
2. Indigenous Ownership Cosmologies: primary case data
3. Resonance Theory: Rosa and Susen.
4. Methodology and Ethics: Yin (2018), Iphofen (2021), European Commission (2021), ICEA Data Policy

A9. Introductory Letter (Annex A)

Spanish invitation sent before data collection, including study purpose, confidentiality, and consent procedure.

Section B: data collection procedures

B1. Access and Communication with Participants

- Initial contact by email using Introductory Letter (Annex A)
- 1st reminder by email & 2nd reminder via Email & WhatsApp/ Facebook/ LinkedIn
- Main communication via WhatsApp after first contact
- Interviews conducted online (Zoom / Google Meet / WhatsApp Video)
- Participants receive Introductory Letter (Annex A) + Consent Form (Annex B) in advance
- Verbal reconfirmation of consent at the beginning of each interview

B2. Data Sources and Collection Methods

1. **Transcripts (Interviews):** Semi-structured interviews conducted in Spanish (45-60 min, recorded with consent). Each transcript includes metadata on date, language, participant code, and duration.
2. **Field Notes:** Handwritten notes taken during or immediately after interviews, including contextual observations and reflexive comments by the researcher.
3. **Public Sources:** Websites, press releases, newsletters, and verified social-media posts that describe the organization's activities.
4. **Registry Records:** Official databases such as FECRECOOP, SIREM, and SERNATUR, as well as any public registries confirming legal status, certification, or partnerships.

Data management:

- Structured folders: 0_Administrative, 1_Methodology, 2_Evidence, 3_Analysis
- Each case folder (2_Evidence/ Küme Mogen, Seynekun, Mapu Lahual) mirrors the same five evidence categories: (1) Transcripts, (2) Field Notes, (3) Public Sources, and (4) Registry Records.
- A central Excel file Data_Log.xlsx, located in the main directory, tracks cases, contacts, communications, and evidence.

B3. Fieldwork Logistics and Resources

- Devices: Laptop, Tablet, mobile phone, notebook, pens

- Software: Word / Excel / Pingpong (for transcription)
- Communication: Email + WhatsApp (main), Facebook/LinkedIn (optional)
- Recording via mobile voice memo app (with consent)
- Stable internet required
- Secure cloud storage for all files
- Interview guide structure (Annex C): Introduction, Main Themes, Closing

B4. Ethical Procedures and Protection of Human Subjects

- Informed consent (Annex B) shared before interviews
- Verbal confirmation of participation and recording at the beginning of each interview
- Personal data used only for academic purposes
- Recordings and transcripts stored securely (password protected)
- Use of pseudonyms for participants and organization names only with explicit consent
- Deletion of all identifiable data after thesis evaluation
- Compliance with University of Padua & EU ethics guidelines

B5. Schedule and Contingency Planning

- Planned interview period: 9 - 21 October (+ 5-day buffer)
- Hours: 08:00 - 22:00 (Germany time)
- Min. 3 planned case studies
- Flexibility to adapt to participants' preferences
- Backup options: switch platform / send voice notes / extend period
- Transcriptions and preliminary coding are planned for late October to November 2025

B6. Notes on Field Conduct and Reflection

- Respectful and culturally sensitive interaction
- Reflexive practice on researcher positionality (European context vs. Indigenous communities)
- Supervisor reviews to mitigate bias

Section C: protocol questions

C1. Overview of Inquiry Focus

The inquiry is guided by three main theoretical perspectives:

- Steward-ownership (purpose orientation and self-determination)
- Indigenous Cosmologies of Ownership
- Resonance Theory (Rosa and Susen)

Objective:

- To explore whether and how the principles of steward-ownership resonate with indigenous concepts of property and organization in Latin America.
- To make indigenous perspectives visible and contribute to a decolonial discussion on ownership and self-determination.

C2. Core Case Study Questions (Level 2 Questions)

No.	Level 2 Question	Sources
1	How do the principles of steward-ownership (purpose orientation and self-determination) compare with indigenous models of ownership and organization?	Semi-structured interviews, publicly available organizational materials, Purpose Foundation materials
2	How do indigenous organizations and their members conceptualize ownership in relation to purpose, autonomy, and responsibility?	Interviews, social media content, mission statements
3	In what ways do specific indigenous enterprises or associations illustrate resonances or tensions with steward-ownership principles?	Interviews, websites, secondary reports
4	What methodological and ethical challenges emerge when researching ownership across cultural contexts, and how are they addressed during the study?	Field notes, reflexive memos, ethics literature

C3. Evidence Sources and Indicators

Type of Evidence	Storage Location	Indicators / Use
Semi-structured interviews	2_Evidence/[Case]/1_Transcripts	Statements and examples illustrating purpose, governance, and ownership values.
Interview notes	2_Evidence/[Case]/1_Transcripts	Researcher's impressions, emerging patterns, and methodological reflections.
Publicly available online materials	2_Evidence/[Case]/3_PublicSources	Public framing of values, partnerships, and community engagement.
Official databases and registers	2_Evidence/[Case]/4_RegistryRecords	Legal status, registration details, and institutional affiliations
Consent forms	2_Evidence/[Case]/ 0_Consent	Documentation of ethical compliance and informed participation.

C4. Cross-Case Consistency

- The same semi-structured interview guide (Annex C) is used for all participants, adapted only to organizational context and language tone.
- The same evidence categories (interviews, field notes, public sources, and registry records) are collected for each case and stored following identical folder and naming structures.

C5. Analytical Preparation

Each transcript was coded manually using these thematic categories:

Analytical Category	KM	SY	ML
Purpose and the collective good			
Control and responsibility			
Profit and surplus logic			
Relationship with land and nature			
Temporality and the intergenerational horizon			
Challenges and tensions (cross-cutting)			

Section D: a tentative outline for the case study report

D1. Purpose and Audience of the Report

- The final report will take the form of a Master's Thesis within the CCD-STeDe programme at the University of Padua.
- main audience: academic committee evaluating the thesis
- report's goal primarily academic: contributing to research on ownership, self-determination, and decolonial perspectives
- report's goal secondary practical: for organizations such as the Purpose Network and the participating indigenous initiatives
- writing style: reflexive, clear, and inclusive

D2. Tentative Structure of the Final Case Study Report

Main Chapters

1. Introduction
2. Theoretical Framework
3. Methodology
4. Results
5. Discussion
6. Conclusion
7. Annexes

This outline follows a linear-analytic format (theory → method → findings → interpretation).

Making the "chain of evidence" visible:

- In-text: Every idea or quote is linked to its source using APA citations (e.g., interview code, document, or reference).
- In tables: Short source codes (e.g., KM_I2 = Interview 2, Küme Mogen) connect evidence to the database.
- In folders and Excel file: All materials are stored and labeled systematically, so anyone could trace each finding back to its original evidence.

D3. Documentation and Annexes

Annex overview:

- Annex A: Introductory Letter
- Annex B: Informed Consent Form
- Annex C: Interview Guide
- Annex D: Case Study Protocol

D4. Anticipated Format and Style

- Report type: Linear-analytic format with short comparative elements across the three cases.
- Narrative style: Analytical and descriptive, including short quotations and contextual examples when relevant.
- Length: approximately 60-100 pages excluding annexes
- Language: English, with original Spanish quotations

D5. Adaptive Strategy

The outline is flexible.

Whenever changes are made, a short note will be added in the Analysis Log indicating:

- the date of the change,
- what was modified, and
- why the adjustment was necessary.