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Additional Information

Epistemic resilience: articulating struggles and dreams from the co-production of knowledge from below between universities and community researchers

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Abstract

One of the main challenges to be faced in contemporary societies of the 21st century is the urgency of moving towards a people-centred approach to security. This approach to security relies on the human development paradigm promoted by the United Nations Development Programme, which questions security approaches focused on police control and repression, understanding human security as a concern for life and human dignity. In this chapter, we explore the contributions of the Network of Community Researchers (NCR) to approach epistemic resilience as a way of contributing knowledge to move towards human security in the city of Medellín (Colombia). The NCR is an experience of co-production of knowledge from below between community researchers and academics promoted by the University of Antioquia, Colombia. From a bottom-up approach to human security, we understand that the NCR is contributing to building a reparative future. On the one hand, by recognising the historical injustices and inequalities that occur in the city, exacerbated by the municipality's public policies on citizen security. On the other hand, by co-producing knowledge from below with the communities and the university to strengthen community and organisational struggles and practices, based on

hope and collective utopia, but also on denunciation and political advocacy. From this perspective, the NCR plays a fundamental role in articulating transformative learning spaces, struggles and dreams, and achieving a future of peace and a more just, inclusive, and sustainable city.

Introduction

Given the different social and environmental crises that we face globally, the concept of resilience has emerged strongly in recent years. From a historical perspective, resilience arises from the natural sciences as “the capacity of a material or system to return to equilibrium after a displacement” (Norris et al., 2008: 127). However, this concept has been reinterpreted by the social sciences from different angles. From a community perspective, Ntontis et al. (2019) and Norris et al. (2008) understand resilience as the adaptation of individuals and communities after a disturbance or adversity. However, there is no consensus among scientists and decision-makers about how to translate resilience into public policies. Currently, the European Union defines resilience as the “ability not only to withstand and cope with challenges but also to undergo transitions, in a sustainable, fair, and democratic manner” (European Commission [EC] 2023). Instead, some authors warn about the risk of treating resilience in a broad and empty, top-down manner, with a lack of indicators or measurement methods, as an antidote and a countermeasure to poverty, inequalities and vulnerability (Ntontis et al., 2019; Bohle, Downing & Watts, 1994).

In this chapter we explore resilience from an epistemic perspective, understanding that people not only have capacities to adapt, but are also agents of change and producers of knowledge for social and environmental transformation (Leivas et al., 2022). To this end, we will delve into the experience of the Network of Community Researchers (hereinafter

NCR), promoted by the Human Security Observatory (HSO) of the University of Antioquia, in Medellín, Colombia. Medellín is one of the most unequal cities in Latin America, reaching a Gini index of 0.52 in 2020 (Medellín Cómo Vamos, 2021). This inequality is associated with higher levels of crime and violence, increasing insecurity in the city. According to some authors who are working with communities living in the midst of chronic violence and crime, security policies and practices in Latin America continue to be dominated by counterproductive militarised responses that have failed to address violence and crime (Pearce & Abello Colak, 2021; Abello Colak & Pearce, 2009). For Rincón (2018), citizen security policies are understood as the set of measures implemented to deal with the different types of violence and conflict processes that occur in urban contexts. At present, we are witnessing the emergence of a citizen movement that, under the hashtag *#esaseguridadnomerepresenta* (that security doesn't represent me), demands from the president of Colombia (2022 – 2026) the changes he promised in the electoral campaign regarding security policies. These changes were aimed at moving from a militarised citizen security approach based on police control and repression, towards a human security approach “based on equality, the protection of the national sovereignty, citizen security, care of life and nature” (Petro, 2023).

To challenge these punitive approaches to security, Pearce and Abello Colak (2021: 1370) argue that “communities living with these realities need to develop their own understanding of security”. For these authors, participatory action research practices based on the co-production of knowledge from below make it possible to humanise security. These methodological approaches invite us to recover the theoretical legacy of Paulo Freire to rethink resilience from an epistemic perspective. From his approach, people and communities are not only able to adapt to changes, but also to transform the present and think about a different future from below. In this sense, Freire (2014) already

highlighted that adaptive approaches do not give room to "[...] utopia, that is, for the dream, for the option, for the decision, for waiting in the fight, the only one in which there is hope" (117). Freire (2014) argues the importance of the dream for political subjects, and that utopia is waiting for a collective future in struggle and from hope.

From these perspectives, this chapter aims to answer the following research question: Is epistemic resilience a bottom-up approach to contributing knowledge from below to a reparative future? To this end, in the following section, we delve into the different perspectives on community resilience and draw on previous work based on Freire's contributions to approach the concept of epistemic resilience. Subsequently, we explore the methodological strategy used and the NCR case study. Next, we analyse the contributions of the NCR in terms of human security as an experience of epistemic resilience that allows the articulation of collective struggles and dreams to achieve a more just and sustainable future. Finally, we present the main conclusions of the research.

[From community resilience to epistemic resilience](#)

Despite the recent and overwhelming emergence of different perspectives around the concept of resilience, we find two points in common from the social sciences. The first point in common is related to the roots of the concept that emerges from the physical and mathematical sciences, highlighting the importance of conceptualising resilience as an adaptation response and not as a stability action in the face of a disaster situation. In this sense, Norris et al. (2008) stress that resilience is a "process that leads to adaptation, not to a result, not to stability" (144). On the other hand, the second point is related to the need to understand resilience as a process and not as a result (Norris et al., 2008). Ntontis et al. (2019) argue that resilience cannot be understood as the result of public policies from above, but must be understood and operationalised as a process that includes mechanisms and instruments for citizen participation. For the authors, it is urgent to avoid

discourses and policies that use "resilience to explain resilience itself" (2019: 11), which they call 'circularity of resilience', a practice widely used in the actions and design of public policies against to disasters. From a community perspective of resilience, there are different approaches in the literature. For authors such as Pfefferbaum et al. (2005), Coles, & Buckle, P. (2004) and Ganor & Ben-Lavy (2003) community resilience is the set of skills, capacities and knowledge of the members of a community to adapt to a disaster situation. For Norris et al. (2008), community resilience emerges from "four primary sets of adaptive capacities -Economic Development, Social Capital, Information and Communication, and Community Competence- that together provide a strategy for disaster readiness" (127). On the other hand, Kruse et al. (2017) expand this notion of community resilience by adding the learning and actions taken internally by communities, as well as other external factors that can influence resilience, such as disaster policies or the socio-economic and environmental context itself.

Some authors emphasise that public policies cannot be top-down generated to build resilience when a disaster occurs, but that it has to be a process in which the community is involved. In this sense, Furedi (2008) highlights that resilience cannot be taught from top-down technocratic approaches and argues the risk of these approaches by limiting local initiatives, since they do not involve communities. According to Ntontis et al. (2019) the recognition of the behavioural and psychological capacity of the population to act "paves the way for collaboration between agencies and communities in a horizontal rather than top down manner" (10). In this line, some authors evidence that people gather in groups and self-organise during disasters with a bottom-up approach (Clarke, 2002; Drury et al., 2009; 2015; Williams & Drury, 2010). On the other hand, Brown and Kulig (1996/97) point out that "People in communities are resilient together[...] For us,

community resiliency refers to the capacity of community members to engage in projects” (43).

In this chapter, we will explore the case of the NCR made up of community and university researchers who fight for the defence of human rights and the transformation of the city of Medellín (Colombia) from the co-production of knowledge from below. On the one hand, this methodological approach is aligned with the principles and practices of popular education proposed by the Brazilian pedagogue Paulo Freire. On the other hand, it contributes to operationalising and humanising the UNDP approach to human security (Pearce and Abello Colak, 2021). These authors propose human security from below as:

“[...] an attempt to increase the capacity of communities and local level actors to articulate their demands for better security provision based on agreed norms and under democratic principles in which security must be at the heart of all struggles for equitable development and social justice” (Abello Colak & Pearce, 2009:11).

In this sense, the NCR suggests an alternative theoretical-methodological proposal to the hegemonic perspective of citizen security used by the municipal administration in the city of Medellín. In previous work, Leivas et al. (2022) evidenced the NCR as a case of hermeneutic insurrection. According to Medina (2017), the hermeneutic insurrection represents "Forms of disobedience and rebellion against the norms and expressive/interpretative expectations to pave the way towards a new hermeneutic order" (48). In order to move towards a fairer hermeneutic order, Leivas et al. (2020) propose four capabilities for epistemic liberation that can be expanded in knowledge co-production processes and analyse them in the case of NCR (Leivas et al., 2022). The analysis shows the expansion of four capabilities for epistemic liberation: the capability to be recognised as producers of valid knowledge, the capability to do through communicative openness, the capability to learn from the collective knowledge, and the

capability to transform through collective action (Leivas et al., 2022). These capabilities are inspired by Freire's 'Pedagogy of the oppressed' (1970) and the Capabilities Approach proposed by Amartya Sen (1979; 1999).

In this chapter, the previous findings of Leivas et al. (2022) will help us to approach epistemic resilience as a way of contributing knowledge to move towards the construction of a reparative collective future. A future that recognises and seeks to repair historical injustices (Sriprakash et al., 2020; Hall, 2018), but that also leads to utopia and hope through struggle and collective action. In this sense, Freire defines the concept of utopia as the tension between the unfair and unequal present and the future to be built collectively:

“[...] there is no true utopia outside of the tension between the denunciation of a present that is becoming increasingly intolerable and the announcement of a future to be created, to be built politically, aesthetically and ethically by all, women and men. [...] Utopia implies denunciation and announcement, but it does not allow the tension between the two to end around the production of the previously announced future and now a new present. The new dream experience is established to the same extent that history does not immobilise, does not die. On the contrary, continue.” (Freire 2014: 116-117).

According to Freire (2014), utopia and the collective dream are the possibilities of change for the political subjects who aim to transform the world. Therefore, we understand that these collective spaces generate political learning that offers the opportunity to engage collectively with the struggles and dreams to move towards a reparative future.

Based on the different contributions explored in this section, we propose a first approximation to the concept of *epistemic resilience*, understood as a commitment to *transformation through participation in processes of knowledge co-production from*

below. These processes allow communities not only to become aware of the adaptation to multiple situations of inequality, oppression and historical violation but also to generate collective knowledge for social and environmental transformation to dream and co-create a more just and sustainable future. In this sense, the NCR case study, presented below, will allow us to contrast and expand this definition of epistemic resilience.

A qualitative approach to the case of NCR

Intending to contrast and expand the theoretical definition of epistemic resilience, in this section we propose a qualitative approach to the case study of the NCR. This methodological strategy is based on a review of the literature on resilience, a documentary analysis about the NCR and the discourse analysis on the interviews carried out in 2018 within the framework of a research project funded by the Universitat Politècnica de València. . To delve into the methodology used in the previous research, see Leivas et al. (2022).

Next, we describe the case study of the NCR. The NCR is a network of community researchers (hereinafter CRs) and academic researchers (hereinafter ARs) promoted by the Human Security Observatory of Medellín (HSO), attached to the Institute of Regional Studies of the University of Antioquia, Colombia. The CRs are activists, community leaders, and human rights defenders from different social collectives (women, afro-descendants and victims of the conflict) who participate in the NCR. The CRs are characterised, on the one hand, by developing leadership in the communities and community organizations, representing these groups in the different participation spaces. And, on the other hand, they improve their practices through the dialogical process established with the academy. The ARs are students and teaching staff who participate in the network. The NCR emerged in 2016 from the project "Network of Community

Researchers: Knowledge, Empowerment and Mobilisation around Human Security", which has had as its precedent an itinerant seminar held in 2013 (Zuluaga et al., 2017, p.6). The main objective of the NCR is to "(...) co-produce knowledge and promote processes that make human security possible for all" (Zuluaga et al. 2017: 4). This project enabled spaces and processes for the co-production of knowledge between the university and community organisations that contributed to advancing the human security approach from below (Abello Colak et al., 2014). This approach is theoretically based on the definition coined by the United Nations Program for Human Development (UNDP, 1994). According to the UNDP, human security means that people can exercise opportunities for human development safely and freely, having relative confidence that these opportunities will not disappear in the future. This approach emphasises that people must be able to take care of themselves:

“(...) everyone must have the opportunity to satisfy their most essential needs and earn a living. This will free them and help ensure that they can make a full contribution to development, to their own development and that of their community, their country and the world” (UNDP, 1994: 27).

In a previous work, Leivas et al. (2022) show from the CRs discourses that the NCR expands the definition of human security proposed by the UNDP, by proposing an approach that is people-centred, universal, comprehensive and interdependent. According to the authors, the co-production of interpretive materials from such an approach can contribute to generating alternative references in terms of different ways of understanding development and security, in addition to making visible the importance of the role of CRs as contributors to the transformation of the territories they inhabit.

At a methodological level, the human security from below proposed by the NCR is supported by the facilitation of training sessions and context analysis from the dialogue

of knowledge between the academy and the communities. The dialogue of knowledge according to the NCR "(...) is a methodology in which different types of knowledge are interrelated with the intention of recognising and understanding each other. Dialogue implies the recognition of the other as a different subject, with diverse knowledges and positions, based on the promotion of freedom and autonomy" (Zuluaga et al., 2017: 6).

In total, eight interviews were conducted in the fieldwork: three with academic researchers (ARs) linked to the HSO and five in-depth interviews with CRs participating in the NCR (four women and one man). These interviews were conducted during a research stay at the University of Antioquia. This three-month stay provided the opportunity to carry out the participant observation technique in the meetings and gatherings of the NCR, in addition to knowing first-hand the realities that community researchers experience on the slopes of Medellín. The results are presented from the discourse analysis of the people interviewed. To protect the security of these people and territories, the results of the interviews will be encoded with the initials CR (see Table 1 below) or AR (see Table 2), referring to community researchers or academic researchers respectively accompanied by a number that is linear in terms of the order in which the interviews were conducted.

Table 1

Coding of interviewed community researchers (CRs)

Code	Gender	District (Comuna)	Social Collective	Role in the community
CR1	Female	2	Women	Community Leader
CR2	Male	6	Afro-descendants	Human Rights Activist
CR3	Female	8	Victims	Community Leader

CR4	Female	8	Victims	Community Leader
CR5	Female	8	Victims	Community Leader

Source: the authors.

Table 2

Coding of interviewed academic researchers (ARs)

Code	Gender	Position
AR1	Female	Staff and PI of the project
AR2	Male	Research staff
AR3	Female	Research staff

Source: the authors.

In the next section, we will analyse the contributions of the NCR regarding human security from below as an experience of epistemic resilience of ARs and CRs.

[Articulating struggles and dreams](#)

In this section we explore the speeches of the people interviewed in an inductive way seeking to illustrate the contributions of the NCR to epistemic resilience. The first evidence that emerges from the NCR is that it is an experience of epistemic resilience that is produced through a process of co-production of knowledge from below. The experience of the NCR makes it possible to articulate the struggles and dreams of CRs and ARs to transform strategies and public policies around security in the city of Medellín. This process of co-production of knowledge rests on pillars such as trust, mutual support, the dialogue of knowledge and the participatory methodologies used in the NCR:

“[...] there we are contributing to a construction and understanding of knowledge. Because we are doing it slowly. We are not governed by a project, we do not have to pass a report, no! Things are happening slowly from what each one does from

their territory and there we are creating this level of trust, we are creating this space where we meet”. (CR3)

The quote above shows how this process of co-production of knowledge and these relationships of trust are not the result of a research project but are the result of experiences in the territories CRs inhabit and of their participation in the NCR from its inception. One of the ARs highlights that the NCR is a process that aims to “nourish and strengthen organisational processes” (AR1) created to influence public policies and generate an alternative security agenda to citizen security. AR3 emphasises that the theoretical and methodological contributions of the NCR make it possible to politically strengthen the discourses of community leaders and organisations “(...) to confront each other in city councils or in different strategies or ways of demanding rights towards an institution that was not a guarantor of them” (AR3). Based on these testimonies, we can observe the coincidences with the definitions of community resilience found in the literature, which understand it as an adaptation process and not as the result of a public policy or the response of a community to a situation of stress or environmental disaster. The second evidence of the epistemic resilience of the NCR is related to the adaptation of CRs to participatory spaces promoted by the municipality where the discourse of citizen security predominates. The CRs not only are able to adapt to these participatory spaces, but also to transform them. The CRs use the theoretical and methodological contributions developed in the NCR to occupy these spaces and influence, educate and raise awareness about the urgency of moving towards a more comprehensive and multidimensional perspective of security in the city of Medellín. In other words, the CRs formally adapt to the spaces offered by the municipality to disseminate the human security approach from below. For example, for CR3 human security is:

“[...] being able to have peace of mind without my nose falling off, without my house overflowing, with my children with something to eat and not being kidnapped or raped. I believe that when we talk about human security, we are talking about this human being who deserves to be in complete peace of mind.”

(CR3)

From their discourse, we observe that in their conception of security, they integrate other dimensions that are not contemplated in the citizen security approach, such as security against environmental disasters, security from a gender perspective or food security. As we can see, this occupation of participatory spaces could be understood as adaptive behaviour. However, it shows that they not only adapt to political strategies promoted from above but also use these spaces to make complaints and political advocacy to transform the notion of security and move towards a focus on human security from a dialogical relationship. CR5's speech clarifies the arguments used to differentiate both approaches:

[security] "(...) it is not only having police officers around every corner but having food security, social and economic security, health security, security around the family, which is the main thing." (CR5)

On the other hand, AR1 highlights the importance of broadening the scope of security from an individual perspective towards collective and community co-responsibility:

“It's not just me looking to protect myself, to the detriment of your being unprotected (...) it's not just my safety, but how I protect myself with you. But to protect myself with you, I have to care about you, I have to recognise you as someone that I can also do something with (...) The logic of insurance, of security cameras, what they do is put us in a situation of risk that individualises us, that

distances us, that distances us from the other, the other becomes a threat. Not someone who is just as defenceless as me.” (AR1)

This is also evident in the CR5 discourse that, in addition to highlighting the community dimension of security, establishes connections between the local and the global: “[...] it is like me to provide security to others (...) At a personal level and at the level of humanity and the community” (CR5). This series of evidence on the approach to human security, which integrates other dimensions, broadens the scope and establishes connections between the local and the global, illustrates how NCR is not only formally adapting to co-produce knowledge, but is also transforming the approach itself. This transformation is theoretical, as it proposes a conceptualisation that goes beyond the definition proposed by UNDP; but it is also methodological, for proposing a strategy of co-production of knowledge from below, more horizontal, participatory and from the dialogue of knowledges between the communities and the university.

Therefore, the participation of the CRs in the spaces promoted by the municipality could be understood simply as an adaptation strategy. Instead, they use these spaces to transform the concept of Security in Medellín. Under this understanding of epistemic resilience, the CRs are not only capable of adapting to the ways of producing knowledge that the municipality proposes with its participation instruments, but also seek to transform them through denunciation and political advocacy.

From the two pieces of evidence raised, we can sustain a third piece of evidence related to transformation. The NCR experience aims to generate transformations from three perspectives: transforming the security approach in the city of Medellín, transforming the relations of community leaders with the university, and transforming the territories they inhabit. The transformation of the security approach has already been addressed previously (second evidence). In terms of transforming the relations between community

leaders and the university, the participation of the CRs in the NCR processes contributed to their claiming recognition of their work as subjects that produce knowledge in their territories and not only as "links" between the university and the community:

"No, we must not consider ourselves, nor must we allow ourselves to be seen as these 'links'. That is where the concept of community researcher arises. Oh well, if the academy has its researchers, the community has its researchers too. And we investigate 24 hours. The academic investigates in a project or in an investigative process. We inhabit the territory 24 hours a day." (CR3)

This testimony sheds light on the role of the CRs in the territories and together with the social groups they represent. In addition, this claim as a CR means that they are no longer treated as objects of study in research projects but are recognised as active subjects in the different processes of co-production of knowledge from below in which they participate inside and outside the network. This long-term and continuous participation in the NCR contributes to not only being recognised by the university as CRs but this recognition is also transferred internally in the communities, as well as in spaces promoted by the municipality.

Regarding the transformation of the territories, CR3 highlights that the role of the CRs is to be "(...) that contributor to the transformation of a society" (CR3). On the other hand, AR2 emphasises that CRs not only act individually but also seek to involve other people and groups:

"(...) a leader is thinking about how to generate transformations. And they are thinking about these transformations from their individuality, as a citizen who is outraged, concerned and feels that this must be transformed. But, let's say, they call on collectives or others who are going to help them bring about this transformation." (AR2)

This discourse allows us to affirm that epistemic resilience is produced from a series of actions that are promoted at a collective level and that aim to achieve transformation. This transformation is understood by CR3 as a long-term process:

“The transformation will not be in a month, in days, nor will we see it. But who is going to see it? This little boy who is growing up, my son, my grandson, those who are to come. I do highlight it from this space [*referring from the participatory spaces in the NCR*]. That each one of the leaders, because even if it is in this little bunch, they are doing things for transformation.” (CR3)

From the previous testimony, it is clear that their current struggles and dreams are to achieve a better future for the next generations, evidencing the role of CRs as agents of change and social transformation in their territories. This is made explicit by CR3 itself with the following statement:

“So, oh well, if I stay still, my daughter won't be able to have this opportunity because, in the end, we are a pebble on the road that we are bothering, bothering, and if I stay still it would be one less pebble.” (CR3)

However, from their speech, we can observe that this agency itself can contribute to increasing the exposure to risks and violence that they suffer due to the fact of being community leaders in these territories. This is the case of CR3, who, based on their interview, shares her situation of forced displacement to another slope due to threats and intimidation against her and her family. The denunciation and advocacy CRs carry out against the violations of human rights by the municipality and the security forces, as well as by the armed groups and drug traffickers that seek to control the slopes of Medellín, increase the violence and intimidation that CRs suffer in these spaces (for some examples, see Leivas et al., 2022). Despite this violence and intimidation, the CRs continue to

participate in the spaces of the municipality, in community organisations and in the NCR itself, seeking the transformation of their territories.

The fourth piece of evidence is related to the capabilities that are expanded in the NCR and that contribute to getting closer to the concept of epistemic resilience. Forming and being part of the NCR contributes to the CRs being able to provide themselves with the collective knowledge, tools and practices to channel better their struggles at the community and organisational levels. According to the AR3, the approach proposed by the NCR "[...] is structured and strengthened from the academic point of view but allows for its application and realisation at the practical and community level" (AR3). In this sense, CR3 stresses the importance of knowledge exchange and dialogue with ARs to share this knowledge and practices with people and community organisations:

“I have had the opportunity to share different scenarios from the academic point of view and I have convinced myself of the importance, even if we do not have a professional title, we have a title that is the university of the street. But we have to strengthen that degree with truly academic knowledge. Because then it is there where I collect the productive and beneficial aspects of an academic or a professional person. And I will be able to refute any type of argument.. For me, this dialogue that I have been holding with the academy has been very, very, beneficial. Because I have convinced myself of the importance of empirical knowledge that life has historically placed on me, and how we combine it with academic knowledge.” (CR3)

As evidenced, the CR3 not only transforms and co-produces knowledge together with the ARs, but also appropriates academic knowledge to strengthen community discourses and disseminate them inside and in other participatory spaces. From this perspective, we understand that participation in the NCR spaces offers the opportunity to share political

learning and transform it into collective learning that is produced from the articulation between the struggles and dreams of transformation of the different CRs around the approach of citizen security. In this sense, the CR3 emphasises that the diversity of practices and struggles of the CRs is what motivated them to be part of the NCR:

“So that was what pushed me a lot, a lot, to work in a network. Why? Because it would not only be the voice, let's say, of the victims focused on the issue of human security. Rather, we are going to talk about the issue of human security from women, from young people, from children [...]. History is showing us that peace is not built with war and weapons. That this is an issue and this issue is to continue betting on social processes.” (CR3)

Therefore, while implementing and building from practice an alternative narrative of human security, the diversity and multitude of experiences of community leaders are included. This is also confirmed by the testimony of CR4: "Depending on the role of each leader, for example, there are leaders of the environment, leaders of the victims, and the role is the same: learn and replicate what has been learned" (CR4). The same CR4 highlights that the lessons learned from participation in the NCR are related to human rights, disasters, victims, displaced persons, etc. In this way, it stands out that participation in the NCR offers the opportunity to:

“(...) not only learn and replicate but also see what else we are going to manage and coordinate the group, what do you think? Because it's not just me, me, I'm going to do it, but it's also let's coordinate and start looking at doing more together.” (CR4)

In short, participation in the NCR contributes to the CRs learning from the collective, from other experiences, knowledge and practices. This learning from others and with others allows for weaving individual dreams and transforming them into collective

dreams and utopias. In this sense, the AR3 argues that the main challenge of the NCR is to:

“[...] look at how to weave these particularities and those common issues with common strategies that, for this reason, we must continue to meet (...) So how to find ourselves from the desire without budget (...) to build and to know and let's say to weave what is the collective desire.” (AR3)

As AR3 emphasises, it is urgent to articulate and weave the collective struggles and dreams of the CRs, even without a budget assigned to a project. In this sense, she considers that the NCR should be a process self-managed by the CRs, independent of the economic resources promoted by the university, whose objective should be to fight and dream for a collective future that is reparative and that pursues human security in the city from Medellín.

Epistemic resilience for collective utopia

Epistemic resilience provides a category to be further explored in community resilience studies. Currently, the literature emphasises that community resilience is a process of adaptation and not a result of a public policy or the response of a community to a situation of stress or environmental disaster. On the other hand, although the literature mentions community knowledge, information and skills, communities are not recognised as producers of valuable knowledge for social and environmental transformation. However, we understand that this knowledge offers the opportunity for the communities themselves to transform the present and think about a different future from below.

Based on the case study of the NCR, we find different collective learning that occurs in the participation spaces promoted by the network that enables the dialogue of knowledges between academics and community leaders. These spaces make it possible to share the different struggles and practices from different spheres of political advocacy (children,

women, Afro-descendants, etc.). In this way, collective learning is transformed into political learning that, returning to Freire, makes it possible to articulate dreams and utopias to move towards a reparative future. A future where security is focused on people as subjects who produce knowledge and who are recognised as agents of change and transformation. We argue that our approach to epistemic resilience offers elements for analysing other community experiences and their contributions to social and environmental transformation. In this chapter, we provide evidence that this transformation takes place from three perspectives. First, transforming the relationships that are established between the communities and the university by recognising the people of the communities as knowledge-producing subjects. Second, by redefining the concept of human security towards a comprehensive, multidimensional and people-centred approach, with a bottom-up co-production methodological proposal. And, finally, by recognising the transforming role of community researchers in the territories they inhabit. However, this study also has limitations. The first is related to the fact that it is a case study focused on security policies in Colombia. Therefore, particular results related on security policies cannot be extrapolated to other contexts, but the knowledge co-production practices of the NCR provides new insights about the concept of epistemic resilience and to question how knowledge is mostly generated from academia. The second limitation has to do with the inductive-qualitative approach since the fieldwork was carried out in 2018 and the questions asked in the interviews did not contemplate epistemic resilience. To overcome this limitation, a categorisation of what we understand by epistemic resilience has been carried out and, based on the testimonies, the discourses have been analysed to extract related evidence. Nevertheless, we believe that the testimonies offer powerful elements to illuminate the concept of epistemic resilience that we propose in this chapter.

This approach to epistemic resilience allows us to rethink current knowledge co-production practices to achieve a reparative future that takes into account the different collective utopias. This paradigm shift poses a challenge for contemporary universities. On the one hand, understanding the role of communities not as objects - avoiding academic extractivism, but as knowledge-producing subjects. On the other hand, it invites us to open up to new forms and methodological practices of co-production of knowledge from below that place the dreams and collective utopias of the communities at the centre. It is not simply a question of using participatory methodologies, but facilitating the research process to be emancipatory for the people and communities that participate. Therefore, this approach requires rethinking all stages of the research process, focusing decision-making and research questions on the struggles and dreams that pursue a more just and sustainable reparative future.

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