

From Adaptive Resilience to the Production of the Common. An Analytical Framework for Rethinking Immobility in the Context of Climate Crisis

De la resiliencia adaptativa a la producción de lo común. Un marco analítico para repensar las inmovilidades en el contexto de la crisis climática

Yolanda Alfaro Aramayo

Instituto de Estudios Avanzados en Desigualdades
Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales Ecuador
E-mail: myalfarofl@flacso.edu.ec
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1513-053X>

Mónica Rocha Medina

Centro de Estudios Populares
E-mail: rocha.medinam@gmail.com
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6830-9491>

Huáscar Salazar Lohman

Centro de Estudios Populares
E-mail: huascarsalazar@gmail.com
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5406-4462>



Authors



Within risk studies, resilience has become established as a dominant concept linked to adaptation and defined as the capacity to anticipate, absorb, and recover. However, this framework tends to obscure the structural conditions that produce vulnerability, normalizing precariousness through technocratic discourse. This article critically examines how the notion of resilience is employed in climate mobility studies, advancing toward alternative readings that move beyond the dichotomy presenting migration as agency and immobility as a lack of adaptive capacity. The analysis draws on the case of the Pozo de Flores Association in the Upper Valley of Cochabamba, Bolivia—a community water management initiative led by peasant women. The study adopts a qualitative and situated approach, based on in-depth interviews and participatory mapping. Results demonstrate that voluntary immobility can no longer be understood merely as adaptation or community resilience. Rather, it constitutes a conscious political practice of resistance against the capitalist necrotization of life, rooted in collective strategies for territorial defense and the sustenance of life.



Abstract

Dentro de los estudios sobre riesgos, la resiliencia se ha consolidado como un concepto dominante vinculado a la adaptación y definida como la capacidad de anticipar, absorber y recuperarse. Sin embargo, este marco tiende a oscurecer las condiciones estructurales que producen vulnerabilidad, normalizando la precariedad mediante un discurso tecnocrático. Este artículo examina críticamente cómo se emplea la noción de resiliencia en los estudios sobre movilidad climática, avanzando hacia lecturas alternativas que van más allá de la dicotomía que presenta la migración como agencia y la inmovilidad como una falta de capacidad adaptativa. El análisis se basa en el caso de la Asociación Pozo de Flores en el Valle Alto de Cochabamba, Bolivia — una iniciativa de gestión comunitaria del agua liderada por mujeres campesinas—. El estudio adopta un enfoque cualitativo y situado, basado en entrevistas en profundidad y cartografía participativa. Los resultados demuestran que la inmovilidad voluntaria ya no puede entenderse únicamente como adaptación o resiliencia comunitaria. Más bien, constituye una práctica política consciente de resistencia frente a la necrotización capitalista de la vida, arraigada en estrategias colectivas de defensa territorial y de sostenimiento de la vida.

Adaptation; resilience; voluntary immobility; resistance; production of the common
Adaptación; resiliencia; inmovilidad voluntaria; resistencia; producción de lo común



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1. Introduction

Over the past decade, resilience has become a central concept in risk management discourses, climate policies, and studies of climate mobility. Its popularity stems partly from its apparent capacity to articulate adaptation narratives within a context of escalating socio-ecological crises. Resilience has evolved from its origins in systems ecology to become a central concept in risk and disaster management, where it became consolidated as a notion linked to adaptation. Nevertheless, as various authors caution, its application has been ambivalent: while it highlights the response capacities of communities and subjects, it also risks obscuring power dynamics and shifting responsibilities downward (Manyena, 2006; Pelling, 2010; Chandler, 2012, 2014; Joseph, 2013; King, Crossley & Smith, 2021).

This article situates itself within this critical perspective. Drawing on the organizational experience of peasant women from the Upper Valley of Cochabamba, Bolivia, around community water management within a climate crisis context, we analyze how local responses transcend the notion of climate resilience understood as technical adjustment, instead constituting spaces of political dispute and social transformation. This reading questions the depoliticization of climate resilience discourse, which prioritizes techno-managerial solutions and displaces local knowledge and agency. Moreover, it individualizes adaptation responsibility and normalizes precariousness without interrogating the structures that produce vulnerability.

Against this backdrop, we propose rethinking climate immobility not merely as an indicator of adaptive resilience, but as a political practice of producing the commons. When immobil-

ity involves conscious decision-making and is collectively organized around the care and defense of common goods such as water, it should be understood as a practice that destabilizes technocratic readings of resilience. This is not passive adaptation, but resistance against the capitalist necrotization of life's fabric.

From a feminist political ecology perspective, women's role in community water management, in the reproduction of life, and in the production of the commons becomes central to questioning technocratic readings of resilience. This approach not only connects the political critique of resilience with debates on environmental justice, gender inequality, and social reproduction in climate crisis contexts, but also offers insights for understanding climate immobility. Remaining in territory, when sustained by practices of care and defense of the commons, cannot be understood as mere lack of adaptive capacity, but rather as a form of political resistance. Feminist political ecology thus makes visible the feminization of immobility as a collective strategy against capitalist necrotization, challenging discourses that reduce permanence to passivity or deficit.

This article aims to produce a conceptual critique of the adaptive resilience approach in climate mobility studies, drawing on two previous research processes: on the one hand, the project "Climate Crisis and Governance of Mobilities in the Andean Region," of which the Bolivian case forms part; on the other, the action research work that the Centro de Estudios Populares (CEESP) has been developing in the Valle Alto de Cochabamba since 2021, focused on accompanying organizational processes of peasant women in the face of the water and climate crisis.¹ Both processes have generated an accumulated body of ethnographic work—in-depth interviews, participatory mapping, focus groups, and review of secondary sources—that allows for understanding the meanings and practices associated with permanence in the territory. The article does not intend to offer an exhaustive ethnographic description of the case, but rather to develop, based on this accumulated research, an analytical framework that enables rethinking climate immobility beyond the dominant categories of adaptation and resilience.

The analysis draws on the organizational experience of peasant women from the Upper Valley of Cochabamba, Bolivia, around community water management within a climate crisis context. This region, located at altitudes between 2,550 and 2,800 meters above sea level with a predominantly dry climate, has historically been a strategic agricultural center for the country. The case study focuses on the Pozo de Flores Association in the municipality of Arani, a predominantly rural territory characterized by sustained historical migratory processes yet showing recent demographic transformations that may be linked to immobility dynamics. This context serves as an empirical reference for examining how local responses transcend the notion of climate resilience understood as technical adjustment, instead constituting spaces of political dispute and social transformation.

The following section presents a review of relevant literature on the concept of resilience in risk studies and ecological studies, examining its ambivalent applications and limitations in climate change and migration debates. We then propose a critical reading through the lens of capitalist necrotization and the production of uncertainty in rural territories to situate re-

¹ The action research work in the Valle Alto has resulted in various publications (Aguilar, Rocha & Salazar, 2023). Likewise, a specific systematization of the Pozo de Flores case is currently in press (Alfaro, Rocha, Salazar & Aguilar, in press).

silence as a climate governance device, applying this to the case of the Pozo de Flores Association in the Upper Valley of Cochabamba, Bolivia. Subsequently, we recover different dimensions of immobility and then, through our case study, question narratives that associate women's immobility with passivity, demonstrating how women are political subjects who sustain strategies of organized resistance against climatic and social necrotization. Fourth, we discuss the theoretical and political implications of repoliticizing resilience as a struggle for the commons. Finally, we outline reflections that articulate the field of climate (im)mobility studies with feminist political ecology.

2. From Adaptive Resilience to Community Resilience

Within risk studies, resilience became established as a dominant notion based on Holling's (1973) classic definition, which understood it as a system's capacity to absorb disturbances and reorganize itself without losing its essential identity. Since then, the notion has been transferred to psychology, where it was used to describe individual capacity to overcome adversity, and to the social sciences, where it became linked to processes of community and organizational adaptation. In disaster literature, it was positioned as the positive counterpart to vulnerability: while the latter emphasizes structural conditions of exposure and fragility, resilience highlighted capacities for response and recovery (Manyena, 2006).

This conceptual shift enabled a focus on the potentialities of affected communities rather than their limitations but simultaneously introduced ambiguities. As Manyena (2006) warns, resilience and vulnerability have sometimes been used interchangeably, weakening their analytical specificity. His proposal to conceive both notions as complementary proves useful insofar as it allows recognition of both structural conditions of exposure and resistance strategies deployed by subjects. Similarly, Pelling (2010) distinguishes between resilience, transition, and transformation, demonstrating how the first typically corresponds to the most conservative response, oriented toward maintaining the status quo.

These critiques have been taken up by various authors who interpret resilience as a device of neoliberal governmentality. From this perspective, scholars point out how the concept normalizes precariousness by transferring responsibilities downward. From the analysis of *homo resiliens* (De la Fabián & Sepúlveda, 2018) to observations by Joseph (2013), MacKinnon and Derickson (2012), and Brown (2014), research demonstrates that resilience perfectly accommodates neoliberal rationality by manufacturing autonomous and reflexive subjects responsible for their own security, while obscuring the role of the state and global structures in producing vulnerability. From Latin America, Lampis (2022) reinforces this perspective by showing how resilience operates as performative discourse that celebrates vulnerability and offloads responsibilities onto local communities.

Aligned with this critical reading, from an ecological perspective, community resilience represents an important construct that enables communities to activate adequate resources to cope with adversities such as migration (Cavaye & Ross, 2019). Rural studies have shown that community resilience is not limited to material or infrastructural resources, but also depends on social capital, expressed through bonds of trust, shared identities, and collective learning that sustain common action (Berkes & Ross, 2013; Adger, 2010).

From this perspective, resilience has been used to understand rural communities' capacity to respond to crises, especially in the face of specific events such as fires, cyclones, floods, or epi-

demics. However, as Allen (2006) cautions, emphasis on these extreme situations has tended to obscure more persistent and structural processes that erode rural life—such as prolonged droughts, depopulation, or service withdrawal. This necessitates shifting resilience from the logic of emergency toward that of daily practice, understood not as communities' intrinsic will, but as the result of organizational processes and collective agency that seek to sustain adaptation strategies in scenarios of permanent change (Matarrita-Cascante et al., 2017).

As Cheshire et al. (2015) note, a significant achievement of rural studies has been conceiving resilience as collective practice of agency, often linked to spaces of politicization and dispute. Nevertheless, they also emphasize that much literature has tended to ignore that social systems are traversed by power relations. Therefore, even when resilience may have a community dimension, it cannot be analyzed without addressing the inequalities and hierarchies that shape these processes of contestation (Cote & Nightingale, 2012; Brown, 2014; MacKinnon & Derickson, 2012). Understood in this way, resilience ceases to appear as a neutral property of systems and reveals itself as a field of tensions where projects of social change are at stake.

In recent years, debate over the implications of community resilience has shifted toward the field of climate change and migration. Various studies argue that climate-induced migration introduces a much broader perspective on community resilience because it allows exploration of how vulnerability and resilience manifest in response to climate events. When systematizing literature on community resilience in migratory contexts, Olcese et al. (2024) identified five dimensions—economic aspects, community competencies, information and communication, social capital, and beliefs/attitudes—that demonstrate a predominantly adaptive reading of the concept.

Within this framework lies the thesis of adaptive migration, which has established itself as an influential narrative in global debate. Its appeal lies in shifting discussion from causality—how much climate change causes migration—toward the idea of how mobility can become a legitimate adaptation strategy (Gemenne & Blocher, 2017; Baldwin & Fornalé, 2017). Conceived as a form of household risk management, almost comparable to insurance, this perspective converts migration into a functional mechanism to sustain communities in climate crisis contexts. However, by framing it as rational and desirable policy, there is a risk of naturalizing forced migration and obscuring the inequalities and responsibilities that structure vulnerability.

By conceiving migration as a climate change adaptation strategy, political debate is once again shifted toward a technocratic reading (Bettini et al., 2017), and community resilience appears associated with factors that facilitate integration or recovery in the face of environmental hazards, leaving power tensions, structural inequalities, and their political dimension in the background.

As Methmann and Oels (2015) point out, insofar as resilience is presented as a rational and community-based solution to climate change, migration is assumed as a form of transformative adaptation, in which affected subjects appear not as passive victims, but as active agents responsible for their own destiny and that of their communities through networks, remittances, and transnational circulations. However, the political implications of this discursive construction are not made explicit—that is, the depoliticization of climate crisis, the transfer of responsibilities to the most vulnerable, and the reduction of political space to the decision to migrate or not migrate. This reading proves key to thinking about the transition from community resilience to climate resilience, as it shows how resilience language can normalize

forced mobility and frame it as opportunity, while silencing demands for climate justice and structural transformation.

The incorporation of climate and mobility dimensions further complicates the resilience debate. As Methmann and Oels (2015) note, global discourse tends to present migration as a resilient solution, normalizing forced mobility and displacing structural responsibilities. In contrast to depoliticizing visions, critical currents conceive of resilience as a web of relationships between ecosystems, communities, and power structures. In the context of the climate crisis, this implies recognizing that inequalities structure adaptive capacities and that responses cannot be reduced to technical management but rather must be read through the lens of territorial transformations that characterize contemporary capitalism.

3. Capitalist Necrotization in Rural Territories and Resilience as a Field of Struggle for the Commons

To understand how immobility can constitute itself as a political practice of resistance, it becomes essential to analyze the processes through which capital's logic radically transforms the material and relational conditions that sustain life in rural territories, and how these processes generate, paradoxically, the conditions from which emerge forms of community organization that dispute the very terms of survival.

The concept of capitalist necrotization of life's fabric (Linsalata & Salazar, 2025) offers precise analytical tools for understanding these processes. Capitalist necrotization operates through what Machado (2021) calls a socio-metabolic disorder harmful to life's reproduction: the continuous and violent appropriation of life sources for their conversion into abstract values. This process is not accidental but inherent to capital's expansive logic, which requires "a constant and uninterrupted 'war of conquest' against life sources to enable and ensure its realization process" (Machado, 2021, p. 79).

Unlike death that feeds natural cycles of renewal, necrotic death "breaks with life's cycle, because after it there is no longer life's renewal, but the progressive extinction of multiple sources and forms of life" (Linsalata & Salazar, 2025). This distinction proves fundamental: while organic death is regenerative, capitalist necrotization is cumulative and destructive, creating conditions of irreversibility that erode territories' autopoietic capacities.

This difference allows us to understand how certain responses to the crisis operate not as alternatives to devastation, but as forms of political management. In this sense, adaptive resilience presents itself as a response to environmental degradation as a given fact, without interrogating the structural processes that produce it.

To understand how these abstract processes materialize concretely, the Upper Valley of Cochabamba offers a case that allows examination of capitalist necrotization in action. The transformation of this region—historically known as Bolivia's "breadbasket"—into a territory traversed by water crisis and environmental degradation cannot be reduced to global climate change effects but must be understood as resulting from the articulation between climate changes and territorial transformation processes that respond to capitalist valorization logics.

Climatological data show significant transformations: asymmetric warming characterized by increased maximum temperatures (+0.04°C/year) and decreased minimum temperatures (-0.12°C/year), together with high rainfall variability that erodes environmental predictabil-

ity (SENAMHI, 2024). However, these changes interweave with territorial transformation processes that respond to what Tsing (2021) calls capitalist “scalability:” an expansion pattern that imposes itself on local geographies through the breakdown of previous metabolisms and the imposition of forms of alienation and interchangeability.

In the Upper Valley, this process manifests in the subordination of diverse and locally adapted agricultural systems toward market-oriented crops, intensive use of agrochemicals that degrade soils, and growing dependence on “technological packages” that homogenize territories and reduce them to manageable variables for scalable production. Local testimonies document how this transformation has profoundly altered ecosystems: the disappearance of bioclimatic indicator species such as toads, frogs, and fireflies, while previously unknown pests, such as aphids and fruit flies, proliferate.

The water crisis constitutes the most evident manifestation of this necrotization. The rainfall deficit for approximately ten months of the year has caused critical overexploitation of aquifers that perfectly illustrates how scarcity becomes a business opportunity. “The devastation or degradation of formerly common goods renders such goods scarce. And the scarcer a common good becomes, the more the imperative to access that good through monetary mediation is installed” (Linsalata & Salazar, 2025). The exponential proliferation of wells—from 9 in 2000 to 109 currently in Arani alone—evidences a desperate adaptation strategy that deepens the depletion of underground reserves in the medium term.

In this context of accelerated necrotization, resilience emerges as a fundamental field of political dispute. However, capitalist necrotization is not a unidirectional process that simply devastates territories. While it destroys, it creates the material and relational conditions from which emerge forms of resistance that question both capitalist devastation and the depoliticization inherent in adaptive resilience. These practices do not simply seek to “adapt” to adverse conditions, but to dispute the very terms in which social life is organized, promoting what Gutiérrez, Navarro, and Linsalata (2017) call the production of the commons: organizational dynamics that seek to ensure the sustenance of a concrete community of life through the co-production of material and symbolic wealth and the co-production of collective decisions.

Necrotization, by intensifying conditions of vulnerability, paradoxically activates forms of community organization that might otherwise remain latent. In the Upper Valley, it is precisely the water crisis that has driven experiences such as the Pozo de Flores Association, comprised of peasant women who decided to remain in the territory and organize around community water management.² This initiative transcends conventional categories of adaptive resilience because it does not arise despite necrotization but from the contradictions it gener-

2 In 2008, a group of women organized to promote the drilling of a deep well to guarantee irrigation water. The organization, called Pozo de Flores, consists of 23 women and two men. The project was developed within the framework of the Indigenous Fund—a state mechanism oriented toward financing projects executed directly by social organizations—whose subsequent intervention and institutional crisis led to the stigmatization of the association’s members, labeled as corrupt. This resulted in costs initially covered by the project being ultimately assumed by the women themselves. Water management remains a site of major conflict, where women are the most excluded regardless of their knowledge and capabilities. While the well managed by the women’s organization legitimizes their voices and presence, not all members yet have the resources to conduct water from the well to their plots. Moreover, the members themselves recognize that deep wells do not represent a definitive solution to the water crisis but are part of broader scenarios of water source over-exploitation.

ates. But it is also linked to other structural conditions such as women's patriarchal exclusion from water management.

In a context of climate crisis marked by water stress, this experience shows how resistance to capitalist necrotization operates simultaneously across multiple dimensions: material (guaranteeing access to water), relational (transforming gender dynamics and community power), and epistemic (producing situated knowledges that challenge vertical technical solutions). These women do not merely manage a well; they build new forms of institutionality that challenge both traditional patriarchal exclusion and the individualizing logic of neoliberal resilience.

However, the power of these experiences encounters structural limits in what Linsalata and Salazar (2025) call non-communal scales. As these authors note, "the common is not scalable, since it cannot expand without changing its nature; it is not interchangeable; it is not alienable, it is not alienable." Community networks depend on close relationships anchored to specific places, while capital's necrotizing logic operates through abstract circuits that connect distant territories without considering the relations of interdependence that sustain local life.

This tension between communal and non-communal scales becomes particularly evident when considering the gender dimension. It is fundamentally women who sustain both the reproductive work that maintains communities and the initiatives of resistance against necrotization. Their permanence in the territory—what we will later analyze as the feminization of immobility—sets the groundwork for understanding how immobility, particularly when sustained by women, challenges both territorial necrotization and depoliticized narratives about climate adaptation.

The capitalist necrotization of life's fabric in the Upper Valley thus reveals its contradictory nature: it is simultaneously a process of devastation and a condition of possibility for emerging forms of community organization that dispute the terms of survival.

4. The Feminization of Immobility: Organized Resistance Against Climatic and Social Necrotization

In climate migration studies, immobility has been predominantly interpreted as a limitation. Much of the literature associates it with lack of resources or adaptive capacity, situating it within the terrain of deficiency or passivity (Baldwin & Fornalé, 2017; Schewel, 2020). This perspective has permeated both academic analyses and public policy diagnoses, which typically explain certain populations' permanence as resulting from poverty, exclusion, or lack of means to migrate. Even when it is recognized that some people choose to stay, the dominant conceptualization understands this as individual adaptive adjustment—that is, as adaptive resilience that allows remaining in place of origin while absorbing climate crisis impacts. However, this approach depoliticizes permanence, rendering invisible the fact that it is women who sustain this immobility, especially through care work, and their irruption into organizational spaces as is the case of the women of Pozo de Flores. This leads to the need to analyze immobilities from a gender, intersectional, and feminist political ecology approach that allows for clearly situating the actors of immobility and the power relations that traverse it.

The aspiration/capability framework formulated by Carling (2002) and revisited by Carling and Schewel (2018) opened a relevant analytical space by distinguishing between those who

wish to migrate and can do so, those who wish to but lack the capacity, and those who prefer to stay. This typology made it visible that non-migration is not an inexplicable residue, but rather a constitutive component of migratory processes. However, its classificatory emphasis tends to reduce immobility to individual positions on a continuum between aspirations and capabilities. Even categories such as acquiescent immobility (Schewel, 2015)—which describes those who, even in contexts of vulnerability, do not aspire to migrate—remain anchored to an individualized measurement language that leaves little room for understanding the relational, gender, and community dimensions of permanence.

The women of Pozo de Flores do not passively absorb environmental impacts but rather deploy active forms of resistance based on care practices and collective organization. In this case, permanence does not constitute an individual choice or an adaptive response, but a collective and feminized project that seeks to transform the social and environmental conditions in which it is inscribed. Their immobility thus acquires a deeply political character, insofar as it confronts patriarchal and capitalist structures of dispossession, extractivism, and loss of decision-making capacity. In this sense, remaining is configured as a form of resistance to what Linsalata and Salazar (2025) call the capitalist necrotization of the fabric of life.

The difficulty in reading these types of permanences is not exclusive to the aspiration/capability framework but extends to technocratic approaches to climate resilience. In these approaches, immobility is often interpreted as evidence of successful adaptation or adjustment, shifting the analysis from the structural causes of vulnerability toward local damage management. By defining resilience as the capacity to anticipate, absorb, and recover from impacts, these approaches reduce immobility to a functional variable within risk governance schemes, depoliticizing collective decisions that, as in Pozo de Flores, express active disputes over the conditions for the reproduction of life.

More recent contributions show attempts to displace this technocratic view, albeit still partially. The global analysis by Debray, Ruyssen, and Schewel (2022) demonstrates that voluntary immobility is not a marginal phenomenon, but a majority preference on a global scale, with an evident gender bias: women are significantly more likely than men to express a desire to stay. However, the authors interpret these findings in terms of “retention factors” associated with childcare, family networks, or the importance of daily security. The empirical finding that it is women who most choose to remain is thus reduced to a demographic variable, without exploring how these care responsibilities are transformed into collective strategies of resistance. The Pozo de Flores challenges this interpretation, as it demonstrates precisely the political, transformative, and life-sustaining character of care tasks.

Other frameworks seek to go further by recognizing agency in permanence. Olumba (2024) introduces the Resilience-Accessibility Framework and with it the notion of active immobility, which describes those who, even with resources to migrate, consciously decide to remain. The category is suggestive because it breaks with the automatic association between staying and lacking, showing that permanence can be an act of agency in the face of adversity. Something similar occurs with the framework of Bro, Pludwinski, and Veronis (2024), which incorporates psychological factors—threat perception, risk aversion, self-efficacy, response effectiveness—along with cultural, economic, and environmental variables. Their proposal highlights that decisions to remain are not only understood through the availability of material resources, but also through how people interpret risks, value their environments, and build bonds of belonging. The politics of permanence becomes more explicit in Robins’ (2022) proposal, who argues that staying can be an act of loyalty, a way of exercising political com-

mitment by remaining on behalf of a collective. In this sense, loyalty to territory or even rootedness is presented as a political narrative, but it is not examined in terms of the power relations that traverse it—for example, from the conditions of precariousness and environmental injustice in which women sustain permanence.

The effort to shift immobility from the terrain of deficit toward that of agency is noteworthy, expanding the field of discussion; however, in many cases these approaches continue to privilege explanatory frameworks that present immobility as preference, resilience, or capability, without naming it as what it can also be: a collective political practice of resistance. The example of the Pozo de Flores case shows how immobility can be a form of feminized resistance that repoliticizes life for the women involved and for the communities of which they are part, operating through alternative frameworks such as collective care.

This approach is key because it destabilizes the voluntary/involuntary dichotomy and makes visible to the agency expressed in staying (Zickgraf, 2018). However, this analytical shift requires clear delimitation, insofar as remaining in the territory does not in itself constitute a practice of resistance, nor an automatic indicator of collective agency. In numerous contexts of climate crisis, immobility may respond to structural constraints, to the absence of real mobility alternatives, or to processes of forced immobilization, without implying an active dispute over the conditions for the reproduction of life, as has been extensively noted in immobility studies (Carling, 2002; Zickgraf, 2018; Schewel, 2020).

The Pozo de Flores case allows us, rather, to identify a specific and situated form of politicized immobility, whose intelligibility depends on its anchoring in collective organizational processes, in disputes over vital resources, and in the reconfiguration of power relations, particularly of gender. This approach is key because it destabilizes the voluntary/involuntary dichotomy and makes visible to the agency expressed in staying (Zickgraf, 2018). Emphasizing gender constitutes a determining element not only for unraveling how everyday experiences and perceptions of climate change are configured in differentiated ways, but also for advancing toward a more politicized reading of the effects of the climate crisis on the lives of women and men, on the social structure of communities, and on the collective actions that emerge in response and that reconfigure community life.

As Vigil (2024) points out, understanding immobility from a gender perspective requires contextualizing and historicizing the reasons why women choose to remain, situating them within the socio-political and historical frameworks and global power hierarchies in which they find themselves. In this context, the observation that they are the ones who remain most should not be understood as a simple statistical fact, but as a situated expression of women's politics in territories in the face of historical inequalities that have limited their access to resources.

The case of Pozo de Flores in Cochabamba allows us to situate this discussion. There, women elaborate situated vocabularies—based on care, memory, and the defense of common goods—that challenge the technocratic framework of climate resilience. Just as feminism created its own language to name previously invisible violences, these communities develop ways of naming their experience that transcend the ambivalent representations that other studies have made of women, whether as passive victims of the crisis or as natural defenders of the environment (Boas et al., 2022; Rothe, 2017).

5. Politicizing Resilience: Theoretical Implications for the Study of Climate Immobilities

The experience of the Pozo de Flores enables us to question dominant analytical categories in the study of climate mobilities and propose alternative frameworks that capture the political dimension of decisions about permanence. Their analysis reveals that resilience, when appropriated from below, can transcend its function as a device of neoliberal governmentality to become a platform for political dispute and social transformation.

The organizational process of the Pozo de Flores illustrates how community-based water management operates simultaneously as a material response to water crisis and as an epistemic questioning of dominant frameworks on climate adaptation. When the women decided to organize to drill a community well, they not only solved a technical problem but challenged the patriarchal structure that controls water management in the Upper Valley. As one of the founders recalls, when presenting the project they faced systematic exclusion: “the leader scolded them, reaffirming that they should not talk about irrigation because that is a men’s issue” (N. Aguilar, personal interview, December 7, 2024).

This exclusion was not incidental but structural, based on apparently technical arguments that obscure its political character: “a woman is not going to be able to. Even the floodgates are difficult for women” (Patricia, participatory mapping workshop, November 23, 2024). By transforming this exclusion into political opportunity, women not only created new institutionality but questioned who has the right to make decisions about vital resources. The Pozo thus materializes what we could call territorial epistemic resistance: the creation of situated vocabularies that dispute dominant frameworks for understanding and managing climate crisis.

The politicization of resilience operates through three interconnected movements that transcend technical adaptation. First, the transformation of a material needs into political demand: access to water becomes the right to decide on vital resources. Second, the construction of new institutionalities that reconfigure power relations: water management becomes a space for transforming gender hierarchies. Third, the articulation of local knowledge that questions both vertical technical solutions and the normalization of crisis.

This process does not eliminate the structural contradictions that communities face but rather makes them visible and politicizes them. The Pozo women recognize that their strategy through deep wells contributes to aquifer overexploitation, but precisely for this reason they insist on demanding policies that transcend partial technical “solutions”: “this water that we have here in the little well is from above what they have accumulated, but in all that part it is already drying up” (Antonia, participatory mapping workshop, November 23, 2024).

The Pozo experience thus reveals the dual nature of politicized resilience: it is simultaneously a survival strategy forced by capitalist necrotization and a practice of resistance that produces new forms of the commons. This unresolved tension constitutes its main lesson: in contexts of systemic crisis, the construction of alternatives cannot wait for ideal conditions but must emerge from present contradictions, politicizing even devices designed to depoliticize.

These dynamics suggest the need to rethink central categories in the study of climate mobility. From this perspective, immobility cannot be understood as a normative category nor as a homogeneous response to the climate crisis. Its political character depends on the social and

relational conditions in which it is produced. Immobility can be read as a collective form of resistance when it is articulated with sustained organizational processes, with explicit disputes over the control and management of vital resources, and with the production of forms of community institutionality that challenge extractive and patriarchal orders (MacKinnon & Derickson, 2012; Gutiérrez et al., 2017; Vigil, 2024). In the absence of these elements, permanence can operate as passive adaptation, as a result of structural constraints, or as a mechanism for the reproduction of inequalities, without emancipatory content. Recognizing this distinction is central to avoiding romanticized readings of immobility and to situating it, analytically, as part of the mobility regimes that traverse territories in contexts of climate crisis (Boas et al., 2022; Zickgraf, 2018).

These conceptual contributions have direct implications for public policy design and institutional frameworks. Rather than “adaptation” policies that ignore the power dimensions inherent in climate crisis, frameworks are needed that recognize immobility as a territorial right and support the production of the commons without subordinating it to conventional development logics. This requires abandoning the adaptive resilience paradigm in favor of approaches that recognize communities’ political autonomy to define their own strategies in the face of climate crisis.

6. Conclusions

This article set out to critically examine how the notion of resilience is employed in climate mobility studies, advancing toward alternative analytical frameworks that overcome the dichotomy between migration as agency and immobility as adaptive deficiency. Through analysis of the Pozo de Flores Association case in the Upper Valley of Cochabamba, we have demonstrated that voluntary immobility can no longer be interpreted solely as community adaptation or resilience, but rather constitutes a conscious political practice of resistance against the capitalist necrotization of life, rooted in collective strategies of territorial defense and life sustainment.

The analysis revealed three fundamental dimensions in which adaptive resilience operates as a depoliticization device. First, it normalizes precariousness by presenting environmental degradation as an inevitable context to which populations must “adapt” through individual technical solutions. Second, it systematically transfers crisis management responsibilities to affected communities, obscuring the power structures that produce differentiated vulnerability. Third, it reduces immobility to a simple indicator of adaptive capacity, concealing its profoundly political nature and the gender relations that traverse it.

Against this depoliticizing logic, the Pozo de Flores experience demonstrates that climate immobility does not reflect absence of resources or adaptive deficit, but rather organized resistance and production of the commons. The peasant women who comprise this initiative not only responded to water crisis through community water management, but simultaneously transformed power relations, questioned gender hierarchies, and developed situated vocabularies to understand and confront climate crisis. Their permanence in territory constitutes a form of autonomous territorial citizenship that operates through collective defense of common goods.

This experience supports the proposal of three interrelated analytical categories that contribute specifically to the field of climate mobility studies. Strategic immobility transcends

existing typologies of voluntary permanence to conceptualize conscious political practices of territorial dispute that operate collectively. The feminization of permanence distinguishes itself from both forced immobility and immobility due to lack of resources, revealing forms of political organization that question the dominant binary logic in analyzing responses to climate crisis. Territorial epistemic resistance identifies specific forms of autonomy that dispute not only particular policies but also the conceptual frameworks from which the relationship between climate crisis and human mobility is understood.

From a feminist political ecology perspective, these findings make visible how practices of care, interdependence, and territorial defense constitute forms of political resistance that have been systematically obscured by technocratic approaches. Women's role in community water management and in life's reproduction cannot be reduced to demographic "retention factors" but must be understood as political practice of producing the commons that challenges both capitalist necrotization and depoliticized narratives about climate adaptation.

These theoretical contributions open to fundamental debate on the conceptual frameworks employed in climate mobility studies. Results suggest that resilience, even in its community version, may have reached the limit of its analytical utility due to its capture by neoliberal rationalities that naturalize precariousness. The Pozo de Flores experience suggests that notions such as production of the commons, interdependence, and coviability offer alternative frameworks better suited for understanding community responses that prioritize life sustainment over technical adaptation.

In methodological terms, the study demonstrates the need to develop approaches that capture the political dimension of decisions about permanence and movement. Participatory methodologies, social cartography, and feminist approaches prove fundamental for making visible territorial knowledge and care practices that remain hidden from conventional technical diagnoses. Equally important is developing indicators that assess "transformation capacity" rather than simply "adaptation capacity," incorporating epistemic dimensions that capture how communities create their own vocabularies to name their experiences and resistances.

The study has limitations that must be acknowledged. It is based on a specific case whose cultural, historical, and ecological particularities condition the possibility of generalization. The tension between communal and non-communal scales facing experiences like the Pozo de Flores requires further research to understand how local responses can articulate with broader structural transformations without losing their autonomous character.

The research agenda that opens includes developing comparative studies that examine how strategic immobility operates in different geographical and cultural contexts, deepening methodologies necessary to capture territorial epistemic resistance, and exploring institutional frameworks that recognize and enhance production of the commons without co-opting it. Equally important is dialogue with broader debates on migration political ecology, climate justice, and development alternatives that allow situating these local experiences within broader horizons of social transformation.

The Pozo de Flores experience demonstrates that alternatives to capitalist necrotization exist and operate daily, although on scales that transcend capital efficiency logic. Their analysis reveals that, in contexts of systemic crisis, the construction of alternatives cannot wait for ideal conditions but must emerge from present contradictions, politicizing even devices designed to depoliticize and transforming forced adaptation into a platform for social transformation.

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