

Living In-Between: Liminality and Everyday Resilience among Wakhi Communities in High Asia

Everyday resilience is understood here as liminal, shaped through thresholds, encounters, and exchanges between uncertainty and stability.



The CONTEXT & Approach

Why this study?

- Wakhi communities living across the Pamirian Knot in High Asia (Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, China) face environmental risk, shifting borders, and socio-economic change.
- Existing models of resilience often overlook everyday lived experience.

Research Approach

- Multi-sited qualitative fieldwork across four countries, combining interviews and ethnographic observations, with a focus on lived experiences of risk, care, and adaptation.

Core Findings

Everyday resilience is enacted through three interconnected practices:

Living with Risk

- Settlements in challenging terrains with hazards such as floods, landslides, avalanches, rockfalls, and earthquake.
- Geo-political and environmental uncertainties.
- Uncertainty is not episodic but lived as a constant condition.
- 👉 **Threshold** (Living on the edge of stability and disruption)

Sensing and Anticipating Risk

- Water changing colour → flood risk
- Clouds at certain locations → Weather shifts
- Cracks in land or walls → Instability
- Sounds (earth, animals) → Impending disturbance
- Animal behaviour → heightened alert
- 👉 **Encounter** (Interpreting the unseen and emergent signals)

Helping, Caring and Sharing

- *Memondori* (hospitality), *Imdod* (help) → A culture of helping and giving
- *Keryar* (Mutual support in routine work of households and *Ashar* – Community work) → Care creates obligation
- *Nomus* → Dignity and honour in relationships and preparedness by building infrastructure and enhancing social cohesion.
- 👉 **Exchange** (Sustaining life through care and obligation)

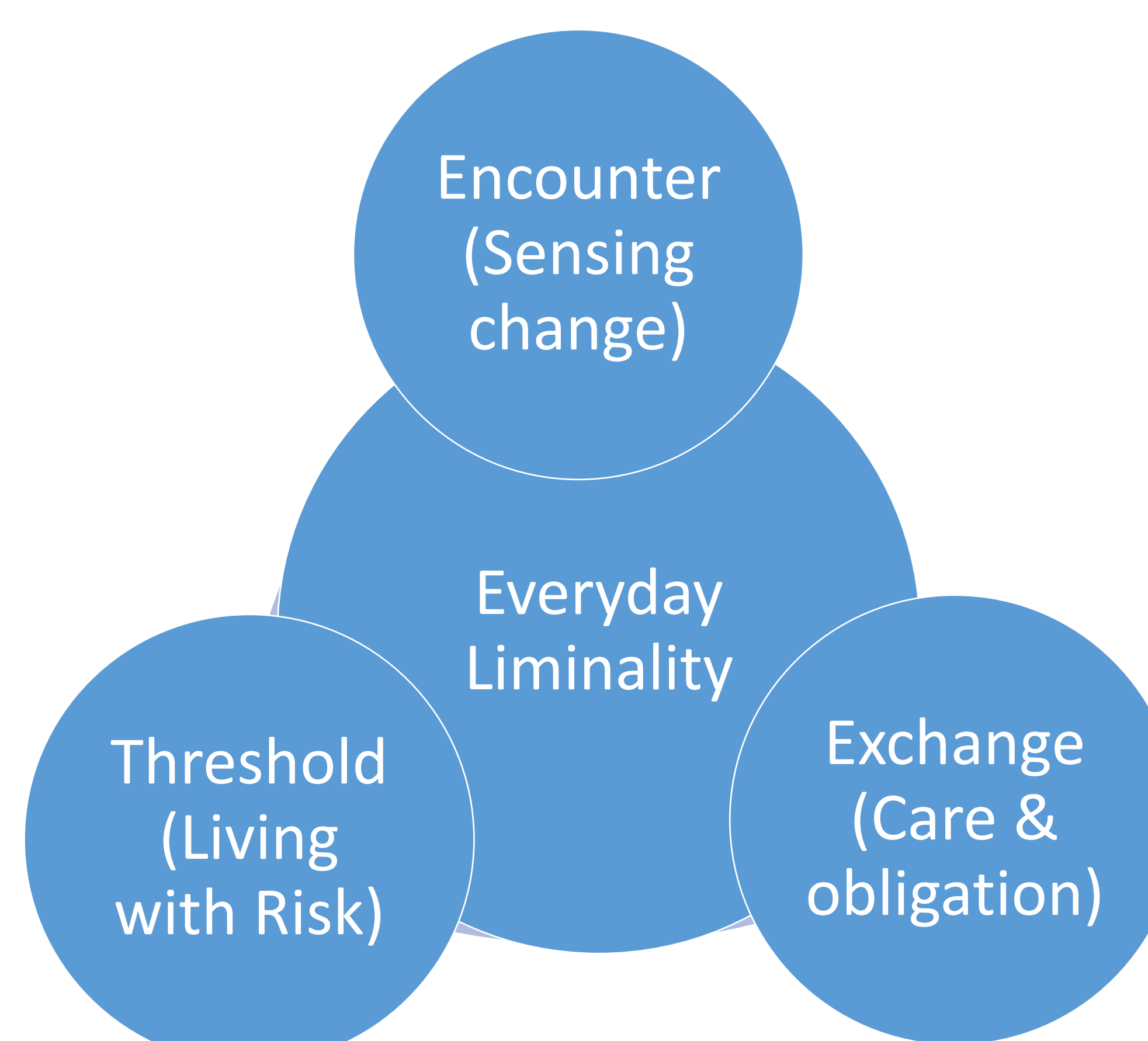
Key Contributions

- **Amplifying Mountain Voices:** Bringing lived experiences into global policy spaces.
- **Preserving Indigenous Knowledge:** Highlighting the urgency of documentation.
- **Community-Centred Scholarship:** Grounded, insider, and accountable research.



Conceptual Lens

- This study conceptualizes everyday life as liminal, shaped by continuous encounters, thresholds, and exchanges between stability and uncertainty.



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