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“Peripatetic Strategies in South Asia: Skills as a Capital among Nomadic Artisans and Entertainers”

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PERIPATETIC STRATEGIES IN SOUTH ASIA: SKILLS AS CAPITAL
AMONG NOMADIC ARTISANS AND ENTERTAINERS

by J. Berland

Snake charmers, trainers of performing animals, bards, magicians, acrobats, jugglers, dancers, musicians, fortune tellers, beggars, tinkers, smiths, potters, and weavers, as well as other peripatetic artisans and entertainers, have been enduring color elements in sedentary societies since the dawn of recorded history. Apparently invisible to most investigators concerned with «nomadic» adaptations, the activities of spatially mobile artisans and entertainers have not received attention comparable to gathering and hunting strategies or pastoral activities such as reindeer, camel, sheep, and cattle herding. While each of these specialized subsistence strategies, as ideal cultural types, rely on «nomadism» characterized by greater spatial mobility, structural flexibility, organizational fluidity, and marginality relative to more sedentary agricultural and urban populations, they represent markedly disparate forms of nomadic adaptation.

In keeping with their etymology, the terms «nomad» and «nomadism» are generally used to refer to pastoralism, although the concepts have been applied to other highly spatially mobile groups such as hunter-gatherers, itinerants, or «Gypsies». Perhaps by definition as well as the uncritical linking of «nomadism» to investigations of pastoral activities (which, incidentally, have virtually become synonymous with nomadic adaptations in the anthropological literature), comparative analysis of other nomadic strategies is greatly limited. Similarly, theory regarding spatial mobility which is derived almost exclusively from pastoral activities inhibits understanding the role of other nomadic groups in larger social systems. Further, pastoral focused theory limits our knowledge regarding the role of spatial mobility in the subsistence strategies of human societies. Certainly, when viewed within appropriate temporal parameters, spatial mobility is a characteristic of all human groups and not an exclusive characteristic of pastoral or non-pastoral «nomads». Depending on numerous internal as well as external factors, including technology, bio-environmental variability, social and political conditions, each group, as well as segments within each group, utilizes variable degrees of spatial mobility related to resource extraction and survival. Although all groups move (and move purposefully), spatial mobility in some groups is more directly related to specific subsistence strategies, whereas movement in other groups may be influenced more by political, economic, or other social conditions in the larger social system, independently of particular subsistence resources such as game, pasture, trade, or markets. Additionally, and this is an area for further examination, movement occurs at both individual and group activity levels; thus one must account for the aggregate movement of primary groups as well as the patterns of mobility for individuals. Herding models of pastoral activities, frequently emphasizing spatial movement associated exclusively with physio-biotic requirements of herds, are not appropriate for other (i.e., non-pastoral) nomadic groups. Similarly, it follows that spatial mobility, as a defining characteristic of nomad/nomadism, is insufficient for the analysis and comparison of various

nomadic groups if their activities are viewed independently of other groups and resources in the larger socio-ecological system. Thus the extent to which these terms may be expanded entails a re-examination of the parameters of «nomadic» adaptations as well as the role of highly spatial mobile groups in the «total spheres of activity» in a region (see for example, Irons 1975, Barth 1973: 11-21, Cole 1973: 113-128, Salzman 1978: 539-557). This expanded investigative and analytical perspective will increase understanding of the complex interrelationship between patterns of resource extraction, social organization, and spatial mobility.

Drawing on more than two years participant observation among artisans and entertainers (Pāryātān) in Pakistan, this discussion has a two-fold purpose. First, to introduce the concept of the peripatetic niche, operationally corresponding to the human resource base of nomadic artisans and entertainers, as contrasted to the predominantly bio-physiologic resources of pastoral nomads. Secondly, in order to illustrate the peripatetic niche, a descriptive-analytic model of the range of nomadic groups exploiting human resources in the South Asian socio-cultural milieu will be presented. In this discussion, peripatetic is introduced as a specialized term for nomadic activities which de-emphasizes notions of livestock and herding. The contrast between a socio-ecological or peripatetic focused model with the more common herding based models will broaden our perspectives on the nature of nomadic adaptations as well as the role of spatial mobility in human experience.

The Perspective

A decade ago Neville Dyson-Hudson (1972), in advancing a herding model for studies of pastoral nomads, noted that «nomadism» as an «ideal cultural type» figuring in traditional taxonomic schemes contributed very little to our understanding of social systems. Focusing his discussion on herding activities, Dyson-Hudson suggested that «nomadism» represented two distinct sets of phenomena: livestock herding and spatial mobility. Following Lattimore (1957) and Krader (1959), he emphasized that previous efforts «yoking the two sets of phenomena together is what has facilitated the erroneous assumption that nomadic movement is caused simply by environmental factors» (emphasis added) (1972:23). Subsequent studies elaborating upon the human-livestock-environmental interaction characteristic of the herding model have demonstrated that spatial mobility among pastoralists is associated with internal as well as external socio-cultural factors and not exclusively on needs for water and pasture. More recently, Gulliver (1975: 369-386), in an extensive review of the factors associated with spatial mobility among pastoralists, indicated that «... it is not simply a matter that nomads can and do move regularly, but that movement is directly and indirectly, conscious and unconsciously, used in social policy and strategies going well beyond the requirements of the physio-biotic environment». Noting that socio-cultural factors relating to spatial mobility should be given more careful attention, Gulliver concluded that our analyses of pastoral movement have been cursory and that «interaction of physical environment and socio-cultural factors is more complex than is often perceived» (1975: 382-382 passim).

To date, most studies of internal (Gulliver 1975) and external (Irons 1975) factors related to nomadic movement independent of bio-physiologic limitations have focused on pastoral activities where environmental limitation

on livestock are inextricably interwoven in the total fabric of their social system. The limited number of comparative studies have been essentially of two kinds. Cross-cultural and other holoecistic investigations of spatially mobile groups remains almost exclusively confined to analyses of pastoral groups with bio-physiologic environments and herd composition treated as independent variables (see for example Patai 1951: 401-414; Krader 1955a: 67-92, 1955b: 301-326; Gulliver 1955; Rubel 1969: 268-273; Spooner 1971: 198-210, 1973). More recently, studies of pastoral groups or «ideal types» of pastoralists such as «complex nomads» (Johnson 1969) with diversified resource bases are contrasted with agriculturalists or other ideal types of sedentary activities in polar opposition models (see for example Paine 1971: 157-172; Salzman 1971: 185-197, 1972: 60-68; Bates 1971: 109-131, 1973; Nelson 1973). Such studies indicate a shift from an environmental determinist perspective toward a systematic examination of external and internal factors characteristic of the larger socio-ecology (Spooner 1971: 193-210; Irons 1975) of pastoral activities; however as Salzman (1978: 539-557) has pointed out, more comparative studies capable of generating substantive generalizations regarding nomadic activities and spatial mobility in complex societies are greatly needed. In addition to pastoralists, other nomadic groups, often interacting with the same sedentary communities, as well as directly with pastoralists themselves, while noted, have been essentially ignored in the analytic models of group interrelationships in complex social systems (see for example Barth 1961: 91-92; Irons 1975, Cole 1975: 105-106). Some investigators, notably Dyson-Hudson (1972: 2-29) and Barth (1973: 11-21; 1975: 285-298) have called for comparative studies of «other nomadic groups» as ideal «crucial test cases» of theory regarding nomadic movement derived from herding models. Interestingly enough, however, «other nomadic groups» are often inappropriately lumped as «aberrant cases,» «Gypsies,» «itinerants,» and the like; thus, analytical models comparable to those for pastoral nomads are still lacking.

While most investigators have had some firsthand experience with «other nomadic groups» or spatially mobile artisans and entertainers such as tinkers, «Gypsies,» carnies, circus performers and similar groups, it is surprising that these groups have been only cursorily noted or even deleted from ethnographic accounts of pastoralists or other, more sedentary groups interacting in socio-ecological systems. Indeed, peripatetic artisans, entertainers, and peddlers are perhaps the most widely dispersed of all nomads and their reliance on relatively high levels of spatial mobility inherent in their subsistence activities recommends them as ideal groups for future comparative analysis. Because the ethnographic record is so sparse in dealing with peripatetic artisans and entertainers it might be wise to summarize the main differences between these spatially mobile groups and pastoral nomads before elaborating on this distinction in South Asia.

Peripatetic versus Pastoral Strategies

Bearing in mind that we are dealing here with broad conceptual categories of nomadic groups, perhaps the most distinctive difference is that peripatetic artisans and entertainers rely exclusively on human social resources, whereas pastoral nomads depend only to varying degrees on sedentary populations. In keeping with their herding activities, pastoral nomads, as food producers, have greater direct control over subsistence resources; peripatetics, dependent on sedentary populations, are not food producers. The resources necessary for

herding activities related to livestock management, especially for large herds, tend to regulate pastoralists to distemic eco-niches peripheral to agricultural zones and urban communities. On the other hand, the specialized economic activities of nomadic artisans and entertainers are proxemic to sedentary groups within both rural agricultural and urban industrial systems. Consequently with human settlements as potential resources, peripatetic artisans and entertainers have greater relative spatial flexibility than pastoralists, whose decisions and actual movement patterns must be mediated by herding requirements. Similarly, the nature of herd and group interactions with sedentists tends to limit the total range of individual or corporate economic activities of pastoral nomads, whereas peripatetics frequently are versed in a wide variety of economic skills. Peripatetic groups, sparsely scattered throughout larger socio-economic systems, offer a wide range of services and products which are frequently socially or economically inappropriate in more sedentary communities as full-time specializations. For example, many small towns and villages cannot support a full-time metalsmith or entertainer, whereas networks of sedentary settlements will support these specialized activities.

Following Barth (1973: 11-21), the distinctions between peripatetics and pastoralists may be viewed as differences in activities related to their «systems of production» or «productive regimes». A comparison of «production factors» such as primary resource, capital, and labor for sedentary agricultural pastoralists and several peripatetic activities serves to delineate each sphere of production and demonstrates the parameters of the peripatetic niche.

	PRIMARY RESOURCE		CAPITAL		
Sedentary Agriculture	(Fields) LAND	+	SEED	+	LABOR
Pastoralists	(Pasture) LAND	+	HERDS	+	LABOR
Caravaneers (Traders)	HUMAN GROUPS (Crops-Goods)	+	PACK-DRAUGHT ANIMALS	+	LABOR
Artisans	HUMAN GROUPS (Production needs)	+	SKILLS AND TOOLS	+	LABOR
Entertainers	HUMAN GROUPS (Recreation, rituals, curiosity)	+	INDIVIDUAL SKILLS, ANIMALS	+	LABOR
	Peripatetic Niche				

These activities based on human needs or products may be viewed as relatively more flexible or independent of direct bio-physiologic conditions, although resources in cash or kind may be influenced by production levels in agricultural or urban industrial areas. By combining specialized individual skills with

spatial mobility, peripatetic artisans, entertainers, and other similar groups maintain a productive regime based on human groups as primary resources in larger socio-ecological systems which may contain pastoralists, agriculturalists and urban-industrial settlements. Thus, by relying on a variety of specialized individual and corporate skills, socio-cultural flexibility and spatial mobility, nomadic artisans and entertainers occupy a unique and ancient peripatetic niche generated by diverse human social needs and resources. Rather than viewing peripatetics as outcasts from sedentary (especially urban) environments, we profitably view these groups' activities as logical and long-standing responses to sedentary life.

The antiquity of the peripatetic niche and success of peripatetic adaptations are manifested in the socio-cultural milieu of spatially mobile artisans and entertainers (Paryātān) in South Asia.

Nomads in South Asia

Throughout South Asia villagers and urban dwellers are bound to many regions and people by multiple social links; as Marriot (1955), Mandelbaum (1970) and others have demonstrated, notions of isolated, sedentary communities are ethnologically naive in understanding South Asian social systems. One of the links connecting villages and urban settlements, perhaps as old as the very concept of village itself, are numerous groups of pastoralists, caravaneers, as well as peripatetic artisans and entertainers. Excluding gathering and hunting strategies, other subsistence activities incorporating high levels of spatial mobility are very old in the Asian subcontinent. Presently it is impossible to accurately ascertain the antiquity of peripatetic strategies in South Asia, but there is sufficient evidence to suggest that they have been integral groups within the larger Asian social system for many centuries.

There is some evidence of peripatetic artisans and entertainers during the early Vedic period; by the late Vedic era (circa 1000-700 B.C.) the Rig Veda refers to a number of specialized trades and crafts including «...a rudimentary entertainment industry...with professional acrobats, fortune tellers, flute players and dancers» (Basham 1959: 43). Based on a preliminary survey of Kanjar (peripatetic potters and craftsmen) and discussion with the late Sir Mortimer Wheeler, Berland (1977, 1978) has postulated that spatially mobile artisans may have been responsible for the similarity in and distribution of terra cotta figurines and 'toys' found throughout the Indus Valley Civilization. Certainly the similarity in mode of manufacture and style of these specialized cultural items throughout a culture area may be attributed to peripatetic artisans, rather than as evidence of sedentary specialization generally reported in the archaeological literature. So it is tempting to speculate about the possible role of spatially mobile smiths and tinkers (Lohar) in the manufacture, maintenance and repair of iron tools associated with intensive cultivation in the 6th Century B.C. (see for example Banerjee 1965; Ruhela 1968; and Misra 1965, 1969a, 1970, 1975).

In discussing the «amusements» or entertainment among Vedic period villagers and urban dwellers, Basham (1959:43) notes the following about «Gypsies» or nomadic entertainers in ancient India:

...there were others who travelled through town and village, diverting the ordinary folk...musicians, band, acrobats, jugglers, conjurers and snake charmers, popular then as now.

Indeed, while the historic, sociological, and literary record indicate that peripatetic craftsmen and entertainers have been parts of the South Asian social system since the coming of the pastoral Aryans, the prehistoric record, while incomplete, suggests the existence of peripatetic activities since the development of agriculture.

Pre-independence accounts dealing with nomads are frequently included in district gazeteers and regional census reports where there is a «sedencentric» tendency to classify all spatially mobile groups as «pastoral» or «criminal» tribes. Until recent years, the post-independence record is equally if not more ambiguous, with most accounts based on spurious assessment and hearsay. Lacking large herds, most groups of nomadic artisans and entertainers are excluded from government surveys. Suspicious of «outsiders», these groups are essentially closed systems vis-à-vis sedentists and consciously try to maintain an ambiguous posture in the larger social system. The closed nature of their internal social system: subsistence activities and organizational fluidity associated with high levels of spatial mobility, are associated with sedentary Muslim and Hindu perceptions of them as pariah groups. Consequently they are seldom approached directly and reports based on long-term participant-observation by trained, linguistically competent investigators are practically non-existent. While there is an increase in reports (Misra 1970) dealing with peripatetic artisans and entertainers, much of the data continues to be collected «from a distance» and must be cautiously and critically evaluated. Census and other demographic accounts are particularly vulnerable to distortion. For example, one tent of entertainers with whom I was travelling in Pakistan was surveyed by three independent census surveyors in two states where over four hundred tents of the same group were never approached. A frequent source of entertainment among peripatetic entertainers is humorous accounts of how «outsiders» seeking information were «handled». Perceived as a very important fact in their subsistence activity repertoire, information and impression management activities are valued skills among many peripatetics in Asia (Berland 1977) as well as similar groups throughout the world (Gropper 1975; Rehfisch et al 1975; Yoors 1967). Certainly, the gullibility and willingness of «outsiders», including social scientists, to believe incredible tales of misery, lament for a more «settled» life, and the like, reinforces the disdain most of these nomads have for sedentary groups.

For numerous reasons, including linguistic variability, throughout the Asian subcontinent, the same groups may be classified differently within as well as between regions. Specific subsistence activities continue to be confused with notions of «tribes» and castes (jati); for example, since the middle of the 19th century *bērūpīas* have been identified as a caste of impersonators. A *bērūpīa* is in fact any person who professionally impersonates a range of cultural roles without fraudulent intent, regardless of tribal or jati affiliation (Berland 1977; Tandon 1961). Ambiguities of this nature are prevalent in the data and are often perpetuated on the ground by various groups of nomads themselves. Although an accurate assessment of the range and variability of nomadic groups exploiting human resources as a peripatetic niche for the Asian subcontinent is lacking, recent classificatory schemes may be a step in the right direction.

In addressing the problem of ethnographically sensitive classifications of nomads in South Asia, Bose (1956: 1-6) distinguished a difference between «nomadism» of pastoral nomads and that of «roving» or «wandering» craftsmen and entertainers. Bose briefly noted, but unfortunately did not follow up on his observation that many of these groups «...speaking a language of their own...had originally no relationship (even economic) with the settled inhabitants of the agricultural villages: (p. 4). Focusing his analysis on nomadic craftsmen, Bose concludes that movement among such groups was «guided by needs of trade rather than by the need of food of the animals reared» (p. 5), and went on to question if such groups should be called nomad(ism) at all; concluding that they probably should because they «...roam about have(ing) no permanent home, and roam in small family groups» (p. 5). Explicit in Bose's analysis is the assumption that movement among groups is exclusively determined by external economic factors, or demands for their services among sedentists with high levels of spatial mobility a response rather than an integral part of their subsistence skills. Recently Bose (1975: 1-15) and others have suggested that the concept of nomad, in keeping with its Greek etymology emphasizing pasture, be limited to nomadic pastoral activities and the notion of «wanderer» be applied to other groups such as craftsmen and entertainers (Leshnik 1975:x.). The English term «wanderer,» like most terms denoting high levels of spatial mobility in the lexicon of sedentary populations, is unacceptable to this investigator because it explicitly suggests random movement and implicitly carries a negative or derogatory connotation among sedentary users. Just as the pastoral nomad is constrained by herd animals and fluctuations in the larger bio-physiologic as well as social environment, peripatetic groups are sensitive to socio-environmental factors as well. Because their decisions are not necessarily mediated by herd considerations, nomadic artisans and entertainers may be viewed as having relative greater flexibility in mobility as compared to most pastoral groups. It should be kept in mind that relatively high levels of spatial mobility among any groups is frequently interpreted by sedentists as vicarious activity; however, random movement for any group has yet to be demonstrated.

General classificatory schemes based on «types» of economic activities for tribal groups abound in the Indian anthropological literature. Most specify nomadic pastoralists, forest hunter/gatherers, and craftsmen (handicrafts), although nomadic artisans and entertainers are excluded as distinct «types» (see Majumdar and Madan 1970). Noteworthy, however, is Vidyarthi and Rai's (1977: 131-137) inclusion of simple artisans, pastoral and folk-artists as distinct «economic types» among India's tribal population. Classificatory schemes derived from specific surveys of nomadic artisans and entertainers in India are limited to one notable exception. Misra, in a pioneering effort spanning the past decade, has noted considerable numbers of «itinerant» groups (Misra 1964: 251-256; 1965; 1969: 307-315; 1970; 1971: 317-333; 1975: 235-246; 1978).

In a survey of Mysore and Andhra Pradesh in South India, Misra (1970: 151-197) has reported eighty-eight nomadic groups exclusive of pastoralists:

We met them on the road sides, on move or in camps near the villages and towns. They camped beneath a tree, in cloth tents, temporary huts, or in open. They transported the luggage themselves on horses, donkeys, cows, bullock

carts, trains or buses. Each one of these groups had a distinct area of movement. Some moved throughout the year with relatively slower speed of movement during rainy season, others moved only in a part of the year, generally returning to their base camps in rainy season. It was reported that usually the frequency of movement is more during harvest season. They engaged themselves in a variety of occupations such as hunting, trapping, and fishing; crafts such as umbrella repairing, polishing and scraping of horns of cattle, rope and mat making, blacksmithy, etc.; other skilled jobs such as bull and snakes displaying, recitation of mythological stories, singing and staging dramas, acrobating, displaying deities, dentistry, veterinarining, forecasting, money lending and various forms of begging, cattle rearing, trading such as selling of perfume, spices and aluminum vessels. They claimed that these various occupations were with them since generations and that they generally engaged themselves in more than one occupation. (Misra 1970: 159).

Based on their primary subsistence activity, Misra classified these groups into four general types; artisans, skilled workers (including entertainers), traders/peddlers, and bikshaks (begging associated with religious activities). Each of these multilingual groups practices a variety of individual skills as part of their subsistence activities. Some confine their activities to urban or rural areas; however, most exploit a network encompassing both types of settlement. Patterns of mobility are influenced by numerous extraneous factors particularly harvest periods and ritual occasions in the Hindu calendar. Misra's data indicate considerable temporal depth for these groups, and, as might be expected in predominantly Hindu areas, most of these groups are systematically linked into traditional jajman relationships in both the rural and urban settings. Misra demonstrates that their wide range of specialized skills are ideally adapted to the larger economic, social, and ritual milieu of India. Noting the nature of their specialized skills, Misra has convincingly demonstrated how such groups effectively bridge the Great and Little Traditions «in a style, dialect, and medium which easily catch the imagination of the local people» (1971: 318); simultaneously providing a range of goods and services unavailable to many in rural as well as urban settings. Related to the limited or seasonal demand for these goods and services, Misra found the nuclear household (tent) the basic social unit, with most groups consisting of one or two kinship based-household units travelling together. Misra's data suggest, but do not clearly indicate, these are distinct, endogamous ethnic groups which are distinguishable from other nomads as well as from sedentary castes practicing the same economic activities.

In a recent review of papers presented at the 1978 National Seminar on Indian nomads held in Mysore, Misra (1978: 2-6) has classified Indian nomads into three categories: symbiotic nomads, natural nomads, and hunting and collecting nomads. By «natural nomads» Misra is apparently referring to pastoralists, as he emphasizes their movement is regulated by «vagaries of nature» (p. 4), in contrast to traditionally recognized groups of hunter-collectors. The third group, symbiotic nomads, are the same group that Misra has referred to in his earlier work as «itinerants,» i.e., spatially mobile groups which provide a variety of goods and specialized services to

settled populations. In the notion of symbiotic nomads, Misra emphasizes their interaction with sedentary groups, failing to note that «symbiotic» relationships are characteristic activities of all nomadic groups in Asia, especially pastoralists. In addition, as suggested in an earlier classificatory scheme (Misra 1970), the general category of «symbiotic» nomads tends to fuse into a single category disparate forms of peripatetic activities. Inherent in Misra's previous research and explicitly stated in his review of nomadic groups in South Asia is the «sedenocentric» assumption that symbiotic nomads have been forced into this subsistence strategy as «displaced sedentists»:

In this situation one may visualize that now and then a good number of people to whom no work could be provided in the villages or who could not earn enough by living in one village alone, had to migrate to industrial belts, plantation areas and some had to turn into habitual nomads. (1978: 5).

By emphasizing the displaced nature of these groups, Misra's scheme does not consider the fact that many of these groups recognize and exploit the socio-economic niche generated by sedentary agricultural-based communities. Also implicit in Misra's assumption is the notion that these specialized activities are solely a response to urban communities: while the exact relationship of these groups to rural as well as urban areas is yet to be demonstrated, however, it is apparently not restricted to urban areas.

The results of Misra's survey work and of the Mysore conference on Indian nomads are significant in their recognition of peripatetic activities as distinct from pastoral, hunting and gathering strategies. Emphasizing these distinctions, Hayden (1978) has recently suggested the concept of «service nomad» as a category comparable to Misra's «symbiotic nomads». Hayden's analysis focuses on peripatetic artisans with established jajman relationships in the Indian urban and village setting. While his paper concentrates on economic activities, Hayden does not include discussion of groups outside this traditional relationship; however, his recognition of the fact that these groups exploit a social milieu rather than a bio-physiologic environment lends support to the notion of a distinct peripatetic niche. Recognition of these groups as separate, autonomous, yet integral parts of the Indian socio-cultural system is a major step toward our understanding the complex nature and interrelationship of various nomadic groups in South Asia.

A Descriptive-Analytic Model from Pakistan

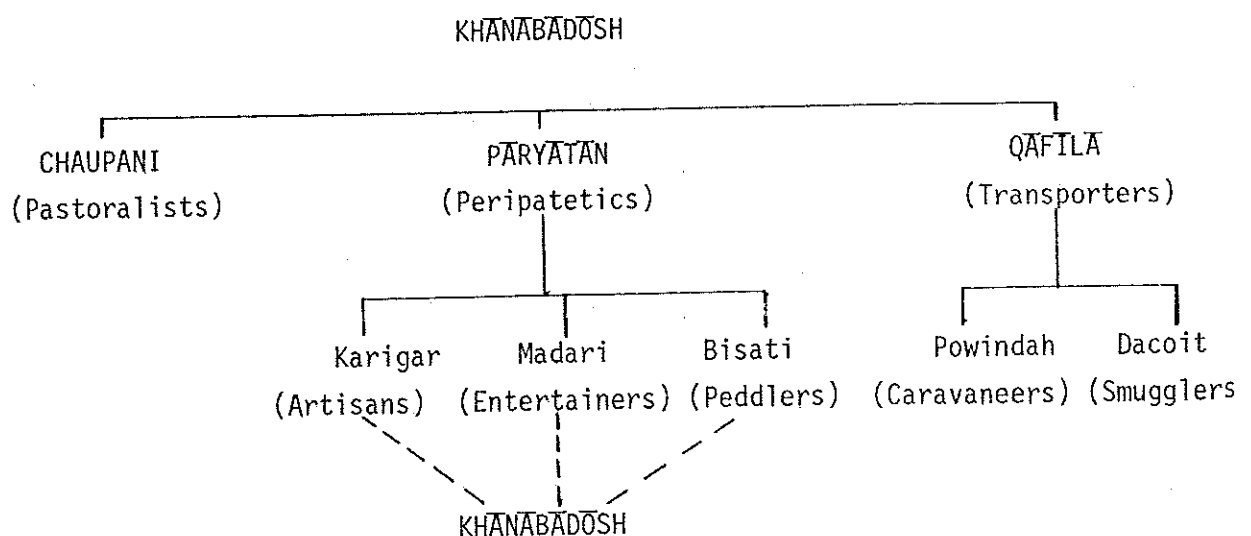
Like Kipling's Kim, those who have travelled along the Grand Trunk Road, from the Khyber Pass to the Ganges and Calcutta, or south to the Arabian Sea, have marveled at the great cultural diversity encountered. The vast Indo-Ganges lowlands are the area of the Indus Valley (Harappan) civilization and Vedic age. Throughout history it has been a much sought-after prize for Persians, Greeks, Afghans, and others who came into the subcontinent through the mountain passes to the West. The Indus region is culturally and geographically one of the most distinctive areas in South Asia and its proximity to Arab, Persian, and Afghan influences gives it a special identity within the South Asian subcontinent. Particularly as one passes through the villages and towns in the Punjab, it becomes apparent that this has historically been a zone of cultural integration.

Given the great antiquity of agricultural development associated with the rich alluvial flood plains of the Punjab and Indus Valley region, as well as its historical position in the crossroads between the Ganges basin and Persia, the Punjab and Sind seem an ideal location for the ethno-archaeological, historical, and ethnographic study of spatially mobile groups of artisans and entertainers.

As part of a larger study concerned with child development among spatially mobile entertainers, the results of a nine-month nation-wide survey of peripatetic groups and twenty-four months subsequent participant observation among Qalandar (peripatetic entertainers) and Kanjar (peripatetic artisans) suggest a descriptive-analytical model of nomadic activities for Pakistan comparable to that found for India.

Throughout Pakistan, particularly among sedentists, the notion of «nomad» as a cultural construct (including both pastoral nomads and peripatetic groups) is most commonly covered by the term *Khanābādōsh*. A Persian term incorporated into Urdu, Punjabi, Pashto, as well as Sindī, it glosses into English literally as «house-on-shoulder»: *Khānā* (house) - *bā* (on) - *dōsh* (shoulder). *Khānābādōsh* is also used by the sedentary population to refer either to a snail, a tramp, or those who have no permanent sedentary status (i.e., those who carry their homes around with them). When used by sedentists, the term always carries a negative or derisive connotation and is seldom used as a term of reference among peripatetic groups.

While all spatially mobile groups are generally categorized into the single concept of *khanābādōsh* (which includes pastoralists), I found that most peripatetics have a more elaborate classification scheme which distinguishes different nomadic activities from sedentary groups. While travelling with Qalandar and Kanjar, we frequently shared campsites with other peripatetic groups; camp discussions with these artisans and entertainers suggested the conceptual model of nomadic activities which is presented below. Ethnographically sensitive for Pakistan, this descriptive-analytical model is similar to the situation reported for India and is also useful in unfolding the notion of nomadic adaptations for general cross-cultural comparison.



This classificatory model does not include sedentary groups in rural and urban settings who may also practice comparable subsistence activities. Khānabādōsh, while covering all spatially mobile groups, depending on the context of use, may be limited to Pāryātān groups exclusively, a usage which is analogous to comparable terms outside Asia such as «Gypsies» or itinerants. Among peripatetics I found a clear conceptual distinction between Chaupani (pastoralists); Qāfīlā (including both professional thieves and smugglers) and Pāryātān (nomadic artisans, entertainers, and peddlers).

Exclusive of pastoral groups (Chaupani) such as Gujars, Baluch, and others, I encountered fourteen distinct, endogamous groups of nomads. Identified in terms of their major subsistence skills and activities these groups are:

- (1) Bazigar - The Bazigar are primarily Muslim tumblers and acrobats (among Hindus they are called Nats). They are usually found in cities and towns, performing for special occasions, e.g., the horse and cattle show in Lahore. Some are sedentary but most move from city to city following fairs and public events.
- (2) Charan - (derived from Sanskrit chara--wanderer). The Charan are confined to the Punjab and Sind. They work as migrant agricultural laborers, often serving in the capacity of carriers. I believe the Charan to be synonymous with the Banjara/Vanjari of India. When not working on the wheat and rice harvests, they do odd jobs and beg.
- (3) Chunger - The Chunger are Hindu and Muslim gatherers and collectors. As scavengers confined to the major urban areas, they gather garbage and discarded materials such as iron, rags, glass, papers, etc., which they accumulate and sell to manufacturers. They are the unofficial street cleaners. During the wheat and rice harvest, some tents travel from village to village working as «sifters» of grain.
- (4) Churigar - The Churigar are bangle and jewelry peddlers, either sedentary or nomadic. Most operate out of major urban areas, with single tents travelling through traditionally established village networks.
- (5) Jogi - The Jogi or saperas as Hindu and Muslim snake charmers and medicine (jari buti) peddlers. Found throughout the Punjab and Sind, they tend to concentrate in urban areas when not following the village harvest. The men show snakes; the women manufacture and sell the butis (medicines). Some tents also maintain hunting dogs for the amusement of villagers.
- (6) Kanjar - The Kanjar are best known as artisans who manufacture terra cotta figurines and sell them as toys. As entertainers, they also sing and dance: outstanding musicians and dancers often migrate to entertainment centers in urban areas. They also gather scrap paper, cloth, and reeds from which they make paper flowers, animals, etc. A segment of the Kanjar also make winnowing baskets and reed brooms and also weave fish nets.
- (7) Kochi - The Kochi are primarily an Afghan tribe of pastoralists, some of whom smuggle and sell illicit goods, i.e., cloth, firearms, lumber, opium, etc. They should be considered qāfīlā or caravaners rather than nomadic artisans and entertainers.

(8) Kowli - A Muslim group of tinkers and traders, the Kowli, or Ghorbati, peddle pots and pans among villagers and pastoral nomadic groups in Baluchistan and Persia.

(9) Lohar - The Lohar (blacksmiths) are one of the major nomadic artisan groups, often called Lori in the southern Sind. Found in North India and Pakistan, these nomadic tinkers and smiths may also trade and deal in cattle, especially in North India and the Southern Sind (see Misra 1975; Ruhela 1968).

(10) Marwari - The Marwari are a group of toy and knick-knack (combs, soap, razor blades) peddlers in the Hyderabad area of Sind.

(11) Mirasi - In Pakistan, the Mirasi are famous as genealogists. They are the bards of North India and also work as story-tellers (bhands) and impersonators (berupia).

(12) Oudh - A small segment of the pastoral Oudhs work also as caravaneers (qāfīlā) and professional thieves (dacoits).

(13) Qalandar - The Qalandar are a major group of entertainers who show dancing bears and monkeys, sing, dance, perform magic and work as impersonators (berupia).

(14) Sansis - The Sansis are primarily nomadic, unskilled laborers and beggars. Like the Chunger, they travel from village to village to help in the harvesting of rice and wheat, mainly as «sifters». Many deal in medicines and charms for a variety of diseases. They, like the Mirasi, may also be genealogists.

Pāryātān and Qāfīlā

Pāryātān and Qāfīlā groups recognize and exploit human social resources as their primary economic base. By combining specialized skills and spatial mobility they have found a peripatetic niche among sedentary urban and rural dwellers in Pakistan. It should be noted that each endogamous peripatetic group will frequently refer to other peripatetic groups using terms synonymous with their specific subsistence activities and skills. Among peripatetics it is important to keep in mind that within each of these endogamous occupational groups are numbers of individuals representing a broad spectrum of jatis (castes) often associated with specific sedentary occupational skills. Thus a group's name, sometimes synonymous with a particular occupation, does not always indicate their varna-jati status. For example, among the Qalandar, nomadic entertainers who rely primarily on performing bears and monkeys, seventeen jatis were represented. In Pakistan, the sedentary world deals with these groups as castes based on their major occupational skills, ignorant of the fact that these groups are not single caste. Among the Qalandar and Kanjar, an individual's jati is often concealed from sedentary inquiry because sedentists of the same jati affiliation are frequently offended that «caste fellows» would be associated with peripatetic activities such as begging, dancing, prostitution and the like. Another frequently used term among nomads is the Punjabi concept of pukiwas (tent dweller), commonly used as a term of reference among peripatetics. Interestingly enough, among the groups I studied the notion

of puki, or tent, was also synonymous with the notion of camp (a cluster of tents travelling together); thus there was no specific term referring to a group travelling together as a unit of two, three, or more tents. Among all groups the basic social unit is the tent, composed of a man, his wife, and their unmarried children.

Most of these groups exploit both rural and urban settings, although some, such as the Chunger, as scavengers, appear to be exclusively confined to a specialized niche generated by human waste and debris characteristic of urban settlements. While their movement patterns are primarily related to the demands of human resources, bio-environmental factors affecting the availability of food and cash in the sedentary setting also influence the peripatetic economic strategies and movement pattern. Artisans and entertainers disperse into agricultural areas during and immediately following the two major harvest periods when their services are most frequently rewarded in kind; namely, wheat and rice, which is collected and sold in market areas. Movement patterns are most frequent, often daily, during the harvest periods to allow tents travelling together to exploit a maximum number of villages. Following the harvest period, tents begin to converge on the urban areas, where tent movement is less frequent and individual tents of artisans and entertainers canvass specific neighborhoods before moving to other areas within a city. In the urban setting camp groups may be larger, although more volatile, and compensation for services is most often received in the form of cash and occasionally, goods such as cast-off clothing, shoes, and similar items. Throughout Pakistan, these groups are considered pariahs and thus many are excluded from traditional economic relations (jajman) in the urban and rural settings. Because the demand for their services is often seasonal and limited, it is extremely unusual to find large concentrations of tents in any one area. As highly mobile pariah groups vis-à-vis the larger sedentary society, these peripatetic groups frequently share common campsites, especially in the urban areas; however, there is seldom direct regular exchange between groups and little sharing of food, since each group considers itself to be ritually purer in relation to all other groups.

All Paryātān groups rely to a certain extent on begging, with some, for example Sansi, Chunger, and Qalandar deriving as much as sixty percent of their total income from this activity in urban areas. In predominantly Muslim Pakistan, I found no endogamous groups of beggars comparable to the biksha groups which exploit Hindu pilgrims and Hindu religious activities in India. Many older males among Paryātān in Pakistan do work as peripatetic holy men (Pirs) when their physical condition precludes more strenuous activities such as showing performing bears. Depending on economic conditions, some groups prostitute females; however, prostitution is not perceived as a primary subsistence activity. Most of these groups are flexible in the range of subsistence skills they may use depending on a particular context, which makes classification according to subsistence activities extremely difficult. For example, while Chunger derive their income predominantly from scavenging, they also manufacture reed and cloth toys, beg, and prostitute. Individuals from some groups, notably the Sansi, have become sedentary laborers in urban areas, although such individuals are held in disdain by those who continue as nomads. Among Qalandar, prolonged affiliation with sedentists or sedentarization of a tent is an offense punishable by death.

While groups of entertainers, artisans, and peddlers are classed under the general construct of Paryātān, several important differences in their subsistence skills and patterns of spatial mobility distinguish entertainers from artisans. Nomadic artisans and peddlers tend to move along more established networks where their specific services are necessary, predictable resources for sedentary agriculturalists and, to a lesser extent, for urban dwellers. Thus, artisans may have more patron-client relationships as compared to entertainers, although any artisan tent may break out into new areas depending on a number of internal or external factors. For example, Lohar (smiths), Mirasi, and Sansi (as genealogists) frequently service a regular network of sedentary families in both rural and urban settings. On the other hand, peripatetic entertainers such as Qalandar and Jogi intentionally avoid recurrent relations with the same villages, depending instead on the novelty of their entertainment in new villages or urban areas. Another area of contrast between the two groups is in the use of animals. Most groups of artisans, especially the Lohar, depend to a certain degree on domesticated animals, particularly bullocks, as draft animals to pull wagons containing the materials required for their metalsmith activities. Some Lohar have begun to trade draft animals; however, their major income is based on metal work. Peddlers and other artisan groups keep donkeys as pack animals and dogs; in addition, many tents maintain one or two goats for milk. Entertainers such as the Qalandar keep domesticated as well as non-domesticated animals as part of their performing routines. Qalandar use donkeys as pack animals, with other domesticated animals such as dogs and goats trained to perform as well. In addition, they train and use wild animals such as snakes, bears, monkeys, and birds. As entertainers, the range of individual skills both within and between tents is greater than those found among most artisan groups. The heterogeneity of skills among entertainers contributes to greater relative flexibility in terms of group composition and patterns of movement than more specialized activities among artisans. Thus the composition and duration of travelling groups is more sensitive to both external as well as internal factors which contribute to the entertainers' relative greater flexibility. The same sorts of internal and external mechanisms governing patterns of fission and fusion as well as group solidarity among peripatetics are found among pastoral groups as discussed by Barth (1964) and Gulliver (1975). Misunderstandings and disputes related to marriage, travel routes, distribution of resources, and numerous other political and social factors operating within groups are especially sensitive because each group of entertainers is capable of surviving independently. Alliances of tents into travelling units are very fragile, although given an optimal collection of skills and animals, a group of tents, especially in village areas, is more effective as a performing team.

Many of these peripatetic groups are today under pressure from technological innovations. Increased education, movies, radio, television, plastic toys, and inexpensive tin and aluminium utensils are replacing traditional items and threatening the current skills and resources of these peripatetic groups. However, as Gropper (1975) has indicated for the Rom (Gypsies) in North America and Europe, these groups appear to possess the organizational flexibility to develop new resources and skills from their human resource base. In Pakistan, many have expressed interests in learning skills such as truck driving and transportation, painting and carpentry, which would enable them to maintain their peripatetic strategy without having to become sedentary «peasants».

Conclusion

Human groups, because of their needs for a variety of goods and services, can be tapped as economic resources, and such dependence upon human groups can be seen as a distinct socio-ecological niche. The human-resource based, or peripatetic niche is as distinct and viable as pasture, game or the resources generated by the urban industrial environments. By extending Barth's (1973) lead in examining the resource base and capital among groups, we are better able to identify how specific subsistence activities, skills, patterns of social organization and social structures are interrelated within larger socio-ecological systems. As Salzman (1978) has suggested in his review of Barth's use of «economic regimes», we should not start with economic regimes as givens «...for we have learned from the case material that economic regimes are, or may be, a function of the relationships among the populations in the social field, arena, or region, and also of their noneconomic elements, such as power or status» (p. 555). Indeed, expanding the concept of nomad to include a range of peripatetic activities, such as those of spatially mobile artisans, entertainers, and similar groups, encourages an awareness of the total social field containing a wide variety of groups, including pastoralists and sedentists. Systems of production and levels of technology, which includes patterns of social organization such as fission and fusion within groups, group composition and duration as a form of social technology, may for all groups involve relative levels of spatial mobility depending on the temporal and contextual parameters of our analysis. Thus, notions such as «multi-resource» nomadism (Salzman 1972) rather than defining a characteristic of certain pastoral activities may be more profitably extended as a feature of all human groups.

By focusing our study and analyses exclusively on any group's primary subsistence resources and capital, such as pasture and herds for pastoralists, fields and crops for agriculturalists, or human needs and desires for peripatetics, we limit our perspective of how these groups are interdependently related to the larger bio-social systems. Similarly, by concentrating only on a dominant resource, we ignore the flexibility in most groups to utilize secondary resources or skills in responding to bio-environmental as well as socio-cultural variation through time. For example, accounts of pastoral cattle herders continue to ignore the role of goats and other resources and how these in turn affect and are affected by changes in the composition of domestic groups as well as domestic cycles. So also has the rigid focus on singular activities, such as juggling, confused our understanding of peripatetic groups in India and Pakistan. Indeed, by limiting our analyses of «nomadism» to pastoral and perhaps gathering and hunting strategies, we have lost sight of the importance of spatial mobility as a characteristic of human adaptive processes. Since relatively sedentary activities such as agriculture are very recent systems of production we might profitably abandon the «sedenocentric» posture of viewing pastoralists, peripatetics, and other spatially mobile groups as «displaced sedentists» and examine the role of more static activities in fluid bio-social systems. Certainly, peripatetic artisans and entertainers recognize and exploit a substantive socio-ecological niche and should not be considered as pariah groups in search of fields and permanent homes. Their most important resource, human needs and desires, appears to this investigator to be the most predictable and reliable of all niches in the world today.

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