

# Commission on Nomadic Peoples

“Paryatan: ‘Native’ Models of Peripatetic Strategies in Pakistan”

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Nomadic Peoples, Number 21/22, December 1986

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PĀRYTĀN: "NATIVE" MODELS OF PERIPATETIC STRATEGIES IN PAKISTAN

by Joseph C. Berland

"Panjun unglian baraber nahee handyan."

No five fingers are alike.

- Qalandar maxim -

Over the past decade we have witnessed a flourishing research record dealing with diverse nomadic populations. This includes not only descriptive accounts in a natural history tradition; but a growth of comparative and analytical efforts based on intensive fieldwork focusing on how individual members of these groups perceive and interpret the elements and activities of their universe. This experience and data has profitably offered insight into larger biological, social and ecocultural factors related to nomadic activities and the complex patterns of interactions and processes among these variables.

In large, the ethnographic record bears out Spooner's (1973:3) perspicacious observation that " ... there are no features of culture or social organization that are common to all nomads or even that are found exclusively among nomads." By the same token, the breaking-up of nomadism and hunting-gathering, as unitary constructs, into specific activities combined with relative levels of spatial mobility, has been an important step towards clarifying muddled models of diverse nomadic social systems (Ahmed 1983; Bates and Lees 1977; Galaty 1984; Gulliver 1975; Koster 1977; Misra 1969, 1982; Schneider 1984; and Salzman 1972, 1978, 1980, 1984). To this extent I concur with Salzman's (1980) conclusion that "nomadism" is a useful concept and join the Dyson-Hudsons (1980) call for more intensive analyses focusing on the details of individual decision-making processes and the development of dynamic rather than static models of nomad social structure and organization. While not a unique characteristic, if field experience has taught us nothing else, flexibility at both the individual and group level is an important hallmark of nomadic systems.

Where many have called for both more intensive and broader perspectives on nomadism, the bulk of research remains confined to gathering-hunting and pastoral-herding strategies. By limiting focus to these traditional categories of spatially mobile populations, mainstream anthropology has overlooked the most pervasive and widely dispersed of all nomadic activities - peripatetic societies of artisans, entertainers and other nomadic populations, what Georg Simmel (1921, 1950) might have called professional strangers (see also Schnetz 1944 and Sway 1981). This oversight is especially remarkable for research in the Middle East, South and Southwest Asia where the prehistoric and classical record indicate the great antiquity and viability of peregrinatic specialists as integral elements in the design of complex social systems since earliest times (Basham 1959; Berland 1977, 1982, 1983a, 1985a; Misra and Misra 1982; McDowell 1970; Rao 1985a,b.). Drawing on fifteen years research experience among peripatetic populations in Southwest Asia my bold purpose in this modest paper is fourfold: 1) to briefly summarize the

parameters of the peripatetics' niche; 2) illustrate a "native" or peripatetics' model of diverse nomadic strategies for Pakistan; 3) review their perceptions of nomadic activities and how their flexible cognitive map lends validity to a larger notion of diverse but distinct peripatetics' niche; and 4) offer the notion of peripatetic societies towards both broadening and clarifying current perspectives on nomadism and the place of spatially mobile elements in the structure and organization of complex social systems.

### Exploring the Parameters of Peripatetics' Niche

Throughout most of the world, wherever we find networks of peasant farming activities, small villages, towns and metropolitan centers we also find diverse populations of nomadic specialists. This is especially the case in Southwest Asia where such a system has been in place for at least five millennium. Here the relative propinquity of diverse settlement patterns is closely linked to geological and bio-ecocultural factors regulating access to basic floral and faunal resources and their place in human survival strategies. For sedentary life predictable and sufficient water resources are vital and the great river systems of the subcontinent figure largely in the location, structure, organization and tenure of social systems, especially agriculture-based communities. The geologic interaction among great mountain ranges, flood plains, and the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal, permit diverse patterns of sedentary communities through reliable, but less predictable rainfall patterns associated with monsoon activities. The same processes also generate arid zones where permanent settlement is limited or impossible - regions often exploited by populations practicing multi-resource strategies such as nomadic pastoralism and/or gathering-hunting activities.

Across the centuries technological innovations such as wells, irrigation canals, barrages and high dams have opened-up new regions for agricultural pursuits while enhancing the predictability of vital resources for stable settlement patterns. While geo-ecological processes are critical they have been and remain constantly mediated by patterns of population growth and changing political regimes. Having personally grown up in and among families practicing multi-resource, pastoral nomadic activities in the Snake and Imnaha River areas of Oregon and Idaho, I would like to remind readers that the bio-ecological factors most favoring agriculture cropping are often the ideal and most desired settings for livestock management and faunal adaptations associated with hunting activities. Thus, where nomad-peasant mutualism is a fact, the often peripheral status of pastoral herders and today's gatherers-hunters is more likely a case of political clout rather than ecological determinism.

Given the history of anthropological theory and the competition among sedentists, pastoralists and gatherers-hunters for basically the same natural resources, we may have at least a partial explanation why mainstream social sciences have "overlooked" peripatetic populations in the structure and organization of complex social systems. Among peregrinatic specialists, the primary resource base is the membership of other communities, their capital largely vested in and maintained through a range of specialized skills, services and/or products. Both diverse and flexible, these resources and associated strategies only marginally compete for the basic elements necessary for pastoral, peasant or urban adaptations. In terms of propinquity, populations of peripatetic specialists are both integral and peripheral vis-a-vis other communities. To this extent they exploit a distinct peripatetics' niche: " ... the demand for specialized goods/services that sedentary or

pastoral communities cannot, or will not, support on a permanent basis (Berland 1979, 1982, 1983a,b,c, 1985a)."

In contrast with other peregrinatic populations such as gatherers-hunters and pastoralists, peripatetics lack herds and have no control over, or rights to, natural or human resources in the diverse settings they exploit. Their specialized activities place them inside the mainstream of more perdurable rural and urban communities. Their harvesting of sedentist's and pastoral nomad's needs for specialized skills, such as smithing, winnowing baskets and brooms; or desires for novel entertainment, places a premium on individual skills and high levels of spatial mobility. In turn, these specialized activities demand, as well as provide, for high degrees of structural flexibility and organizational fluidity at the group level (Berland 1979, 1983a,b,c, 1985a; Hayden 1979; Okely 1983; Piasere 1985; Rao 1985a,b; Rao and Casimir 1983).

### Invisible or Insignificant?

Unquestionably, mainstream anthropology, those specializing in small-scale societies, or large scale societies for that matter, and the larger sedentary world in general, are confused regarding the nature of peripatetic populations and their combination or specialized skills and/or services with high levels of spatial mobility. This lack of interest and knowledge may be attributed to many factors, not least of which is that many remain satisfied with romantic or perjorative stereotypes based on folklore, cursory information and contact limited to specific settings. Following Simmel's discussion on the nature of "strangers", peripatetics as professional strangers, are like the "inner enemies of Sirius," elements of each community; however, their relationship involves being both inside and outside - integral yet separate components. Peripatetics are seldom "organically connected" to the membership of host communities through traditional bonds of kinship, propinquity or occupation. However, " ... his position in this group is determined, essentially, by the fact that he has not belonged to it from the beginning, that he imports qualities into it, which do not and cannot stem from the group itself (Simmel 1950:235).

It has been my experience in Pakistan that when peripatetic artisans and especially entertainers visit a community, they are perceived, however briefly, as ordinary elements of that particular contextual interaction. When gone, they cease to exist - cognitively filed away to remote domains of memory to be re-called only when they reappear. Specific enquiries about peripatetics among sedentists seldom generate more than terse recollections of "bear or monkey leaders," "jugglers and acrobats," "sirkiwalla" (broom, basket weavers) and the like, often stated in semantically negative metaphors about such people as irresponsible ne'er-do-wells.

Throughout Pakistan, peripatetic artisans are occasionally part of jajam or vartan banji (system of reciprocal gift giving) transactions with members of client villages. On the other hand, nomadic entertainers might best be characterized as operating through what Woodburn (1983) has termed immediate return transactions and rarely have regular bonds with specific villages or individuals in the sedentary world. Interestingly, across the broad and often meticulously documented ethnographic record of village life in South Asia, peripatetic populations are seldom noted and then only as footnotes or single category references in demographic charts. Almost incomprehensible is my finding that professional ethnographers, many with several years experience in village India, respond in much the same

manner as their informants regarding the diverse groups of peripatetics that pass through "their" village each year. Throughout South Asia, from as few as six to as many as thirty different peripatetic groups annually visit practically every village. They provide a wide range of goods and services, then leave with cash or commodities as payment. Still, they don't figure into accounts of village economic organization. Could it be "here today, gone tomorrow" triggers an automatic response of indifference among investigators largely equipped with sedentary experience, values and prejudices? This oversight is further highlighted by the fact that South Asian literature and auto-biographies of village life are rich with accounts of diverse peripatetics in the lives of both urban and rural dwellers. This is also true of popular movies in both Pakistan and India.

On the other hand it should be kept in mind that peripatetic societies are closed systems where entry and opportunity for long-term participant observation and development of close rapport are extremely difficult for professional investigators. Even when admitted and "accepted," the daily/seasonal rigors, persistent processes of fission and fusion, and other characteristics associated with high levels of spatial mobility are extremely taxing for the most tenacious and experienced fieldworkers. Having lived full-time for nearly five years among peripatetics in Pakistan, I can assure aspiring ethnographers that there is absolutely nothing romantic about this sort of participant observation (Berland 1977, 1982, 1985a). Once acceptance/tolerance and rapport have been established the relationship of the semi-professional (anthropologist) among professional strangers is one of the most interesting and rewarding forms of ethnographic endeavor. Here the ethnographer and her/his informants share a strong bond as naturalists and both strive towards understanding, broadening and updating the accuracy of their knowledge about the diverse elements comprising their universe of activities through time and space.

Certainly, the peripatetics of my experience are keenly aware of their role as professional strangers, take pride in and value their freedom of mobility, wide range of cultural experience, and actively cultivate the mystique sedentists have about nomadic populations. As peregrinatic professionals they are skilled and sensitive observers, knowledgeable about diverse social systems, cultural habits and values among host populations. Often speaking five or more languages and numerous dialects, peripatetics have objective and detailed cognitive maps of their own, and others' places in a diverse universe. Here lies one of the great rewards of long-term participant observation among peripatetic specialists. In contrast to most sedentists, peripatetics have numerous and complex theories about the nature of other human and animal societies, including classificatory schemes, intensive efforts at comparative analyses and many of the same sorts of interrogative imperatives as the professional anthropologist. The key difference, brought home to me on a daily basis by my informants/friends, is the fact that among nomadic artisans and especially entertainers, the validity of their social and cultural observations and inferences is vital for day-to-day survival. Hence, social and ecocultural knowledge is as much a part of their primary capital resources as individual skills, animals and other cognitive and material assets.

### First Steps Towards Native Models

Along with the peripatetics of my experience in Pakistan, I share the belief that it is the inherent nature, or fate, of knowledge claims and inferences about social structure and organization to always be modestly muddled. While the emic-

etic paradigm profitably remains in the repertoire of both semi-professional and professional strangers, the validity of our knowledge claims is seldom systematically retested among the original population of interest. Here the peripatetic specialist has the advantage, for ethnographers, as semi-professional strangers - often on a short string - seldom have the resources or opportunity to review or retest the veracity of observations and conclusions among their original sample or population on a regular basis. To this extent, the ascription of ethnological metaphysics or native theories to given social systems largely remains in the area of "interpretations" rather than substantive theories, more what Kroeber (1963:102) termed " ... better and worse characterizations, more or less broad, congruent and compelling characterizations."

As an ethnographer involved in what Neisser (personal communication) has called the "great ecological conspiracy," my primary concern as a field investigator is with the construct validity of ethnological and psychological models or characterizations of human activities. For more than a decade I have tried to test the accuracy and sensitivity of social theories, my own as well as those of my informants, among not only my original sample, but other samples of peripatetic artisans and entertainers in Southwest Asia. While I have some experience among all the peripatetic populations in Pakistan, and some in North India, to date most of my experience has been among four societies: Qalandar (peripatetic animal trainers and leaders, magicians, acrobats, jugglers, and impersonators); Kanjar (nomadic makers of terracotta toys, carnival-type ride operators, singers, dancers, musicians and prostitutes); Jogi (peripatetic snake handlers and potion makers/peddlers); and Chungar (peregrinetic basket and broom weavers). My longest tenure has been four years fulltime among Qalandar and just over a year travelling with Kanjar, who I am presently studying from an ethnoarchaeological perspective regarding their division of labour and social organization of manufacturing activities (Berland 1985a,b). The "native" model of nomadic strategies/groups presented below in Figure 1, was derived from these two groups and has been systematically checked and rechecked before inclusion in its present form.

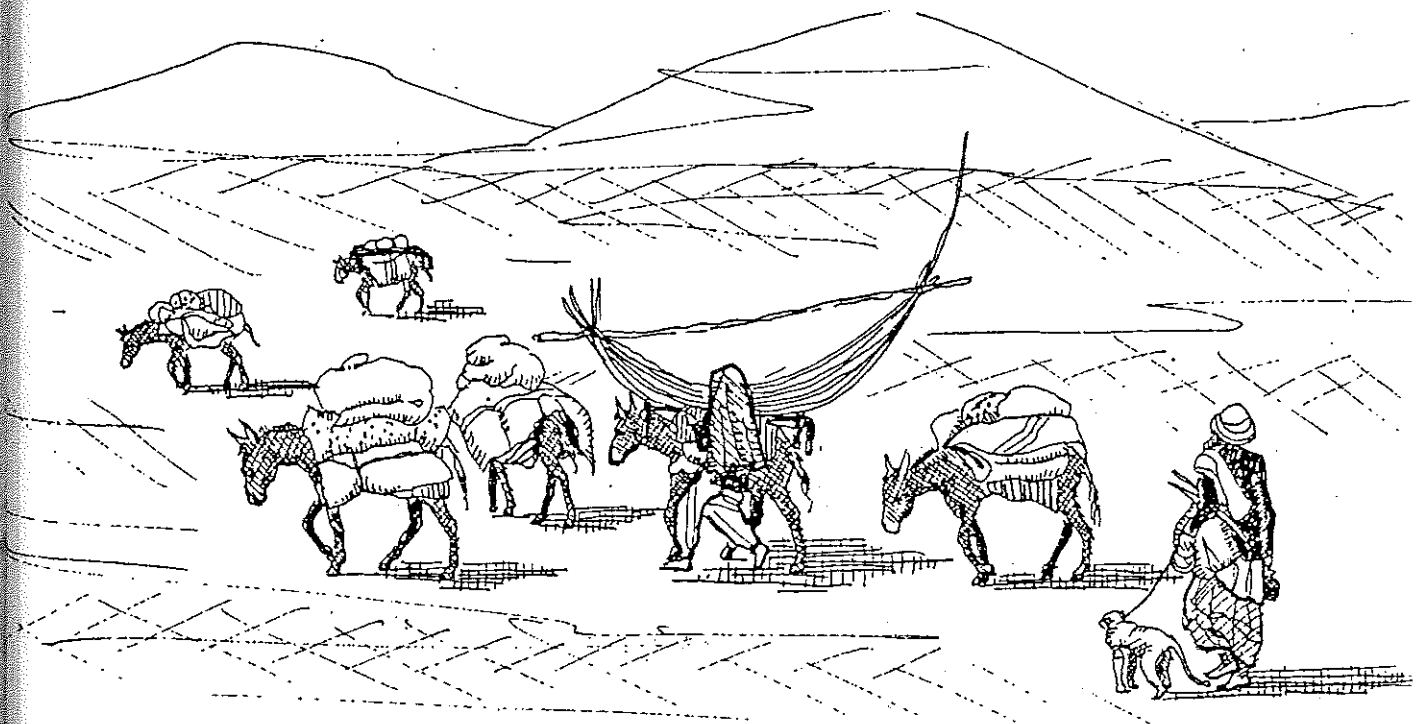
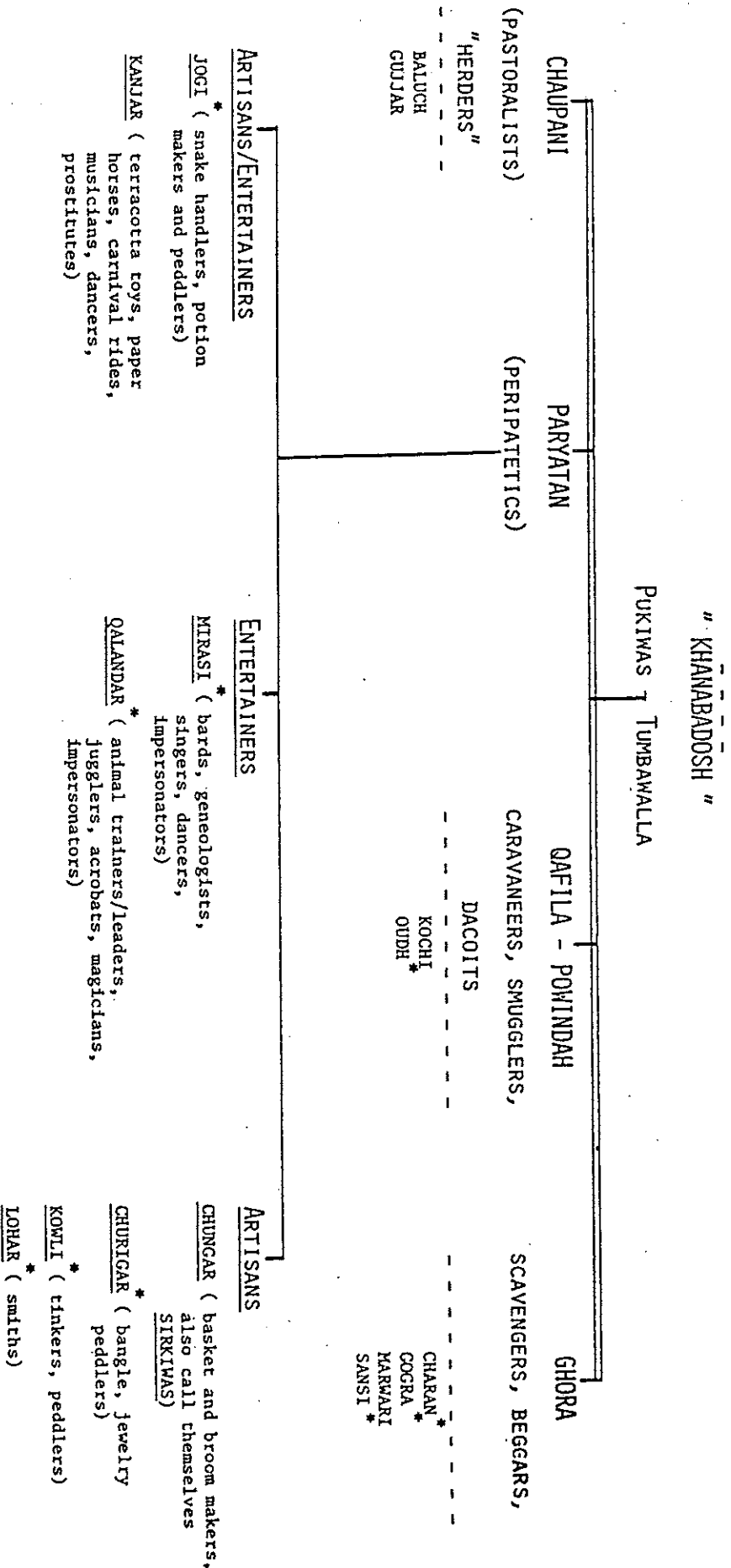


FIGURE 1

PERIPATETICS' MODEL OF NOMADIC POPULATIONS IN PAKISTAN \*\*



(\*) ALL HAVE BENDER-TYPE TENTS (1)

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS AMONG PERIPATETICS:

- A) QOM, NATION OR TRIBE; B) LANGUAGE OR ARGOT; C) STRICT ENDOGAMY  
 C) QOM COMPRISED OF DIVERSE ZAI/JATI, JATI ENDOGAMY PREFERRED; D) STRONG  
 SENSE OF BETWEEN TRIBE HIERARCHY. WITHIN QOM HIERARCHY BASED ON INDIVIDUAL  
 LEVELS OF KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCE AND SKILL; E) BASIC SOCIAL UNIT THE TENT-  
 FAMILY, TENTS ORGANIZED INTO FLUID GROUPS CALLED DEHRA.



### Peripatetics' Model of Nomadic Strategies in Pakistan

Since both Qalandar and Kanjar are professional entertainers they are acutely perceptive observers of "other cultures" and basically share the same classificatory scheme of nomadic strategies and groups for Pakistan. Older informants point out that there are fewer peripatetics since the 1947 partition of India and Pakistan and the closed borders between the two nations. Both societies used to travel as far as Delhi, but now are confined to movement within Pakistan. Where they miss the larger number of villages and great urban centers, they pine most for the services generated by Hindu pilgrims and the loss of Hindu holidays. Elsewhere I have documented these two peripatetic populations' elaborate and systematic models or theories about cognitive development and the role of social and cultural experience on patterns of psychological performance (Berland 1977, 1979b, 1981, 1982).

#### The Model in Context

My awareness of this model evolved across several years and two distinct phases of field work. Living and travelling with Qalandar we often saw, encountered or shared camp areas with other tent-dwelling nomads. Before I learned to recognize distinctive tent features<sup>1</sup>, camp configurations and other characteristics distinguishing diverse nomadic populations, I would ask about the nature of these different tumbawalla. Early in my field work answers were simple classificatory constructs: chaupani (herders, pastoralists); ghora (professional scavengers, beggars); powindah or qafila (caravaneers or smugglers). When pointing out tents of peripatetic artisans and entertainers, Qalandar would offer the term pukiwas and then go on with specific names such as Qalandar, Jogi, Kanjar, Chungar and the like. Noting my confusion and probably frustrated by my ignorance and persistent questioning, one evening an informant called me to sit in front of his tent while he and others marked out their cognitive map of nomadic populations (pukiwas or tumbawalla) in the dust with sticks. It was here that I first heard them refer to themselves as pārvātān, a classical Hindi term that best glosses as either peripatetic or peregrinatic. For Qalandar, pārvātān means thought-out or wise patterns of movement connected with specialized individual skills. It also distinguishes peripatetics from other tumbawalla because pārvātān are not jungli (uncivilized) nor dependent on livestock or charity for their food and freedom. In explaining the general nature of tumbawalla they explained that such lōk or people, such as powindah, are composed of Qōm, endogamous groups of pukiwas practicing a unique combination of specialized activities that requires spatial mobility.

Like a segment in an unending process of "rites of passage," these professional strangers realized their curious but inept semi-professional guest was not only genuinely interested in nomads but their (Qalandar) perceptions and feelings about other populations. From this point on I became chela (student) and ever since they continue to make extraordinary efforts towards directing my attention to the details of their everyday lives and how these activities contrast with other pukiwas.

Among peripatetics their use of Qōm best translates into the Hindi construct adivasi, close to the English concept of tribe and/or nation. Qōm are comprised of numerous zat or jati (castes). The basic social unit among Qōm is the tent (puki), structurally similar to our anthropological notion of a nuclear family, a female, her husband and unmarried children. Some Qōm, for example Kanjar and Jogi, may



often include extended kinsman such as in-laws or divorced children in their puki; however, space limitations often promote separate tents for tent members who have reached majority, married and thus create new puki or families. With exception of Kanjar and Jogi, actual ownership of physical tent structures (both bender-type and sirki) is corporate between wife and husband; however, when the chips are down and divorces carried out it is usually the female that gets the tent, or it is burned. Among Kanjar and Jogi, the tent and the most physical possessions are the exclusive property of females.

Two or more tents travelling together constitute a dehra. Perpetual processes of fission and fusion among tents contribute to extremely fluid membership among dehra, some puki changing affiliation as often as six or more times a year. Consequently, one frequently finds new dehra being formed and few dehra of long standing. Dehra membership depends on many factors including desires for kin affiliation and friendship. Despite individual desires or kin responsibilities and obligations, economic considerations related to the over-all number, level and distribution of individual skills, knowledge and experience, are always critical organizing factors. Income in either cash or kind is largely earned individually and redistributed among tent members or loaned to members of other puki. Among peripatetics, decisions regarding income distribution/utilization is usually in the hands of females. On the other hand, decisions regarding dehra affiliation, marriage and travel routes are corporate activities with deference to experience and knowledgeable individuals.

Dehra are basically acephalous; however, desire for affiliation/ membership is closely linked to individuals known and respected for their exceptional acumen, experience, technological and/or other social/ professional skills. Hence, a dehra is usually identified by that individual's name and members will reference themselves in this manner during their tenure in his group. Disputes are the most common cause of dehra reorganization or disintegration, agonistic parties simply moving out and either travelling alone or joining another dehra. All peripatetic Qöm have highly structured and elaborate legal systems similar to traditional panchayat and the Romani Kris (Berland 1983d; Gropper 1975; and Yoors 1947, 1967). The same factors contributing to dehra affiliation promote dehra avoidance. The peripatetics of my experience have an uncanny ability to see and perceive tents belonging to different individuals and dehra from great distances. Since fission and avoidance are the desired and most effective means of controlling conflicts among disputing parties, dehra seldom gather in the same camp area. There is also an economic factor here related to overloading a region with the same skills and/or services. The exception to this general rule are accidental encounters at night or under proscribed conditions related to marriages and legal settlements (Berland 1983d).

Peripatetic Qöm are hierarchally organized, each population considering themselves superior to other Qöm. While groups from diverse Qöm may occupy the same field or other camp area, strict territoriality is maintained among dehra. Individuals from diverse Qöm will use the same wells and among peripatetic Qöm may share tea, as long as each person provides his/her own cup. Among peripatetics, contacts among different Qöm members are usually restricted to rather formal, but polite and friendly, exchanges of social and ecocultural news about particular regions or neighborhoods. Also, skilled artisans or entertainers from diverse tribes may observe each other or sell their specialized experience and skill. For example, Qalandar frequently hire Mirasi (highly skilled impersonators, musicians and geneologists) to teach children skills as impersonators. Nowadays, the Kanjar seek services from peripatetic smiths for manufacture and repair of their carnival

ride equipment such as small merry-go-rounds, Ferris wheels and tent rehra (carts). During these visits, cigarettes may be exchanged; however, I have never witnessed the sharing of hookah (water pipe) or the same cot. Thus far in my research I have yet to see any peripatetic Qöm use cow, horse, mule or camel dung as fuel, each group restricting themselves to grass, twigs and wood for fires. Kanjar and Qalandar will allow peasant women and children and peripatetic ghora to collect dung from their camps. Where Qalandar keep and train dogs for entertainment routines, most peripatetic groups keep at least one dog to help maintain both puki and dehra security.

Sexual liaisons, for pleasure, are discouraged outside the tent, dehra and Qöm; however, the unspoken rule is one of opportunity and individual skill in not being caught. Qöm endogamy is taken very seriously and love (musthana) marriages or long-lasting relations outside the group are considered the most shameful of all individual conduct and is punishable by death or permanent Qöm expulsion. Exogamous sexual relations (other than prostitution) and individual attempts to seek assistance from or involve police in dehra matters bring shame on the entire Qöm and retribution against the offending individual(s) is swift and usually lethal. Polygyny and in-marriage is rare though cases may be found. Among the Qalandar, my "adopted" father's second wife was a Makranni Baloch thrown out of her husband's village for adultery. My fa fa br son married a Mirasi female who had been declared hookah-pani-bund (water-pipe-closed), outcasted because she was hafime (opium addict). Because all pārvātān are considered outside the zat or jati system, and are also perceived as pariahs, opportunities for in-marriage and out-marriage for males is extremely limited.

Among peripatetic Qöm, members trace ancestry back to some common but unknown ancestor, temporal references often associated with a prominent historical figure such as Sikandar (Alexander the Great), Mohammad, Jesus or the like; the reference often depending on the religion or allegiance of those making the enquiry. Both Qalandar and Kanjar joke that no person really knows who his/her father really is, let alone their real ancestors. The importance of these myths lies in their effort to maintain a tradition of great historical solidarity and continuity for each Qöm. Each tribe has elaborate systems of values and beliefs governing individual behavior and Qöm integrity. These ideals and actual behaviors are regulated on a daily basis through strong notions of sharm (shame) and izzet (pride/integrity/biradarana or spirit of brotherliness). Often Biradari and dehra are used synonymously to indicate the ideal of mutual support, understanding, tolerance, respect and cooperation. Closely linked to notions of shame, pride and brotherliness is their ideal of azadi, freedom for both individuals and Qöm from any form of political or religious tyranny (Berland 1983d). See Ahmed (1983) for similar ideological systems among pastoralists; Woodburn (1983); Lee (1979); and Silbilbauer (1981) for comparable analyses among gatherer-hunter populations, and among the "peripatetic-pastoral" Nandiwalla in India by Malhotra (1974) and Samarakkody and Malhotra (1982:23-41).

Peripatetics' perceptions of and knowledge about sedentary lifestyles is extensive, detailed and beyond all parameters of this paper. Suffice to say however, they are as explicit and detailed as the pastoral herder's or hunter's knowledge of the diverse elements and processes in their respective niches. Like most of the nomadic populations of Southwest Asia, peripatetics take pride in, and cherish freedom (azadi) of movement. Not surprisingly, while they understand sedentary and pastoral activities and the prerequisite patterns of social structure and organization

necessary for these survival strategies, they tend to view sedentists with considerable disdain. This is especially the case for peasant farmers whom they perceive as slaves to patches of dirt and/or piles of cow dung, mud and bricks- ever conscious however, that villagers and urban dwellers are the main source of their livelihood.

In closing my discussion on the context of the peripatetics' model of nomadic strategies in Pakistan I should emphasize that nomads seldom refer to themselves as khānābādōsh (people who carry their houses on their shoulders). Sedentists, however, tend to lump all spatially mobile populations under this ancient Persian construct in much the same manner as different translations of "Gypsy" are used for nomadic ethnic groups and societies in the Western World (Salo 1979 and Okely 1979). Both khānābādōsh and gypsy tend to carry negative, often fearful or scornful, connotations. The peripatetics of my experience don't mind. In fact, they take some pride in its meaning and derive solace from its ambiguity. As Qalandar would say: " ... it is hard to find a bulbul when the king only instructs his hunters to capture a bird."

#### A Broader Scope and Context for Nomad Studies

Like a script for a Whorfian melodrama, there remains a gap, if not a paradox, among ethnographic, ethnological and "native" characterizations and inferences about the role of nomadic activities in both the history and order of everyday contexts among world populations. Much of this confusion comes from characterizations and constructs - both native and ethnological - that lack substantive theoretical perspective and knowledge about the independent variables surrounding as well as interacting with the dependent variable of interest. The raw data of participant observation has no value until it is interpreted and tested for both its reliability and validity. Following Rivers' early lead, my field activities have been directed at how my informants theorize about human activities. In short, how do their particular patterns of experience "focus the direction of (their) attention," my own, and the fit, if any, with current theories of human social and cultural activities.

Several anecdotal asides illustrate my motivation and message regarding the value of collecting native models. For years and through countless manuscripts anthropologists have struggled to explain diverse manifestations of preferred patrilineal parallel cousin marriage. In pursuing this literature I have been, and remain puzzled by the fact that no one has apparently taken the time, or effort, to ask the individuals involved in such marriage arrangements why such and such a specific marriage was either considered and/or finally negotiated, then consummated. Both Qalandar and Kanjar prefer that first marriages be along parallel cousin lines. In the case of Qalandar their answer is unanimous " ... we know and will have to live longest with our siblings. This marriage symbolizes our desire to maintain biradarana with our brothers and sisters." Among Kanjar on the other hand, brideprice is extremely costly and they prefer this marriage pattern as part of an exchange among siblings in order to save money, create an alliance and broader "line of credit" for subsequent marriages.

In my own domain of psychological anthropology and cross-cultural psychology, it remains common for investigators to make descriptive statements to the effect that "x" tribe: " ... live in a homogeneous physical and social environment." Homogeneous to whom ... the investigator or the members of that society? It took me three years of full-time participation observation research and many hours of

Careful instruction from patient Qalandar before I learned to accurately identify different forms of bender and sirki tents among peripatetic Qōm in Pakistan. Among Qalandar and Kanjar I still have difficulty identifying individual tents in each dehra. While they occasionally make mistakes they are correct most of the time - despite the fact that tents are constantly undergoing repair work. The straightforward observation that peripatetics distinguish many tent forms from considerable distances is an ethnographic fact. However, the practice of this activity on a daily basis suggested this was, and is, an important skill and, as I have indicated above, is vital information about relations among individuals, avoidance and approach activities.

What, who, when, where, how and why are the interrogative springboards for all social science endeavors and as all fieldworkers have learned, questions like "why" or others touching personal domains, often border on thresholds of impertinence and/or insult. By the same token, they often generate conflicting, ambiguous or contextually contradictory responses from the same individual or group. Where a growing number of studies focus on increasingly narrow dependent variables, ambiguity and contradictory activities tend to muddle neat models and detract from the validity and reliability of knowledge claims. The literature on "culture contact" and "innovation/independent invention" remains void of the likely role that peripatetics may play in these processes. While contradictions, contextual specificity and flexibility, and ambiguity are anathema to Ph.D. candidates, their committees and most editors, they are the exciting stuff of everyday life in the communities of ethnographic field experience.

Over the past decade we have witnessed the accumulation of substantive research based on long-term participant observation that supports the "impertinent" fact - long overlooked in mainstream anthropology - that peripatetic populations are distinct societies exploiting a long-standing and viable niche. Similarly, these spatially mobile specialists are distinct, peripheral and integral elements in the overall design of most complex social systems. A review of this growing evidence is beyond the scope of this paper but excellent summaries are available in (Groppe 1975; Misra and Malhotra 1982; Okely 1983; Rehfish 1975; Salo 1979; and Rao 1985a, 1985b). Sharon Gmelch (Union College) is currently reviewing this record for Annual Reviews in Anthropology, a herculean but much needed task. This sketch of a "native" model of nomadic strategies and populations in Pakistan is offered as partial evidence of the reliability and validity of this new perspective on nomadism, and as a lead for understanding better the structure and organization of sedentary and many pastoral populations.

Since I am constantly checking and reviewing my summaries and conclusions among the peripatetics of my sample populations in Pakistan, they would concur with me that "their model," like all cultural characterizations, is only valid until further notice - it is sketched in dust, not stone. In fact, in my first illustration of their model (Berland 1983c), Qalandar argued that Marwari were pāryātān or peripatetics. Last Fall (1984-1985) in reviewing the diagram among the same individuals, they informed me that things had changed and they now would classify Marwari as ghora (see Figure 1). Why? " ... we were on good terms with them and they sold us oil and combs at fair prices. Now they think they are raiputs and charge too much money ... they are haramzada ghora (bastard beggars)." Others argued that while Marwari had indeed become bastards and cheats, they were still peripatetics and not beggars/scavengers. Sitting there with them while they argued and fought about the current status of Marwari I thought about Walt Whitman's reply when accused of contradicting himself: " ... Do I contradict myself? Very

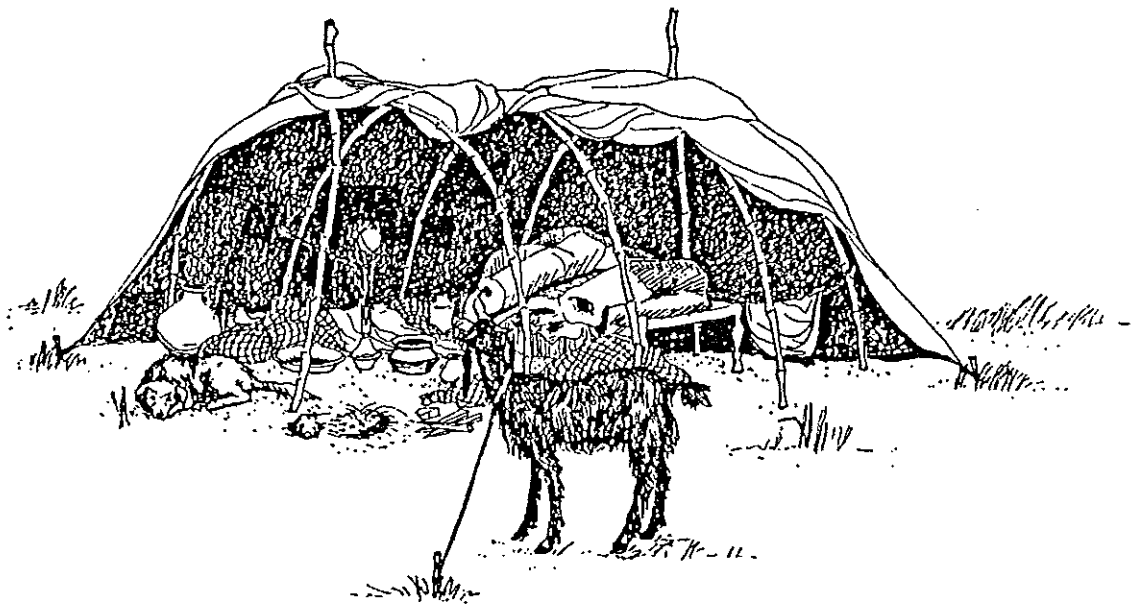
well then I contradict myself, ... I am large, I contain multitudes."

#### Acknowledgements and Notes

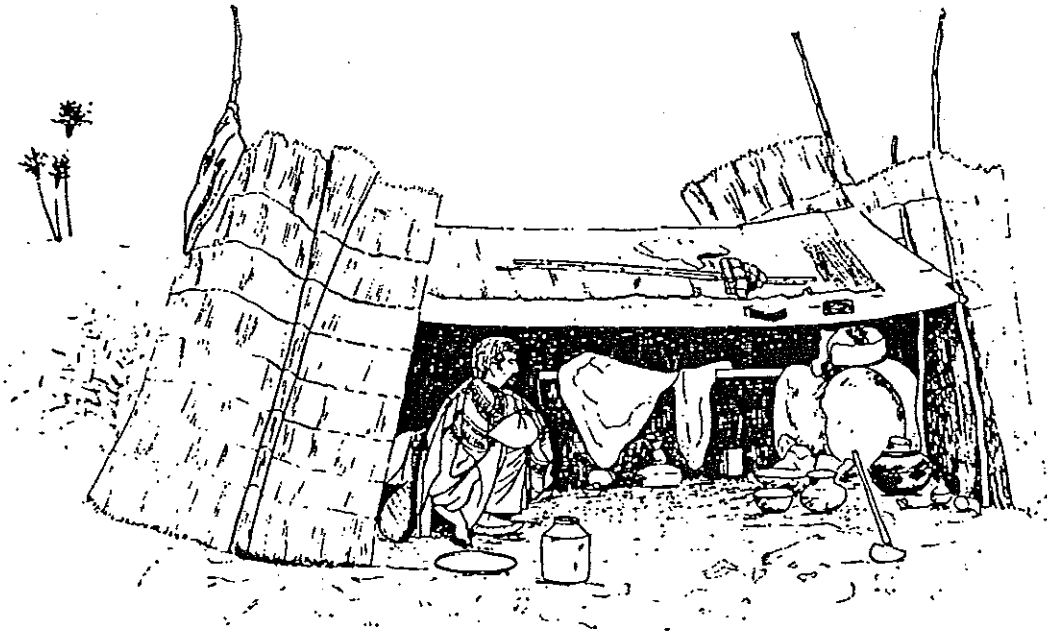
The research summarized in this paper is based on fieldwork among peripatetic artisans and entertainers from 1971-1973, with follow-up studies in 1979, 1980, 1982-1983, 1984-1985, as part of a larger, long term study of the social organization of child development among spatially mobile specialists in Pakistan. The original investigation was funded by the United States Institute of Mental Health. Subsequent field trips were partially supported through Fulbright-Hays (C.I.E.S.) awards and the generous cooperation of Quaid-I-Azam University in Islamabad, the Ford Foundation in Pakistan, Intercultural Research, Japan; and the Tribal Research Centre, Tamil University, Uthagamandalam, India. The International Symposium on Peripatetic Societies would not have been possible without the generous support of the I.U.A.E.S. Commission on Nomadic Peoples and the American Anthropological Association. Special thanks are renewed to the people and Government of Pakistan. I wish also to take this opportunity to extend heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Mohammad A. Rauf (Professor of Anthropology and Dean of Social Sciences, Quaid-I-Azam University), Dr. P.K. Misra (Head, Department of Anthropology, Northeastern Hill University, Shullong, India) and Dr. Philip Carl Salzman (Department of Anthropology, McGill University, Canada) for their encouragement, support and friendship.

1. Depending on population involved and seasonality, one finds many tent forms in Pakistan. Styles ranging from diverse types of pup-tents through single-pole, to variations on barrel-vaulted designs such as the Afghan and Persian black-tent designs. Among Pārvātān, there are two basic designs: a) the multi-ribbed, barrel-vaulted, patchwork cloth or classic bender-type is the most common. Among Kanjar and Chungar we find the less common Sirki or munj grass structure. Examples of each are illustrated below.

a) BENDER-TENT. Frame covered with layers of cloth often stitched in quilt-like form (from Berland 1982:78).



b) SIRKI TENT. Stick/pole frame wrapped with woven "mats" of munj grass and reeds.



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