

NOMADISM AND THE FRONTIERS OF THE STATE

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1. Nomadism and the classification of social groups

In my earlier work on the Bakkarwal, a nomadic pastoral group that migrates from the Jammu region into the Kashmir Valley every summer, I examined the particular difficulties they have faced during the ongoing insurgency in Kashmir. In this article, I look at certain questions posed by other writings on nomadism in order to aid a more detailed examination of the term 'nomadism' itself. This term, once subjected to comparison, seems difficult to isolate in respect of any inherent features that are specific to it. In fact, writing on the socio-anthropological idea or concept of nomadism often describes the fuzziness of the term and the difficulty in coming up with a distinct category of nomadism because of the possibility that this form of classification might impede profitable analysis of the culture and peoples who practice something like nomadism.

Taking up this dilemma, Dyson-Hudson proposes an analytical model that subsumes the term 'nomadism' under the broader classification of 'pastoralism,' arguing that pastoralism is an economic mode that involves both a 'herding model' and a 'spatial mobility model'. The question returns, however, if we concern ourselves with the value of nomadism as a term, although exactly why one term or the other of the broader pairing 'nomadic pastoralism' needs to be privileged remains unclear in such work (cited in Salzman 1980).

In fact, many scholars suggest that part of the reason that nomads have been written about so much is because of a certain mystique (Khazanov 1984, Asad 1978) and attractiveness of their itinerant way of life for sedentary populations, which seems to draw some of us to those without a fixed address, marking them out as a people who stand out from the sedentary residents of towns and villages locking their homes to visit their temples and coming back again.² Another argument that follows from this is that the nomad is disappearing and that the loss of this fabled form of life deserves to be documented (Salzman 1980).³ However, there seems to be a danger in treating the nomad as a pre-given unit (either as unit of movement or as a people about to 'go extinct'). As Dyson Hudson comments:

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² This could also apply to the history of relations between Roma and settled populations in Europe (cf. fears of 'children running off with the Gypsies'), though of course most Roma are now settled.

³ The San in Botswana would presumably be a contemporary case, given the efforts of a non-San government to make them settle down.

...if movement is treated as an absolute quality of particular human groups, rather than being relative and dependent on other factors, then our most profitable questions about spatial mobility are pre-empted, we too easily settle for categories that do not so much explain as explain away the realities of nomadic behaviour. (cited in Salzman 1980)

Indeed, as Spooner (1973) concludes, there are no features of culture or social organization that are universal to all nomads or even that are found exclusively among nomads. The question then arises as to why nomads—peripatetics, hunters-gatherers, foragers, entertainers, acrobats, travelling salesmen and a host of other communities who practice spatial mobility as a somewhat permanent and often ‘traditional’ lifestyle for reasons of sustenance—continue to be a topic of discussion and some academic scrutiny. Is it perhaps that the term ‘nomad’ continues to be relevant because the particularism of constant mobility is used by many peoples as a unique cultural marker, that is, because nomads use mobility to distinguish themselves from others?

Focusing on the factors underlying social, economic and political equality among nomads, Asad (1978) dismisses both nomadic movement and pastoral production as the determining factors with which to classify nomads. He insists on the absence of accumulation (pastoralists can only grow their herds according to the carrying capacity of their pastures) and argues for production mainly for their own consumption as the most important feature of nomads, owing to which ‘there cannot be an essential pastoral nomadic society’. The nature of their social life, in his view, is best determined by looking at the total system and at their historically specific role in larger economic systems, ‘wherein it becomes less important to say that people are nomads than to say they or someone else controls their territory, less important that they are pastoralists than to say who owns the animals and whether the production is for a market or subsistence.’ For Asad, the idea of subsistence also makes possible independence from market-based evaluations of wealth—in fact he seems to point to a particular formula within nomadic-pastoral economies that distinguishes them from other economies: the idea of the forms of ownership of animals and of territory.

We find a particular variation of this formula in the works of anthropologists and historians focused on the Eurasian steppes. Ernest Gellner (cited in Khazanov 1984) noted that the rough formula which became widely accepted among Soviet ethnographers for the social organization of nomads ran as follows: ‘Communal ownership of pasture, private ownership of herds’. He pointed out that the long, persistent and fascinating debate among Soviet ethnographers was over the issue of land tenure among nomads, not the ownership of animals: ‘They contended that land was being monopolized by one class within nomadic society. The private, non-communal ownership of herds was not disputed, even for the past, as far back as the first millennium BC’ (cited in Khazanov 1984). Gellner argues further that this form of liminality between communal and private ownership

means that nomadism cannot be categorized easily as either a subsistence-based or an accumulative form of economy. Moreover, for Gellner the private ownership of herds does not hasten the integration of a nomadic economy into a broader market system (as is the case for Asad), but is also associated with a particular positive value – that is, the institutionalized connection with its immediate ecology, meaning that there is not just an attempt to balance extraction and production linked to that ecology.

2. The ending of subsistence and ritual sacrifice

Nomadic societies are known to possess a culture that is widely diffused and encapsulated in its members, their social stratification being ephemeral and weak, their political formations fragile and elusive. Even if on occasion they grow into something bigger, this leads to no permanent and irreversible structural changes in their society. As Tolybekov notes:

Every illiterate nomadic Kazakh, like all nomads of the world, was in the 15th to the 18th centuries simultaneously a shepherd and a soldier, an orator and a historian, poet and singer. All national wisdom, assembled by the ages, existed only in oral form. (cited in Khazanov 1984)

This variable, with its institutionalized values, itself has many co-ordinates. For example, Berland (2003) notes how peripatetic communities are experts at cultivating a certain secrecy in order to evade the scrutiny of officialdom and to access resources, while Gardner (2003) elaborates on how nomads use mobility to avoid conflict and move on. Mobility also allows for a diversification of practices to be combined alongside herding. These might range from the Raika and Rabari pastoralists in Rajasthan doubling up as blacksmiths to nomads abetting the smuggling of banned products across international boundaries, as seen in the poppy trade in Afghanistan.

There is, however, another peculiar aspect of nomadism that marks it out as singular—its capacity for a certain destructiveness that is part of the process of nomadic production. This is what Gellner (*ibid.*) and Khazanov (*ibid.*) describe as a certain capacity for ‘partibility’ by which they are able to part with things and move on. This initial stimulus to movement seems to be a seed of distinction, which by itself remains unclarified.

At this level of the nomadic function, we in fact see different variables of the institutionalized values that nomads are known to possess across the board: resilience, pliability, partibility, dispersal, evasion (usually emphasized), and also erasure, a certain indiscernibility of their archaeological traces Ratnagar (2004). In fact it is these institutionalized values that seem to distinguish nomadism from a purely subsistence type of economy (as described by Asad, 1978). The maintenance of a subsistence form of life seems to require functions other than the defence of

territory or limitations on the numbers of animals exchanged under market conditions – that is, as I argued in the conclusion to the previous section, it requires a particular positive value associated with ecology.

The following example will elucidate this point. In 2012-13 I conducted doctoral fieldwork in Warwan, Indian Kashmir, among the nomadic Bakkarwal and sedentary Warwanis. The Bakkarwal, like so many non-sedentary populations I encountered through different periods of fieldwork in different parts of the country, seem to have (or at least to have had) a special place in the discourse of sedentary populations. In a sense, the mystique that draws so many writers to write about nomads is also part of the vocabulary that sedentary populations use in their periodic encounters with these people.

For the Warwanis, the annual journey of the Bakkarwal to Warwan was something to look forward to, an occasion even to rejoice: *'Unse is sunsaan jaghan main raunak aati thi'* ('They brought radiance to this isolated gloomy land'), as a Warwani woman once said to me. For the Warwanis, the arrival of the Bakkarwal in their cold forbidding valley would herald the coming of good weather and sunny blue skies, and their migration back again would signal the end of summer, and the beginning of the rain and snow and a kind of hibernation. As the ice would melt and the first few blades of grass would sprout, groups of children would lie in restless anticipation, waiting to spot the first trail of sheep and goats trickling down the steep mountain slopes, ringing with the familiar whistle and stride of the tall robust Bakkarwal – their summer friends who returned to Warwan year after year after year. The first sightings were met with much joy: Warwani children would run along with the herd together with Bakkarwal children, kicking up even more dust along the trail, whistling and shouting, as the elders would come out of their homes and smile. Both groups described how in the past the occasion would be met by killing and eating a goat from among the Bakkarwal's herd. In fact from their accounts it would seem that to a great extent the killing of goats in the past was related to ritual occasions and functions.

However, this kind of ritualistic relationship between the Bakkarwal and Warwanis seemingly began to shift very significantly during this time, which was one of insurgency in Kashmir, as Warwan was a kind of wild untamed frontier space used by the militants to hide away, given that the Indian army has only come to Warwan quite recently. In many ways, it may be said that the process of the state's encroachment on Warwan was a reaction to the advent of the insurgency, as ignoring Warwan was no longer possible, in spite of its small population and modest impact on vote-bank politics. The impact of the insurgency was such that this otherwise 'minor' region eventually came under the gaze of the state and has gradually started to be connected to the 'outside world'. The Warwanis are aware of this misrecognition. They have suffered long hard years of,

first, living under fear of the insurgency, and then experiencing the heavy hand of the army, as well as mainstream Kashmiri politics. To counter this, they are gradually inching towards a hard-fought recognition of their needs by negotiating with the state in ways the latter can scarcely ignore, connected with the militancy. The Warwanis have found the trigger, and this time the state is standing in rapt attention. As an elite Warwani woman from Inshan said: ‘Militancy came, then the army came, and then came development. It is only because of militancy that the state looked towards us. This much we have understood now.’

In an unfortunate turn of events, the very erosion of the Bakkarwal’s modes of movement highlights the irreducibility of forms of mobility to the sustenance of their form of life. Depending on the migratory route employed⁴ migration may take up to two months, during which time they camp at various sites and altitudes en route to the final pasture – thus it is important to understand that the migratory corridor is as important for their livelihood as the final pasture. Factors such as cold weather require them to stop and wait for the right window of opportunity before gradually moving camp.

With the increasing establishment of roads and residential areas, the Bakkarwal are now being pushed into migrating through dangerous and congested tunnels and roads with heavy traffic and nervous tension, because of which the Bakkarwal incur heavy losses each year. The navigation through bottlenecks such as the Jawahar Tunnel that connects Jammu to Kashmir ends up in a large number of accidents for the Bakkarwal, resulting not only in the deaths of their animals, but also in the loss of the lives and limbs of some nomads. On top of this they have to tolerate abuse from both the traffic police and the forest authorities, who, like settled people generally, are increasingly viewing their migration as an indulgence. The fencing off of forest land on the one hand and the growing number of settled populations on the other is squeezing the Bakkarwal from both sides. Moreover, new high-altitude roads are often constructed on the migratory corridors and routes established by the Bakkarwal, who are then unable to claim their traditional rights to these passages.

Such problems of mobility seem to circumscribe the difficulties in seeing nomadism as reducible to a functional corollary of pastoralism. In fact the precise problem I encounter in describing nomadic institutionalized values (i.e. partibility, evasion, erasure etc.) purely in terms of subsistence – whether this is thought of purely as an economic function or within the mode of a particular ritualistic economy – is that such descriptions fail to account entirely for the particular role these values play in moments of political crisis.

⁴ There is already a considerable literature that describes the complexity of the arrangement of nomadic-pastoral routes, which itself remains a subject for future research.

Furthermore, as described above, the general depletion of the Bakkarwal's relations with sedentary peoples along their migration routes has further exacerbated this situation. This has led members of the community, particularly those who have emerged as leaders in the last few decades, to look for measures to secure their forms of livelihood while simultaneously highlighting a range of institutionalized values that are necessary to describe nomads outside the understanding of them as a community based on a subsistence economy.

3. State law and the nomadic community

In the last few decades the Bakkarwal community has seen a degree of political mobilization, with attempts to secure their rights within the state, particularly through the voices of a small number of young and educated leaders. Among the possible reforms they have considered is the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (FRA). Since its successful tabling and passage, the FRA has seen a variety of political applications across states in India. and has in many cases been successful in securing the livelihoods of those who are reliant on the forests. This is particularly the case in light of the eviction of traditional 'forest-dwellers' when their forms of livelihood are classified as 'encroachments' on forest land marked out as reserved or forest sanctuaries. The access of a community to the benefits accruing from this act is mediated by two possible categories of inclusion within it: 'Scheduled Tribe' and 'Other Forest Dweller'.⁵

Inclusion under the category of 'Scheduled Tribe' allows the community a certain degree of autonomy over the process of deciding what acts might constitute 'encroachments' on forest land and what might be seen as maintaining or 'preserving' the balance of ecology in the forest. This autonomy is itself based on guarantees afforded by the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, Article 244, Part X, on 'autonomous areas or tribal areas'. Inclusion under the 'Other Forest Dweller' category, on the other hand, requires the setting up of a *gram sabha* under the following conditions defined within the act:

'Gram Sabha' means a village assembly which shall consist of all adult members of a village and in case of States having no Panchayats, Padas, Tolas and other traditional village institutions and elected village committees, with full and unrestricted participation of women. (Forest Rights Act, 2006)

⁵ Forest Rights Act, 2006, <https://tribal.nic.in/FRA/data/FRARulesBook.pdf>. Accessed 25th April 2017.

The term ‘nomadic’ appears five times within the Act, always as a description of a mode of economy or subsistence specific to the group. For example, the second section of the Act, which discusses the kinds of forest-based livelihood activities it is looking to secure, places nomadic activities among:

other community rights of uses or entitlements such as fish and other products of water bodies, grazing (both settled or transhumant) and traditional seasonal resource access of nomadic or pastoralist communities. (Forest Rights Act, 2006)⁶

Discussion of the possibility of ensuring greater autonomy for Bakkarwal by means of this Act was particularly visible this year in the nationally reported interviews of Bakkarwal and Gujjar leaders following what has been largely described in the media as ‘The Kathua Rape Case’.⁷ While the details of the case have been reported in the news internationally and are easily accessible, certain aspects of it have generally escaped public scrutiny. Most significant here is the refusal of the village – to which the accused in the case belonged – to allow the girl’s family to use the burial ground, outside which they were camping, to perform the final rites for the victim. This was a further grotesque reminder of the fact that the ritualistic relationship that nomads shared with settled villagers has almost ceased to exist, much like the burial ground, where the burial of the little girl was denied to the Bakkarwal. She now lies buried on a hill in the forest a few miles away.

Following the case, and following the refusal of any possibility of political representation, several of the young and educated from the community have taken to attempting to find ways to secure the Bakkarwal their rights. This incident has also served as a means for the Gujjars, another group of nomads, and the Bakkarwal to voice their discontent over the treatment of nomadic peoples by the settled populations of Jammu and Kashmir. The FRA has been suggested on many occasions as one such route. However, the difficulties faced by the community have largely concerned how the Act should be interpreted and how the community should best be represented. Inclusion under the category of ‘Other Forest Dweller’ creates the risk that the Bakkarwal might be represented by members of villages with whom their relations might have been eroded to a greater or a lesser degree. Even assuming that the *gram sabha* will itself be constituted entirely from within

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ For example: ‘Kathua rape case: a past full of conflict and discrimination in Jammu and Kashmir led to the horrific crime’, Sameer Yair, *Indian Express*, April 15, 2018. See <https://www.firstpost.com/india/kathua-rape-case-a-past-full-of-conflict-and-discrimination-in-jammu-and-kashmir-led-to-this-horrific-crime-4429665.html>, accessed 15 April 2018.

the community, the Act provides that any arbitration necessitated by an issue remaining unresolved by the *gram sabha*⁸ will pass to the higher administration at the district and state levels.

On the other hand, the community is also recognized under the constitution as a Scheduled Tribe (ST), thus making it possible for it to access the Act under this category as well. However, while this may allow a greater degree of autonomy in possible arbitrations, for the community the ST category has no specific provision securing the routes the Bakkarwal have to take to reach even their final pastures, even though they are defined as the community's resources under this Act.

In fact it would seem that the security of the Bakkarwal economy is rendered quite difficult because the function of mobility that is inherent in the tribe is not protected.⁹ This also leads us to a recurrent contradiction in writing about nomads, which often argues for the preservation of nomadic forms of subsistence by increasing the freedom granted by the state to allow them to continue to practice their traditional ways of life. However, in line with Gellner (ibid.), I argue that the preservation of nomadism's ritualistic functions fails to account entirely for the kinds of values a variable like nomadism draws from its surrounding ecology. The legal measures that might be envisaged as allowing some form of stability to return to the lives of Kashmir's nomads would require a far more elaborate consideration of how legislation on common resources is organized. Nonetheless the example described in this section shows that, for the Bakkarwal, mobility is a necessary condition for the perpetuation of their form of existence.

4. The 'avoidance of the state' thesis

The relationship between a peripatetic lifestyle and nomads' propensity to avoid the state is well documented. If we look at the work of Scott (2009), we find that mobility as a working productive variable happens precisely at moments of political crisis. Usually what enables this mobility is the possibilities afforded by a particularly difficult ecological zone that, in the broadest sense, can be and has been described in various scholarly writings as a frontier.

The case of the Rajputs in Rajasthan who shrugged off their nomadic past and resorted to the creation of a mythical lineage as a substitute identity in order to gain strategic state power and esteem is instructive here. In her work on the relationship between nomadism and state formation in Rajasthan (2016), Tanuja Kothiyal argues that the emergence of the Rajput state requires a myth

⁸ While literature on the problems of the working of *gram sabhas* constituted by the FRA is still in the process of emerging, Vivek Vyas's paper, on the 'State Implementation of Forest Rights in Rajasthan', written for a project studying 'The Operatisation of the FRA', provides considerable insights into the matter. See https://dlc.dlib.indiana.edu/dlc/bitstream/handle/10535/4270/Rajasthan_Status_Paper.pdf?sequence=1, accessed 20 April 2018.

⁹ For more details on the complexities of nomadic route organization, see Chakravarty 1996.

that enables their relations with a more dispersed and mobile form of society to be downplayed. However, within the deeper regions of the Thar Desert there existed ambulatory populations that did not place a high political value on the idea of descent from a common ancestor, nor did they view this ancestry as a marker of their political distinction. It remains to be asked, following such insight, whether this function of mobility in relation to a state or the avoidance of the state's formations is still maintained within the frontier once the state forms strategies to approach the frontier, or when the frontier appears within its vision.

In fact, during the whole period of the insurgency in Kashmir, the movement of the Bakkarwal was drawn directly into opposition to the state and into ways of avoiding, as much as possible, both the state and the militant groups that often occupied areas that intersected with nomadic routes, that is, areas that were difficult for the state's forces to access.

We might see valuable inflections of this relationship between the state and the nomads in the fact that, from the very beginning, the Bakkarwal, like other nomadic-type populations, were also viewed by the state for their ability to access resources found only in difficult and remote terrain. Ratnagar (2017) has pointed to the ancient relations with nomads in what is today the Afghan region, which revolved around the nomads' almost exclusive ability to access the lapis lazuli quarries at very high altitudes. This in turn was because these quarries do not necessitate a very long detour from a route to some of the best summer grazing in Afghanistan.

Similarly the Bakkarwal were seen as useful to the state because of their access to certain medicinal herbs, high altitude routes and, in the past few decades, their acting as guides and spies for the army. Increasingly today the Bakkarwal find use and value in using their horses to take pilgrims to mountain shrines such as Vaishno Devi and Amarnath. In this sense, and following their apparent initial migration in the mid-nineteenth century to Kashmir from Swat and Kohistan in Pakistan, the Bakkarwal gained status and currency within the independent state in India, often due to the nature of their relations with it. Although I cannot go into details here, one might point out how this relationship was also extended during the period of militancy in Kashmir, which continued to allow the Bakkarwal access to their traditional pastures, past military checkpoints.

It is important to note here that the Bakkarwal continued their migrations up and down the Pir Panjals and Himalayas in spite of the daunting odds imposed by the intensive insurgency of the 1990s and early 2000s, not for no good reason, but most significantly because pastoralism continued to offer them the highest returns to labour. This ability to switch between forms of production and types of division of labour (male-female) allowed them to 'find routes' through this difficult period.

And yet the basic contradiction I faced in fieldwork was the fact that the increasing encroachment of the state had also necessitated certain basic forms of identification and representation that the Bakkarwal have adopted as their own, despite their continued avoidance of the state. Increasingly for the Bakkarwal, political power needs to be wielded through forms of representation within democracy. The most significant marker of this is their inclusion within state education schemes. Institutionalized values notwithstanding, among the Bakkarwal, who were classified as a Scheduled Tribe in 1991, as among a growing number of pastoralists across the world, such as the Changpa in Ladakh and the Raika in Rajasthan, as well as the Evenki and Yakut in Siberia, it is perhaps when they are provided with education – that is, for the sake of the futures of their children – that they seem to begin to sedentarize in large numbers.

Like other nomadic groups, in the face of state programs such as ‘mobile schools’ (a teacher reaches the valley of the final pastures of a group of Bakkarwal from his winter school area and is assigned a tent and a mat to run a school in the summer migration areas of the group), the Bakkarwal find themselves typecast in an essentializing discourse in which their way of life is deemed no longer suitable to the contemporary requirements of a rapidly modernizing state. Indeed, they increasingly compare themselves unfavourably to the Warwanis, with whom their relationship and status have altogether been transformed in recent decades, when every summer the Warwanis would welcome the Bakkarwal with their stories from the outside world, their vitality, craft, food and pageantry.

5. The frontiers beyond the state

The notions of both a subsistence economy and avoidance of the state in particular frontier zones thus seem insufficient to determine the institutionalized values accruing to nomadic ways of life, though these may be a necessary condition for the definition of the ‘nomadic-pastoralism’ mentioned earlier. The question of why education is able to produce this peculiar stagnation is itself unclear and calls for further investigation. Although I do not have the space to substantiate this point fully in the Bakkarwal case, I would add that education has also had particular effects on the way they see their political status.

The question of the introduction of state formation into a frontier zone is a particularly curious one. In the case of the Bakkarwal, their relationship to territory has been strangely inverted. Rather than losing their traditional pasture land directly due to the interventions of the state, it seems that they are being pushed increasingly into a diminishing frontier zone. And what seems to be contested at this moment is precisely not their ability to forego a surplus, nor entirely their ability to avoid the state.

In the case of Warwan, the period of the insurgency has also been coterminous with a loss of status for the Bakkarwal, both in terms of their relations with those around them (an example of which is the interaction of the Bakkarwal with the forest guards on their summer route, as opposed to the military checkpoint) and at the level of the influence of their representation in the state. Regarding the latter, we can cite the capacity of nomads to secure certain specific resources for the state and their role as peripatetics, such as in extracting medicinal herbs or facilitating pilgrimage and tourism. The insurgency is now becoming a growing threat to the population, as well as a threat to the state.

What seems important to describe here is the fact that certain aspects of nomadism – or of what we have described previously as encompassing nomadic institutionalized values such as partibility and evasion – seem to be employed by these groups specifically both to retain an ability to avoid the state and to pose a threat to it. It would seem (at least speculatively, although this is a point I would like to elaborate on elsewhere) that what we have described as a frontier – that is, either as a zone that produces an economy of subsistence and ritual sacrifice, or as one that permits the way of life of a mobile population and allows it to avoid the forms of state-based sedentarization – also allows a threat to be posed to the state at particular spatio-temporal moments because of the very nature of this type of mobility. This is not to argue simply that the insurgency is taking the place of the Bakkarwal as a threat to the state, but rather that, while a description of the value of the nomad as a concept or idea does often require a particular mode of economy or a particular relation to mobility, these prove insufficient to assert the existence of the nomad as an idea.

Consider again the example of education. Increasingly, members of ‘militant groups’ in Kashmir are young people who have often had technical training or have served a long period within the Indian education system. The process of education, far from impeding the growth of militancy in the valley, seemed to provide it with new modes of political action (although I am not attempting to make any moral judgement here about the political value of that action). The militant seems better able to integrate the modes of specialization imposed by education and to take up these new economies. In a sense he is able to incorporate into himself, as with many conventional nomadic groups, all the functions performed by any member of the group (Khazanov 1984).

How is it, then, that certain institutional values of nomadism reappear in the case of militancy, despite the fact the these groups are not necessarily nomadic in terms of their economy if we are to define nomadism as lying within the ambit of a pastoral economy? Which is not to say that comparisons with the economies of so-called militant groups and the economies of pastoralists in other parts of the world when faced with modern state intervention do not deserve attention (thieving, Thugees, guerrilla fighters etc.). That is, in certain ways militant groups in Kashmir seem

to embody a form of nomadic polity that persists in spite of the absence of a pastoralist economy. On the other side of the coin, we find nomadic groups like the Bakkarwal who are enduring considerable difficulties in their attempts to sustain their pastoral economy because its mobile aspect has been interrupted.

We might ask, finally, in the light of these indications of the possible sedentarization of a nomadic form of life, how these specific institutionalized values continue to appear at all within the same ecological zone. In most cases of this sort, this ability to produce such specific institutionalized values also seems related to their appearance in specific locations (although I think we might broaden the term 'location' from meaning simply 'place'). We see particular zones where the relationship to ecology as a mode of subsistence or sustenance is persistently resisted in favour of continuing contestation over the status afforded by a form of territory or an ecology. In particular, these zones are ones that the state usually describes as wasteland—deserts and mountains, scrub and vast unconquerable plains, in which we tend to ascribe a certain value to the peoples living in them. These places also seem to produce in people a relationship with their ecology by which their 'land' is valued as more than merely sustaining them by being productive of their political identity.

We might say, following writers like Uberoi and Khazanov, but also following the theories of nomadism in the work of ibn Khaldoun that both Gellner and Khazanov rely on so heavily, that there are particular frontier zones that enable such values (Uberoi 1978, Khazanov 1984). This would suggest that each frontier zone produces its own kind of nomadic variable: for example, Uberoi's frontier seems entirely different from ibn Khaldoun's, and this is entirely different from that of the Eurasian steppes, which, furthermore, is unlike the circulation of movements found in the Thar Desert in Rajasthan. This would mean not only that nomadism is distinct as a mode of production or as an economy in itself, but also that each type of frontier makes possible the emergence of tactical formations of its own that are peculiar to nomadism's institutionalized values.

The question that remains, given the difficult political scenario in which the Bakkarwal find themselves, is what tactics a nomadic community might employ in such circumstances if it is to retain its traditional modes of livelihood and also its essential forms of existence, and also whether a legal preservation of such modes and forms is even possible. 'The gathering of fallen wood and the theft of wood' might indeed be 'essentially different things' (Marx 1842), but how is 'the gathering of fallen wood' to be protected as a right, without it being marked by the incriminating vision of the state and the 'classes privileged by it'?

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