Nomad

A **nomad** (Middle French: *nomade* "people without fixed habitation")^[1] is a member of a community without fixed habitation which regularly moves to and from the same areas. Such groups include <u>hunter-gatherers</u>, <u>pastoral nomads</u> (owning <u>livestock</u>), and <u>tinkers</u> or <u>trader</u> nomads.^{[2][3]} In the twentieth century, population of nomadic pastoral tribes slowly decreased, reaching to an estimated 30–40 million nomads in the world as of 1995.^{[4][5]}

Nomadic hunting and gathering—following seasonally available wild plants and game—is by far the oldest human subsistence method. Pastoralists raise herds, driving or accompanying in patterns that normally avoid depleting pastures beyond their ability to recover. [7]

Nomadism is also a <u>lifestyle</u> adapted to infertile regions such as <u>steppe</u>, <u>tundra</u>, or <u>ice and sand</u>, where mobility is the most efficient strategy for exploiting scarce resources. For example, many groups living in the tundra are reindeer herders and are semi-extra nomadic, following forage for their animals.



A painting by <u>Vincent van Gogh</u> depicting a caravan of nomadic <u>Romani</u>

Sometimes also described as "nomadic" are the various <u>itinerant</u> populations who move among densely populated areas to offer specialized services (<u>crafts</u> or <u>trades</u>) to their residents—external <u>consultants</u>, for example. These groups are known as "peripatetic nomads". [8][9]

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Common characteristics

A nomad is a person with no settled home, moving from place to place as a way of obtaining food, finding pasture for livestock, or otherwise making a living. The word "nomad" comes ultimately from the classical Greek word voµ α c (nom α s, "roaming, wandering, especially to find pasture"), from Ancient Greek voµ α c (nom α s, "pasture"). Most nomadic groups follow a fixed annual or seasonal pattern of movements and settlements. Nomadic peoples traditionally travel by animal or canoe or on foot. Animals include camels, horses and alpaca. Today, some nomads travel by motor vehicle. Some nomads may live in homes or homeless shelters, though this would necessarily be on a temporary or itinerant basis.

Nomads keep moving for different reasons. Nomadic foragers move in search of game, edible plants, and water. Aboriginal Australians, Negritos of Southeast Asia, and San of Africa, for example, traditionally move from camp to camp to hunt and gather wild plants. Some tribes of the Americas followed this way of life. Pastoral nomads, on the other hand, make their living raising livestock such as



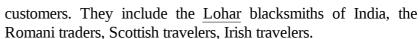
Rider in Mongolia, 2012s. While nomadic life is less common in modern times, the horse remains a national symbol in Mongolia.



Beja nomads from Northeast Africa

camels, cattle, goats, horses, sheep, or yaks; these nomads usually travel in search of pastures for their flocks. The Fulani and their cattle travel through the grasslands of Niger in western Africa. Some nomadic peoples, especially herders, may also move to raid settled communities avoid or to Nomadic enemies. craftworkers and merchants

travel to find and serve



Most nomads travel in groups of families, bands, or <u>tribes</u>. These groups are based on kinship and marriage ties or on formal agreements of cooperation. A council of adult males makes most

of the decisions, though some tribes have chiefs.

In the case of Mongolian nomads, a family moves twice a year. These two movements generally occur during the summer and winter. The winter destination is usually located near the mountains in a valley and most families already have fixed winter locations. Their winter locations have shelter for animals and are not used by other families while they are out. In the summer they move to a more open area that the animals can graze. Most

nomads usually move in the same region and don't travel very far to a totally different region. Since they usually circle around a large area, communities form and families generally know where the other ones are. Often, families do not have the resources to move from one province to another unless they are moving out of



Romani mother and child



Nomads on the Changtang, Ladakh

the area permanently. A family can move on its own or with others; if it moves alone, they are usually no more than a couple of kilometers from each other. The geographical closeness of families is usually for mutual support. Pastoral nomad societies usually do not have a large population. One such society, the Mongols, gave rise to the largest land empire in history. The Mongols originally consisted of loosely organized nomadic tribes in Mongolia, Manchuria, and Siberia. In the late 12th century, Genghis Khan united them and other nomadic tribes to found the Mongol Empire, which eventually stretched the length of Asia.

The nomadic way of life has become increasingly rare. Many countries have converted pastures into cropland and forced nomadic peoples into permanent settlements. [10]

Modern forms of nomadic peoples are variously referred to as "shiftless", "gypsies", "rootless cosmopolitans", hunter-gatherers, refugees and urban homeless or street-people, depending on their individual circumstances. These terms may be used in a derogatory sense.

Hunter-gatherers

Nomads (also known as foragers) move from campsite to campsite, following game and wild <u>fruits</u> and <u>vegetables</u>. Hunting and gathering describes early people's subsistence living style. Following the development of agriculture, most hunter-gatherers were eventually either displaced or converted to farming or pastoralist groups. Only a few contemporary societies are classified as hunter-gatherers; and some of these supplement, sometimes extensively, their foraging activity with farming or keeping animals.



Starting fire by hand. <u>San people</u> in Botswana.

Pastoralism

<u>Pastoral nomads</u> are nomads moving between pastures. Nomadic <u>pastoralism</u> is thought to have developed in three stages that accompanied <u>population growth</u> and an increase in the complexity of <u>social organization</u>. Karim Sadr has proposed the following stages: [12]

- Pastoralism: This is a <u>mixed economy</u> with a <u>symbiosis</u> within the family.
- **Agropastoralism:** This is when symbiosis is between segments or clans within an ethnic group.
- **True Nomadism:** This is when symbiosis is at the regional level, generally between specialised nomadic and agricultural populations.



<u>Cuman</u> nomads, <u>Radziwiłł Chronicle</u>, 13th century.

The pastoralists are sedentary to a certain area, as they move between the permanent spring, summer, autumn and winter (or dry and wet season) pastures for their <u>livestock</u>. The nomads moved depending on the availability of resources. [13]

Origin

Nomadic pastoralism seems to have developed as a part of the <u>secondary products revolution</u> proposed by <u>Andrew Sherratt</u>, in which early <u>pre-pottery Neolithic</u> cultures that had used animals as live meat ("on the hoof") also began using animals for their secondary products, for example, <u>milk</u> and its associated <u>dairy</u>

<u>products</u>, <u>wool</u> and other animal hair, hides and consequently leather, manure for fuel and fertilizer, and traction.

The first nomadic pastoral society developed in the period from 8,500–6,500 BCE in the area of the southern Levant. [14] There, during a period of increasing aridity, Pre-Pottery Neolithic B (PPNB) cultures in the Sinai were replaced by a nomadic, pastoral pottery-using culture, which seems to have been a cultural fusion between a newly arrived Mesolithic people from Egypt (the Harifian culture), adopting their nomadic hunting lifestyle to the raising of stock. [15]

This lifestyle quickly developed into what Jaris Yurins has called the circum-<u>Arabian</u> nomadic pastoral techno-complex and is possibly associated with the appearance of <u>Semitic languages</u> in the region of the <u>Ancient Near East</u>. The rapid spread of such nomadic pastoralism was typical of such later developments as of the <u>Yamnaya</u> culture of the <u>horse and cattle nomads of the Eurasian steppe</u>, or of the <u>Mongol</u> spread of the later <u>Middle Ages. [15]</u>

<u>Trekboer</u> in southern Africa adopted nomadism from the 17th century. [16]

Increase in post-Soviet Central Asia

One of the results of the <u>break-up of the Soviet Union</u> and the subsequent political independence and economic collapse of its <u>Central Asian</u> republics has been the resurgence of pastoral nomadism. Taking the <u>Kyrgyz people</u> as a representative example, nomadism was the centre of their economy before Russian colonization at the turn of the 20th century, when they were settled into agricultural villages. The population became increasingly <u>urbanized</u> after World War II, but some people still take their herds of horses and cows to high pastures (*jailoo*) every summer, continuing a pattern of transhumance.

Since the 1990s, as the cash economy shrank, unemployed relatives were reabsorbed into family farms, and the importance of this form of nomadism has increased. The symbols of nomadism, specifically the crown of the grey felt tent known as the <u>yurt</u>, appears on the national flag, emphasizing the central importance of nomadism in the genesis of the modern nation of Kyrgyzstan. [18]



An 1848 <u>Lithograph</u> showing nomads in Afghanistan.



A <u>yurt</u> in front of the <u>Gurvan Saikhan</u> <u>Mountains</u>. Approximately 30% of the <u>Mongolia</u>'s 3 million people are nomadic or semi-nomadic.



A Sámi family in Norway around 1900.

Reindeer have been <u>herded</u> for centuries by several Arctic and Subarctic people including the Sámi and the Nenets.[11]

Sedentarization

From 1920 to 2008, population of nomadic pastoral tribes slowly decreased from over a quarter of <u>Iran</u>'s population. Tribal pastures were nationalized during the 1960s. The National Commission of <u>UNESCO</u> registered the population of Iran at 21 million in 1963, of whom two million (9.5%) were nomads.

Although the nomadic population of Iran has dramatically decreased in the 20th century, Iran still has one of the largest nomadic populations in the world, an estimated 1.5 million in a country of about 70 million. [21]

In <u>Kazakhstan</u> where the major agricultural activity was nomadic herding, [22] forced collectivization under <u>Joseph Stalin</u>'s rule met with massive resistance and major losses and confiscation of livestock. Livestock in Kazakhstan fell from 7 million cattle to 1.6 million and from 22 million sheep to 1.7 million. The resulting famine of 1931-1934 caused some 1.5 million deaths: this represents more than 40% of the total <u>Kazakh</u> population at that time.

In the 1950s as well as the 1960s, large numbers of <u>Bedouin</u> throughout the Middle East started to leave the traditional, nomadic life to settle in the cities of the Middle East, especially as home ranges have shrunk and population levels have grown. Government policies in <u>Egypt</u> and <u>Israel</u>, oil production in <u>Libya</u> and the <u>Persian Gulf</u>, as well as a desire for improved standards of living, effectively led most Bedouin to become settled citizens of various nations, rather than stateless nomadic herders. A century ago nomadic Bedouin still made up some 10% of the total Arab population. Today they account for some 1% of the total. [25]

At independence in 1960, <u>Mauritania</u> was essentially a nomadic society. The great <u>Sahel droughts</u> of the early 1970s caused massive problems in a country where 85% of its inhabitants were nomadic herders. Today only 15% remain nomads. [26]

As many as 2 million nomadic <u>Kuchis</u> wandered over <u>Afghanistan</u> in the years before the <u>Soviet invasion</u>, and most experts agreed that by 2000 the number had fallen dramatically, perhaps by half. The severe <u>drought</u> had destroyed 80% of the livestock in some areas. [27]

Niger experienced a serious food crisis in 2005 following erratic rainfall and desert locust invasions. Nomads such as the <u>Tuareg</u> and <u>Fulani</u>, who make up about 20% of Niger's 12.9 million population, had been so badly hit by the Niger food crisis that their already fragile way of life is at risk. Nomads in <u>Mali</u> were also affected. Nomads in <u>Mali</u> were also affected.

Lifestyle

Pala nomads living in Western Tibet have a diet that is unusual in that they consume very few vegetables and no fruit. The main staple of their diet is *tsampa* and they drink Tibetan style butter tea. Pala will eat heartier foods in the winter months to help keep warm. Some of the customary restrictions they explain as cultural saying only that *drokha* do not eat certain foods, even some that may be naturally abundant. Though they live near sources of fish and fowl these do not play a significant role in their diet, and they do not eat carnivorous animals, rabbits or the wild asses that are abundant in the environs, classifying the latter as horse due to their cloven hooves. Some families do not eat until after the morning milking, while others may have a light meal with butter tea and *tsampa*. In the afternoon, after the morning milking, the families gather and share a communal meal



Tents of <u>Pashtun</u> nomads in <u>Badghis</u> <u>Province</u>, <u>Afghanistan</u>. They migrate from region to region depending on the season.

of tea, *tsampa* and sometimes <u>yogurt</u>. During winter months the meal is more substantial and includes meat. <u>Herders</u> will eat before leaving the camp and most do not eat again until they return to camp for the evening meal. The typical evening meal may include thin stew with *tsampa*, animal fat and dried <u>radish</u>. Winter stew would include a lot of meat with either *tsampa* or boiled flour <u>dumplings</u>. [30]

Nomadic diets in <u>Kazakhstan</u> have not changed much over centuries. The Kazakh nomad cuisine is simple and includes meat, salads, marinated vegetables and fried and baked <u>breads</u>. <u>Tea</u> is served in bowls, possibly with sugar or <u>milk</u>. Milk and other <u>dairy</u> products, like <u>cheese</u> and <u>yogurt</u>, are especially important. <u>Kumiss</u> is a

drink of <u>fermented</u> milk. <u>Wrestling</u> is a popular sport, but the nomadic people do not have much time for leisure. Horse riding is a valued skill in their culture. [31]

Perception

Ann Marie Kroll Lerner states that the pastoral nomads were viewed as "invading, destructive, and altogether antithetical to civilizing, sedentary societies" during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. According to Lerner, they are rarely accredited as "a civilizing force". [32]

<u>Allan Hill</u> and Sara Randall observes that the western authors have looked for "romance and mystery, as well as the repository of laudable characteristics believed lost in the West, such as independence, stoicism in the face of physical adversity, and a strong sense of loyalty to family and to tribe" in the nomadic pastoralist societies. Hill and Randall observes that nomadic pastoralists are stereotypically seen by the settled populace in Africa and <u>Middle East</u> as "aimless wanderers, immoral, promiscuous and disease-ridden" peoples. According to Hill and Randall, both of these perceptions "misrepresent the reality". [33]

Contemporary peripatetic minorities in Europe and Asia

Peripatetic minorities are mobile populations moving among settled populations offering a craft or trade. [34]

Each existing community is primarily endogamous, and subsists traditionally on a variety of commercial or service activities. Formerly, all or a majority of their members were itinerant, and this largely holds true today. Migration generally takes place within the political boundaries of a single state these days.

Each of the peripatetic communities is multilingual, it speaks one or more of the languages spoken by the local sedentary populations, and, additionally, within each group, a separate dialect or language is spoken. They are speaking languages of



A tent of Romani nomads in <u>Hungary</u>, 19th century.

<u>Indic</u> origin and many are structured somewhat like an <u>argot</u> or secret language, with vocabularies drawn from various languages. There are indications that in northern Iran at least one community speaks <u>Romani language</u>, and some groups in Turkey also speak Romani.

Dom people

In Afghanistan, the Nausar worked as tinkers and animal dealers. Ghorbat men mainly made <u>sieves</u>, drums, and bird cages, and the women peddled these as well as other items of household and personal use; they also worked as moneylenders to rural women. Peddling and the sale of various goods was also practiced by men and women of various groups, such as the Jalali, the Pikraj, the Shadibaz, the Noristani, and the Vangawala. The latter and the Pikraj also worked as animal dealers. Some men among the Shadibaz and the Vangawala entertained as monkey or bear handlers and snake charmers; men and women among the Baluch were musicians and dancers. The Baluch men were warriors that were feared by neighboring tribes and often were used as mercenaries. Jogi men and women had diverse subsistence activities, such as dealing in horses, harvesting, fortune-telling, bloodletting, and begging.

In Iran the Asheq of Azerbaijan, the Challi of Baluchistan, the Luti of Kurdistan, Kermānshāh, Īlām, and Lorestān, the Mehtar in the Mamasani district, the Sazandeh of Band-i Amir and Marv-dasht, and the Toshmal among the Bakhtyari pastoral groups worked as professional musicians. The men among the Kowli worked as

tinkers, smiths, musicians, and monkey and bear handlers; they also made baskets, sieves, and brooms and dealt in donkeys. Their women made a living from peddling, begging, and fortune-telling.

The Ghorbat among the Basseri were smiths and tinkers, traded in pack animals, and made sieves, reed mats, and small wooden implements. In the Fārs region, the Qarbalband, the Kuli, and Luli were reported to work as smiths and to make baskets and sieves; they also dealt in pack animals, and their women peddled various goods among pastoral nomads. In the same region, the Changi and Luti were musicians and balladeers, and their children learned these professions from the age of 7 or 8 years.

The nomadic groups in Turkey make and sell cradles, deal in animals, and play music. The men of the sedentary groups work in towns as scavengers and hangmen; elsewhere they are fishermen, smiths, basket makers, and singers; their women dance at feasts and tell fortunes. Abdal men played music and made sieves, brooms, and wooden spoons for a living. The Tahtacı traditionally worked as lumberers; with increased sedentarization, however, they have taken to agriculture and horticulture.

Little is known for certain about the past of these communities; the history of each is almost entirely contained in their oral traditions. Although some groups—such as the Vangawala—are of Indian origin, some—like the Noristani—are most probably of local origin; still others probably migrated from adjoining areas. The Ghorbat and the Shadibaz claim to have originally come from Iran and Multan, respectively, and Tahtacı traditional accounts mention either <u>Baghdad</u> or <u>Khorāsān</u> as their original home. The Baluch say they were attached as a service community to the Jamshedi, after they fled Baluchistan because of feuds. [35][36]

Kochi people

Romani people

Yörüks

<u>Yörüks</u> are the nomadic people who live in <u>Turkey</u>. Still some groups such as <u>Sankeçililer</u> continues nomadic lifestyle between coastal towns <u>Mediterranean</u> and <u>Taurus Mountains</u> even though most of them were settled by both late Ottoman and Turkish republic.

Bukat People of Borneo

The Bukat people of Borneo in Malaysia live within the region of the river Mendalam, which the natives call **Buköt**. Bukat is an ethnonym that encapsulates all the tribes in the region. These natives are historically self-sufficient but were also known to trade various goods. This is especially true for the clans who lived on the periphery of the territory. The products of their trade were varied and fascinating, including: "...resins (damar, *Agathis dammara; jelutong bukit, Dyera costulata*, gutta-percha, *Palaquium* spp.); wild honey and beeswax (important in trade but often unreported); aromatic resin from insence wood (*gaharu*, *Aquilaria microcarpa*); camphor (found in the fissures of *Dryobalanops aromaticus*); several types of rotan of cane (*Calamus rotan* and other species); poison for blowpipe darts (one source is *ipoh* or *ipu*: see Nieuwenhuis 1900a:137); the antlers of deer (the sambar, *Cervus unicolor*); rhinoceros horn (see Tillema 1939:142); pharmacologically valuable bezoar stones (concretions formed in the intestines and gallbladder of the gibbon, *Seminopithecus*, and in the wounds of porcupines, *Hestrix crassispinus*); birds' nests, the edible nests of swifts (*Collocalia* spp.); the heads and feathers of two species of hombills (*Buceros rhinoceros*, *Rhinoplax vigil*); and various hides (clouded leopards, bears, and other animals)." These nomadic tribes also commonly hunted boar with poison blow darts for their own needs.

Image gallery

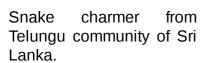




Nomad camp Tingri, Tibet. 1993

near Mongol nomads in the Altai Mountains.







horseman from general area of the lli river, Pazyryk, c. 300 BCE.



from A Scythian Yeniche people in the Bedouin the 15th century



lighting a the camp fire Empire, in Rum, Jordan.



young Kyrgyz nomads in the steppes of Russian Wadi Uzbekistan, by pioneer color photographer Sergey Prokudin-Gorsky, c. 1910.







Tuareg in Mali, 1974.

Kyrgyz 1869-1870.

nomads, Nomads in the Desert (Giulio Rosati).











Gros Ventre (Atsina) House barge American travois for transporting skin lodges and belongings.

Indians Sama-Bajau peoples, moving camps with Indonesia. 1914-1921

of the Photograph Bedouins (wandering of Tunisia, Arabs) 1899

of Indian nomads painting by wellknown artiste Raja Ravi Varma

Indian nomad Banjara

See also

- List of nomadic peoples
- Eurasian nomads
- Nomadic peoples of Europe
- Seasonal human migration
- Nomadic empires
- Nomadic tents
- Nomads of India
- Sea Gypsies
- Antlers Gallery: The 'nomadic' gallery, Bristol
- Snufkin

Figurative use of the term:

- Global nomad
- Digital nomad
- Snowbird (people)
- Military brat
- The Nomadic Project

- Perpetual traveler
- RV lifestyle
- Third culture kid

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