

## **The Decision to Move: Being Mobile and Being Rational in Comparative Anthropological Perspective**

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Taking the ethnography of contemporary mobile hunter-gatherer groups as the point of departure I revisit some of the fundamental questions of rationality and action. This includes the question to what extent forager spatial mobility is indeed a decision to move and not a mechanical adaptation to environmental pressures. It also includes a critique of the assumption amongst sedentary people that movement necessarily involves innovation, change and uncertainty and that to become sedentary is tantamount to "settling" issues of economic and political organization.

Hunter-gatherer studies also question the dual conception of humans as being made up of a natural core and a cultural superstructure by identifying cultural forms in what was previously considered a "state of nature" and, conversely, by reconsidering the role of ecological factors in the emergence of key socio-cultural institutions. Elements of micro-ethnography from hunter-gatherer groups in two different environments (deserts and rainforests) lead me to develop our notion of personhood in terms of aspect duality (the first and third person perspective on human agency) further by grounding it firmly in social relations (the second person perspective).