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Tribalism, Identity and Citizenship in Contemporary Qatar

Ali Alshawi and Andrew Gardner

Abstract: This article examines the resurgence of tribalism as a sociological component of contemporary Qatari society. Utilising an ethnographic, mixed-methods design, the article begins with a survey of the substantial scholarship concerning tribes in Arabia. That scholarship provides ideas and understandings that only partially explain the vitality of contemporary tribalism. The article then demonstrates tribalism's ongoing social importance by analysing data from a quantitative survey of 800 Qatari citizens. The article concludes with the ethnographically situated contention that tribalism functions as a mechanism for asserting social power in the contemporary Qatari state, and is therefore an emblematic component of Qatari citizenship.

Keywords: Arabia, nationalism, Qatar, segmentation, state, tribalism, tribe

Introduction

Buoyed by the wealth of its vast reserves of hydrocarbon resources, the small state of Qatar has quickly evolved from a minor waypoint on the Arabian littoral to one of the central regional nodes in the flow of global capital and culture. Like all the wealthy states of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Qatari state has articulated a plan to transition away from its dependence upon a singular resource. Central to Qatar's economic diversification plan is the ongoing development of a 'knowledge-based' society and economy. With that goal in mind, Qatar has diverted significant resources to the construction of a cutting-edge educational system. For example, the state has constructed Education City (which hosts satellite campuses of the American universities Georgetown, Texas A & M, Carnegie Mellon, Cornell, Northwestern and Virginia



Commonwealth, as well as a constellation of other institutions). It has simultaneously expanded Qatar University, the national university, and it has built a host of other educational institutions (like College of the North Atlantic). Together, these institutions of higher education are charged with the dual purpose of preparing Qatari youth for active contribution to its knowledge-based economy and, simultaneously, of attracting students from outside Qatar. This substantive new educational sector currently relies upon large numbers of foreign faculty, many of whom arrive on potentially and periodically renewable contracts. The astronomical growth in the numbers of academic positions available in Qatar has attracted all sorts of new scholars to the region, and although these faculty often arrive with their own constellation of research interests, many also begin to develop an interest in Qatar itself.

In a more typical situation, that newfound scholarly interest might begin with, and build upon, anthropologists' ethnographic work. Because of the discipline's particularly intrepid academic tradition, anthropologists were often times the first Western scholars to study many non-Western societies. With a few notable exceptions, however, this was not the case in Qatar.¹ Like all the Gulf States, there is a surprisingly impoverished ethnographic literature about the peoples who now comprise Qatar's citizenry. In part this can be attributed to the fact that for much of the last century Qatar and its neighbours were somewhat insular and closed societies, and therefore difficult to study with anthropological methods. Perhaps more importantly, however, in academia the Gulf States were long framed as marginal, exceptional spaces in the greater Middle East, particularly because the wealth and rapid development of those states contrasted so sharply with the rest of the Middle Eastern societies. In that scholarly era, the Gulf was a less attractive research site for anthropologists than other options in the Middle East.

This article seeks to address those scholars new to the region, including those scholars outside the anthropological and sociological tradition and, simultaneously, anyone knowledgeable of the long legacy of scholarly interest in Arabian tribalism. To many visitors, new arrivals, and foreign residents, the Qatari citizenry appears to be a homogenous entity. Encountered by visitors and foreign residents at shopping malls or in the workplace, Qataris appear to dress somewhat uniformly, and general discussions amongst these foreigners typically paint Qataris as ubiquitously wealthy. Outsiders' homogenous portrait of the Qatari citizenry is further exacerbated by the nationalistic discourse articulated by state and citizenry, a discourse which actively elides ethnic, class and sectarian differences in the population. This article seeks to remedy those widespread and incorrect assumptions about Qataris, and to help replace those simplifications with an appropriately complex portrait of the social components and divisions of contemporary Qatari citizenry. While this path will lead to brief mentions of class and ethnicity in Qatar, the primary focus will be on tribes and tribalism – social forms that are perhaps the most alien to a Western readership and, simultaneously, topics that have a long and

developed history in the scholarly literature concerned with the Arabian Peninsula and its peoples.

The analysis presented here relies on a variety of data sources. First and foremost, we begin with a partial literature review, with the goal in mind of providing the reader with some extant sources that directly concern the tribal structures found in contemporary Qatari society. Upon that foundation, we build our analysis around a set of quantitative data that explore tribes and tribalism in contemporary Qatar. Similarly, in the auto-ethnographic tradition, we rely on Ali Alshawi's experiences as a participant and member of Qatari society. These data sources are complemented by Andrew Gardner's two years of participant observation in Qatar (2008–2010), including a set of semi-structured interviews with Qatari citizens and the administration of a set of questionnaires aimed at exploring identity amongst Qatari youth. Altogether, these data cover a period that roughly begins in 1999 and continues to the present.

In the final accounting, our focus is not upon how Qataris present themselves to outsiders (a topic that certainly merits more scholarly analysis), but rather upon how they categorise, organise and understand their relations with one another. In essence, we seek to describe accurately one of the building blocks of contemporary Qatari identity, one that congeals around conceptions of family, clan and tribe. Identity is a complex aspect of human existence. Most social scientists today treat identity not as a set of empirical categories to be discovered but rather as a meaningful aspect of both our individual and collective existence that is constantly being negotiated and renegotiated against the social backdrop of the world in which we live. From another angle, this suggests that while social scientists remain attentive to the structural forces that guide the articulation of these identities, they must also be attentive to the agency individuals and collectivities deploy – that is, to the capacity to negotiate, resist, accommodate or combine the results of these structural parameters. In this article, our focus is less upon the agency individuals deploy in this context, and more upon the structural elements of that context – the building blocks with which individuals and components of Qatari society work in constructing contemporary identities. Our focus on genealogy, family and tribe, as a single subset of these building blocks, therefore eclipses what would certainly be profitable discussions concerning cosmopolitanism, gender, class and much more.²

Tribes and Tribalism and Arabia

Tribalism has been a central feature in social anthropology for much of the discipline's existence, and while ethnographic work concerned with tribes and tribalism has been produced in a wide variety of geographical settings, the Arab peoples of North Africa and Arabia have always been foundational to the discipline's understanding of those concepts. In the earliest analyses, tribes

were understood to be a form of social organisation that preceded the state, and thus fit into the various schemata produced by social evolutionary theorists. The coincidence of tribal social organisation and pastoral nomadism in arid environments eventually yielded a materialist and adaptive understanding of the tribe. This understanding did not necessarily posit the tribe as a position somewhere along the continuum between 'primitive' and 'civilised'. Instead, scholars pointed to tribalism as an adaptive mechanism by which humans – in this case, pastoral nomads – organised themselves in the vast geographical spaces required by their mode of production. In other words, tribes were viewed as an adaptive social form specifically configured to socially and politically organise people distributed across the vast territories required for pastoral nomadism on the arid Arabian Peninsula.

Central to this understanding of the tribe is the segmentary lineage system. With the pioneering work of E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Meyer Fortes, Ernst Gellner and many others, the segmentary lineage system modelled the mechanics by which the organisational and political logic of tribalism worked (Evans-Pritchard 1940a, 1940b; Fortes 1945, 1953; Gellner 1972 Sahllins 1961). It utilised a hierarchy, beginning with the nuclear and then extended family. That extended family was conceptualised as part of a 'lineage' tracing its genealogical roots back four or five generations. Four, six or more of these lineages were grouped into clans. A similar number of clans constituted the tribe. The structure of this mode of social organisation is generally agreed upon in the existing literature, although scholars oftentimes utilise different terminology to describe the various aggregated components (see Chatty 1986; Cole 1975; Eickelman 1981).

Explanations of how this segmentary system functions oftentimes begin with the idiomatic Bedouin saying: 'I against my brother; my brothers and me against my cousins; my cousins and me against strangers.' As an idiomatic phrase, the logic of this statement accurately captures more academic renditions that seek to explain how this model of social organisation regulates and structures political and social interaction.³ The functional logic of tribes as framed in segmentary lineage theory has been a much embattled perspective in the social sciences, with one significant contingent of social scientists claiming that the concept is too blunt and imprecise for use at all (Cole 1982; Fluehr-Lobban et al. 1977; Godelier and Blohm 1973). These scholars suggest that 'tribes' ought to be referred to more precisely as ethnic groups, cultures or societies (see Cole 1982). These debates in anthropology stemmed largely from work in Africa, where a slippage between the idea of *tribes* and *ethnic groups* was more apparent, and where the delineation of tribes was deeply intertwined with European colonialism (Southall 1970; see also Fried 1975). Scholars working in Arabia, however, generally remained invested in the concept of tribe, and while they have made many different attempts to define the concept, Donald Cole's definition can serve us here: tribes are 'groupings of people who use the idiom of kinship to explain their solidarity, recognizing,

however, that they are integrally part of a wider society and culture not based on kinship' (1982: 79).

Tribes and their constituent components were also conceptualised by the geographical facet to their existence (see Tapper 1990: 50–51). As pastoralists, and oftentimes pastoral nomads, tribal members did not wander freely and aimlessly through the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula. Instead, each tribe had a delineated homeland, or *dirah*. Although a western analytic lens oftentimes sought to project the idea of private property on this system, the reality of the homeland in practice was different from what one might expect. The sense of tribal propriety and belonging to a particular piece of land (in some cases, pieces of land the size of large European states) was spatially tethered to propriety and control of particular water sources – mostly wells – in the desert. Sovereignty over those water sources was typically clear; the geographical boundaries between various tribal homelands were more vague in their calculation. Alliances and other relations between tribes oftentimes managed seasonal or occasional nomadic migrations that required the use of others' wells and water sources. Tribes' political interrelations were often reinforced by intermarriage and, more specifically, the exogamous exchange of brides between tribes.

This very brief and general map of the history of anthropologists' and other foreigners' understanding of tribes in Arabia posits a fundamental model for individual identity that is significantly different from the Western norm. Through the frame of nationalism and citizenship, that Western model posits an ideal constructed around notions of impartiality and equality under law. Conversely, the segmentary lineage model described above posits the individual as central in a sequence of valences that are kin-focused and hierarchical. The individual's place in the social world is conceptualised through this logic: the most proximate and strongest bonds are with the nuclear family, then with extended family, and then lineage, clan, tribe, other tribes and beyond. This map of identity is comprehensive in the sense that, from the insider's perspective, everyone one might encounter can be located and placed in a hierarchical logic of relative consanguinity.

Articulated as this embattled model may be in scholarship concerning tribalism on the Arabian Peninsula, we suggest that this model does not grasp the essence of contemporary tribalism in Qatar. It speaks to the structure of relations, but not to the meaning and lived experience of tribal belonging. Moreover, aspects of this embattled model can be readily aligned with the traditionalist discourse that posits tribes and tribalism as central to the gravity of tradition from which 'the Arab' cannot seemingly escape. In response, one might first note that almost all of the classic scholarship upon which these theorisations of tribalism rely is a product of foreign attempts to understand tribalism, and while there is certainly nothing inherently problematic with that, its development has been periodically oblivious to Arabia's own literary legacy and to the contemporary cohort of scholars exploring this arrangement

and social form (e.g. Al-Mohammad 2011; Maisel 2013). Second, one might also recognise the materialist conundrum resulting from these antiquated theorisations: now that most of the people in question are no longer attached to this particular pastoral/nomadic mode of production, why does tribalism persevere?

We think its perseverance is a product of the lived experience of *asabiya*. By focusing on *asabiya*, we explore an alternative understanding of tribes and tribalism, one that begins with Ibn Khaldun's definition and description. While that definition is ignorant of neither the environmental factors underpinning tribal organisation nor the political extrapolations of tribes and tribalism, his emphasis is on the quality and bond of tribalism – *asabiya*. There is no equivalent word for this bond in English; however, its meaning lies somewhere amongst terms like solidarity, kinship, partisanship, loyalty and cohesion. This bond, grounded in consanguinity and kinship, can be enhanced by economic hardship, a shared moral order and strong leadership. Conversely, by Ibn Khaldun's calculations, it can be weakened by the removal of hardships, and particularly by the luxuries Ibn Khaldun associated with a sedentary urban lifestyle. This analysis led Ibn Khaldun to posit the tribe in dynastic and cyclical terms: the norm, he suggested, was for tribes to last only a few generations, a process that correlated directly with the erosion of *asabiya*.

While Ibn Khaldun's description of tribalism shares much ground with other contemporary analyses, we suggest that the focus on *asabiya* and, more specifically, the phenomenological/experiential aspects of tribalism differentiates it from more contemporary and foreign understandings of this form of social organisation. Perhaps more interestingly, neither Ibn Khaldun nor contemporary social scientists provide a strong explanation for the perseverance – or perhaps resurgence – of tribalism in Qatar. In Qatar and all the Gulf States, the contemporary citizenry is predominately and almost ubiquitously urban. In the framework of segmentary lineage theory, the deterministic material relations of production are absent, for sedentarisation is the essence of Qatar's recent history. Why, then, does tribalism persevere? The remainder of this article is devoted to the assertion of tribalism's contemporary vitality in Qatar and, second, a contextualised explanation of its perseverance.

Measuring the Vitality of Tribalism in Contemporary Qatar

Four decades ago, Maurice Godelier and Robert Blohm (1973) noted that the development of new, varied and different forms of social organisation did not produce the end of tribalism. More recently, Roy Mottahedeh added that 'the persistence of older forms of social identification in new settings is as much a feature of contemporary Middle Eastern history as it is of contemporary European history' (1990: ix–x). Although tribalism is inarguably an essential

social component of Qatar's past, the reasons for its perseverance and evolution remain an open question. In the following section, we present evidence that tribalism remains an active and vital aspect of Qatar society, and briefly explore the dynamics and function of tribalism in contemporary Qatar. The evidence we present is drawn from a survey conducted by Ali Alshawi some years ago.

Methodologically, the survey explored tribalism in Qatar through a sample of 800 Qatari citizens from four different areas of the country, and therefore, predominantly from different tribal backgrounds. Each area also included numerous non-tribal Qatari respondents. Almost all the respondents were aged 18–25. The sample was evenly divided between men and women, although response rates were higher for men in the sample. Generally, the survey explored conceptions and experiences of tribal solidarity, religiosity, identity, perspectives on tribal leadership, and other related topics. While it is beyond the scope of this article to present those findings in their entirety, we will briefly review three aspects of the findings that point to the functionality – and hence perseverance – of tribalism in contemporary Qatar.⁴ Those three aspects include the economic force of the tribe, the relationship between education and tribalism, and the role that tribal belonging plays in voting patterns in contemporary Qatar.

In Ibn Khaldun's classic theorisation of tribes and tribalism, he hypothesised a correlation between positive improvements in the welfare of tribal members and the erosion of *asabiya*. In his analysis, increased levels of income yield the possibility of an individual's independence from the economic fabric of tribal belonging and dependence. This hypothetical relationship can be transposed on contemporary Qatar: by Khaldun's logic, economic well-being should correlate with the erosion of tribal solidarity. The data collected through the survey, however, revealed the opposite. Higher levels of income correlated strongly with tribal solidarity, with positive perceptions of both tribal leadership and traditional law, and with a stronger reported pattern of voting along tribal lines.

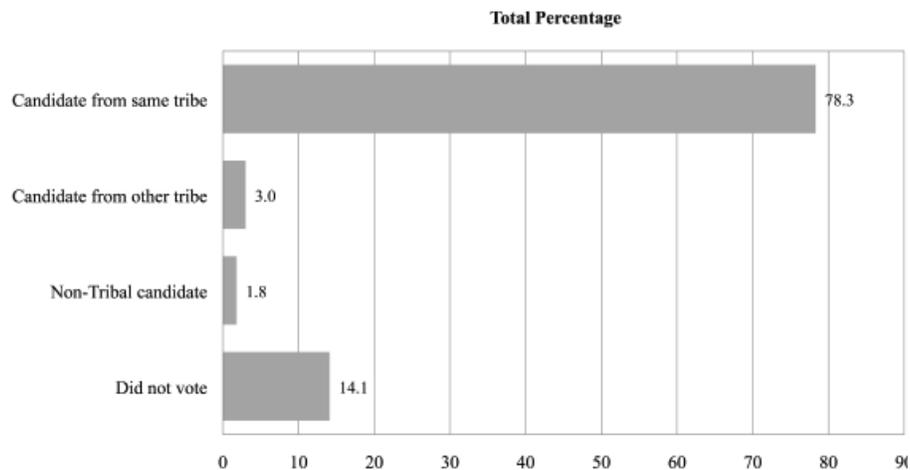
The survey also explored the relationship between education and tribal solidarity. The initial hypothesis that guided this portion of the survey suggested a negative relationship between level of education and tribal solidarity. This hypothesis reflects the general tenor of popular perspectives on tribalism and modernity, whereby tribalism is seen as a pre-modern form of affiliation and belonging, while education is portrayed as a pathway to a more 'modern' lifestyle and identity. A regression analysis of the data collected indicated that there was a strong, positive and statistically significant relationship between level of education and tribal solidarity. In short, higher degrees of expressed tribal identity and solidarity correlated with higher levels of education. These findings were aligned with other related findings in the survey data. For example, the survey data also revealed a statistically significant relationship between

level of education and tribally aligned voting preferences, as well as a statistically significant relationship between level of education and positive perceptions of tribal leadership and tribal law.

Finally, the data collected in regard to voting patterns were drawn from a single survey question. That question asked subjects to describe their vote in the most recent municipal elections in one of the following terms: having voted for a candidate who was a member of my tribe, having voted for a candidate from a different tribe, having voted for a candidate who was not associated with any tribe, or not having voted at all. The resulting data revealed tribally aligned voting practices to be the norm; further exploration of the data, however, suggested the need for more nuanced understandings of tribally aligned voting practices. For example, tribal members who reside in tribally uniform urban neighbourhoods have more uniformly pro-tribal voting practices, and subjects who profess a higher degree of religiosity also vote more frequently for fellow tribesmen. Similarly, tribesmen who marry within the tribe also favour candidates from the same tribe. While many Qataris vote for fellow tribesmen, the role of tribal belonging in shaping that pattern must accommodate many other factors that are also at work.

Although this presentation of the survey data only provides a summary of a much broader and more comprehensive analysis, it is sufficient to demonstrate the vitality of tribes and tribalism in contemporary Qatar. By using reported perspectives on subjects' voting preferences and their perspectives on the idea of both tribal leadership and tribal law, the survey developed a multifaceted proxy for the concept of *asabiya*. Together, these findings reveal economic

Figure 1: Reported voting preferences



well-being, urbanisation, education and the other forces that are generally glossed as aspects of ‘modernity’ to be conducive – rather than antithetical – to tribalism. So if tribalism is not a ‘premodern’ form, as much of the now antiquated scholarship suggests, and if sedentarisation and urbanisation, economic well-being, the development of a robust state, and other social changes wrought by Qatar’s recent path through history have not eroded the tribal social structure, then how ought we to understand and analyse contemporary tribalism in Qatar? In the final section, we utilise an ethnographic methodology to propose a framework for understanding contemporary tribalism in Qatar.

Tribe, Citizenship and State in Qatar

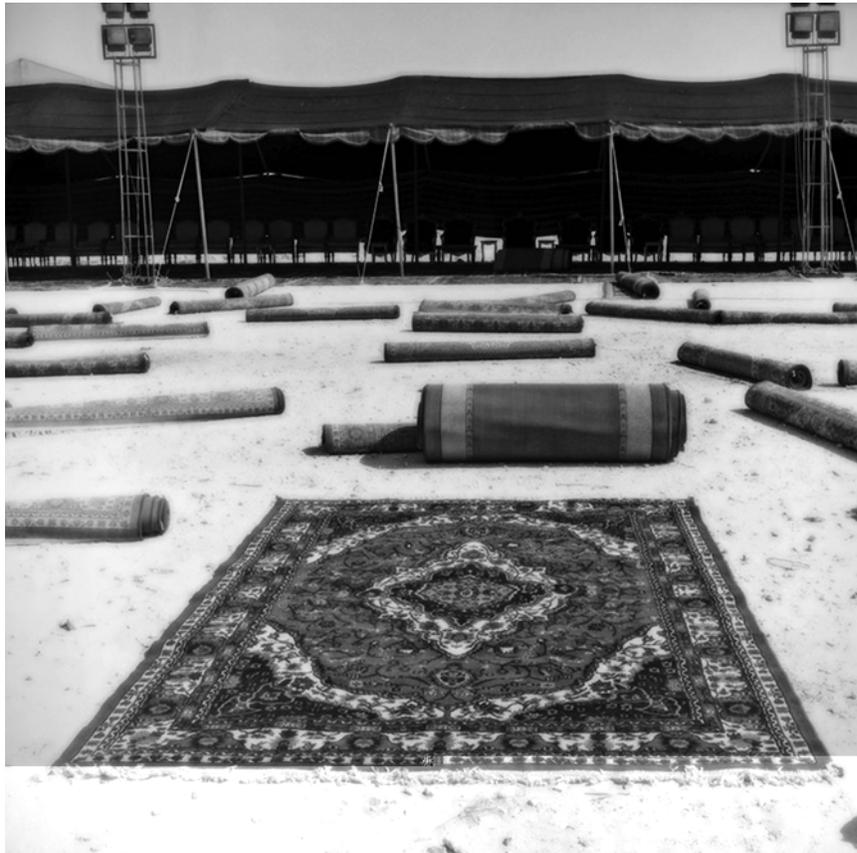
On 18 December 2008, Andrew Gardner was invited by Ali Alshawi to the Al Murrah celebration of Qatar’s National Day. The Al Murrah are Ali’s tribe, and also Qatar’s largest tribe. While National Day in Qatar that year was a new event to Andrew, the evidence of its scope and importance was evident throughout the city. In the week leading up to National Day, legions of south Asian labourers were at work in the interstitial and yet-to-be-developed desert tracts that punctuate the urban landscape in Doha. The men were busy erecting large tents for the upcoming celebration, and filling those tents with rugs and chairs. The tents themselves were of various sizes, with the Al Murrah tent, erected near Andrew’s compound in a large empty lot across from Qatar’s largest shopping mall, being one of the largest – if not the largest – to punctuate the cityscape. On the night of the event, Andrew made his way into the dirt parking lot, and parked his Honda Civic amongst the Land Cruisers and other durable vehicles preferred by Qatari men. The event itself was an astonishing and impressive one: hundreds of men from the Al Murrah tribe arrived by nightfall. Poetry was read, horses were ridden and swords were ceremoniously brandished, friends and acquaintances were greeted, and guests were introduced to cousins, second cousins and more distant relatives of their particular hosts.

National Day in Qatar is frequently described as a day to commemorate Qatari unity, but as many Qataris noted, it is a new holiday. The celebration marks the day when Sheikh Jassem, founder of the State of Qatar, led the country towards unity and away from a society ‘torn apart by conflicting tribal loyalties, devoid of security and order, and overrun by invaders.’⁵ That particular rendition of the conditions against which nationalism was cast in Qatar functions as a contemporary meme, and indeed, while the day seeks to commemorate the ascendancy of a levelling nationalism over the varied pre-statal social topography, the fact that the celebration of National Day is increasingly organised around the idea of tribes – and takes form in the performance of tribal belonging – marks the resurgence of this social form in Qatar and other parts of the *khaleej*. Put another way, in addition to the large tents of the ‘traditional’ tribes of Qatar, a drive around the city on National Day reveals a constella-

tion of smaller tents belonging to other extended families – genealogically calculated units of the citizenry that assemble and perform a contemporary rendition of tribalism.

As noted at the outset of this article, popular understandings of the Qatari and *khaleeji* populations often frame the citizenries as strikingly homogenous. In reality, however, the population of Qatar, like the neighbouring states, is a heterogeneous one – a product of long connections to the Indian Ocean world, the extraordinary mobilities of peoples on the Arabian Peninsula, and long-standing mercantile connections to the Near East, Africa, Europe and South Asia. One interviewee, for example, noted eight distinct components of the Qatari population, and for the interests of representing that heterogeneity, we will briefly present that taxonomy here, drawing on Andrew’s fieldnotes from

Figure 2. Preparations for a gathering in the interstices of urban development in Doha. Photograph by Kristin Giordano, 2010, with permission.



the interview. First, in no particular order, there is the Al Thani family, a family that traces its lineage back to Saudi Arabia. Second, there is that component of the citizenry who trace their lineage to one of the two Bedouin tribes indigenous to the Qatari Peninsula (the Al Murrah and the Bani Hajr). Third, there are those Bedouin who trace their lineage to other tribes not indigenous to the Qatari peninsula, many of whom arrived to serve and protect the ruling family and state in various political conflicts in the past. Fourth, there are various families and clans originally from Bahrain – pearling and merchant families who settled the northern peninsula. Fifth and sixth, there is the portion of the citizenry who trace their roots to Persia in some manner or another – those who claim an Arab ethnicity, as well as those who do not. Seventh, there are several clans from Yemen who have a longstanding presence in Qatar. To this list, one might be tempted to add the descendants of the slave population brought to Qatar from Africa, but they are already integrated into the genealogical social structures described above.

This taxonomy of the Qatari population is certainly not comprehensive, for a list of this sort always illuminates exceptions and oversights. And notably, it belongs merely to one individual Qatari among several hundred thousand. But as it suggests, religious distinctions such as the Shi'a/Sunni division, ethnic distinctions such as the Arab/Persian division, or cultural distinctions such as the *bedu/hadhar* division only capture some portion of the intricacies of identity and belonging in the Gulf States (Longva 2006, Nagy 2006). What is of note, however, is that all of these groups are increasingly performing the idea of tribe and tribal belonging, and to conclude, we would like briefly to venture an explanation and discussion of this process.

First, what we see in contemporary Qatar is the assemblage of tribes and tribal belonging in flux. Classic definitions of 'tribe' focus on the Bedouin populations of the region; the remainder of the population is traditionally conceptualised as non-tribal. In contemporary Qatar, however, these classically non-tribal components of the citizenry are increasingly performing the idea of tribe and tribal belonging. Through elections, National Day celebrations, and the social prerequisites by which access to the state and its resources is achieved, individuals are increasingly called upon to express and utilise the consanguineal linkages of tribe. While social scientists have always pointed to the oftentimes hidden flexibility and versatility of tribes and tribal belonging in the past, the flexibility we see in the present is categorically different: instead of individuals slipping in or out of pre-existing tribes, we see entire (and classically non-tribal) components of the Qatari population re-envisioning themselves as clans and tribes.

Second, while the conditions that (theoretically, and dialectically) generated the tribal social form in the past were environmental in nature, the material conditions conducive to contemporary tribalism in Qatar are located squarely within the state. Power in contemporary Qatar comes, in part, from the size and strength of the tribe, for that power yields access to government posi-

tions, state-controlled resources, land, both elected and appointed positions, and much more. The idiom of the tribe serves as a framework by which this form of social power is established and aggrandised. In relation to the state, tribalism provides a mechanism by which a sub-statal form of solidarity is articulated in Qatar.⁶

In conclusion, then, a critical approach to tribes and tribalism should not be equated with the argument that tribes simply do not exist or that tribalism is not a meaningful and functional social fact in contemporary Arabia. Furthermore, in the Gulf States a critical approach to tribalism must avoid the notion that tribes and tribalism are a Western apprehension that posits these peoples as somehow trapped in the gravity of their own tradition. Tribes and tribalism remain meaningful social facts in contemporary Qatar. They have been reimagined and rearticulated in the contemporary era, but still, they remain a functional aspect of human existence, at least in Qatar (see also Al-Mohammad 2011). This functionality is more than a vestige of the past. Instead, it is an active process by which extended families come into cadence with the contemporary state, and do so over the complex social heterogeneity characteristic of these societies. And the bond of belonging, as *asabiya*, remains the essence of tribalism's contemporary manifestation in Qatar.

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NOTES

1. One of the few anthropologists with an active research agenda in Qatar before the contemporary decade was Sharon Nagy (1998a, 1998b, 2000, 2005, 2006). Although some of the other GCC states were better represented in the literature, none could be compared with the scholarly traditions of Middle Eastern states outside the GCC, such as Egypt or Morocco.
2. This article treats identity not as a set of empirical categories, but rather as something people create and negotiate under a particular set of circumstances. Nonetheless, there is an enduring architecture to the way some cultures forge identities. Identity is also complex and multivalenced. There are many questions to be answered about other aspects of identity, like consumer identity, for example, and how that has reshaped what we describe here, or whether this system will persevere over time, or how the neoliberal era has reshaped these identities. Those are all good questions, but are beyond the scope of this article.
3. Abu-Lughod (1986) makes a clear case for the fact that the segmentary lineage system is really only one part of tribes and tribalism, and she argues for an experiential approach, as well as a woman-centred one. Eickelman (1981), meanwhile, frames the segmentary component of tribalism as a 'native model' of society, a move which recognises the resilience of these relations in practical, everyday life but rejects the scholarly and analytic centrality of the model.
4. These data are presented more comprehensively in Alshawi (2002).
5. In 2008, this meme first appeared in materials produced by various institutions of the Qatari state. A Google search for this phrase now yields 1,190 results.
6. In his study of tribalism in Basra, Al-Mohammad (2011) discerns the absence of the state as the driving circumstance behind the reemergence and assertion of tribal bonds. In suggesting the opposite, we point only to the multiple forces at work in tribalism's overdetermined reemergence and the versatility of this form of belonging's vitality.

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