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Maryam Al-Kuwari

Tribal Reawakening and the Future of State-Building in Kuwait and Qatar

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Chapter 1
My Tribe, My Nation, My World

1.1 A Walk Down Memory Lane

In recent years, I witnessed an increasing number of discussions and conversations with colleagues, friends and relatives about the tribe and its role in society. Even within my personal circle, given the fact that I belong to tribe, I have repeatedly listened to discussions on how much we as a "tribe" need to prove our origins and identity, and how important it is for us to determine who is in and who is out. Indeed, as human beings, we crave bonds and attachments; however, the tribal instinct is not only an instinct that drives the need to belong and include, but also an instinct that drives the need to exclude. Such questions and discussions often carry me back to my childhood, where I lived in a small village and studied in a public junior school for girls, in which most students were members of my tribe.

In the first six years of primary school, my classes constituted of six students only, four from the same tribe, while one was Egyptian and the other Palestinian. This demographic distribution reflected how different areas in Qatar were subdivided into smaller villages, or frij (neighbourhood), based on bloodlines. It is often stated that if one wants to know who lives in a certain frij, village or town, one should visit the main mosque or school to gain a general idea of the local inhabitants or social groups that dominate the area.

My daily trip to school where the majority of students and teachers shared the same lineage and kinship engulfed me with a sense of security, a feeling of being welcomed, and a perception of solidarity with the other students. However, this feeling changed once I moved to a secondary school located in the city where I became a minority member among others, making me feel less confident about myself. On the first day of school, the teacher asked us to introduce ourselves, and when my turn came, she mockingly said, "You are from Iran; there is a place in Iran called Kurdan and your tribe came from there." The teacher then broke into laughter, and at that moment, I thought that perhaps I was indeed from Iran as she claimed. However, I still felt livid as she laughed loudly in front of other students, attempting to make me feel

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inferior to others, especially when she used her tribal name to establish the hierarchy of status and structure of power. I ended up fighting with her which got me kicked out of class. If this classification of people based on tribal affiliation occurs at the school level, one can only imagine what may be happening at the social, national, and regional levels. In light of this, I came to realise that just as my tribe gives me reasons to act in certain ways, the tribe also gives others reasons to act in different ways towards me. More importantly, I realised that tribe membership is the basis for maintaining status hierarchies, and, as such, it can trigger rejection and abuse from others, just as it triggers respect and access to power structures.

These examples from my childhood and adolescent years highlight the notion that tribal identity has always played an important role in Qatari society, not only on a personal level but also on the political, social, and economic levels. This is illustrated by the recent resurgence of emphasis on tribal ancestry in several Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. It must also be acknowledged that the tribe, in the context of the Gulf countries, has played a critical role in bestowing legitimacy upon the monarchies that govern the region today. Moreover, the processes of nation- and state-building in these countries have been dependent on garnering a strong sense of allegiance and loyalty from the tribes. However, the tribes have been affected by the sweeping developments that have influenced the region, including rapid modernisation, the wars in the Gulf, the Arab Spring, and most recently, the 2017 Gulf crisis. These events have tested the existence, structure, functionality, and relevance of the tribe within the modern state and on regional levels in multiple ways. In some cases, moreover, tribes have been at the core of the sociopolitical challenges facing the state.

Repeatedly bombarded by memories and triggered by questions pertaining to individual, tribal and national identity, I found myself gravitating toward pursuing research focusing on the tribe and its role vis-à-vis state and society, and eventually in writing this book. My focus was on studying how the revival of tribalism affects nation-building and state legitimacy in the GCC countries, especially in Qatar and Kuwait. I was also driven by my curiosity to explore the social and political dynamics in the relationship between rising tribalism and the modern state and to investigate how regimes and individuals in countries such as Qatar and Kuwait perceive the rising intensity of tribalism and how they respond to and interact with it.

1.2 The Tribe Still Matters

The centrality of the tribe in the lives of nomadic groups in the Arabian Peninsula can perhaps be best depicted in the poetry of the pre-Islamic poet Qurayt bin ‘Anif al-Anbari al-Tamimi. Al-Tamimi, a member of the Bani Tamim tribe, suffered the loss of 30 camels in a raid by his tribe’s rivals, Bani Shayban. His desperate appeals for help were ignored by the elders of his tribe, which by his standards and the general tribal norms and conventions at the time was shocking. However, aid came

from his relatives, the tribe of Bani Mazen al-Tamimi, who recouped 100 instead of 30 camels. It was in their praise that he recited his famous lines:

> Had I been one of Bani Mazen, my camels would not have been violated,
> By the bastards of Bani Shayban,
> Rough men would have come to my aid,
> If a madman even thought of committing foul play,
> They are people who at the sight of evil,
> Will march to it, single and herds
> They never ask a brother appealing in crisis,
> To provide evidence of his suffering [al-Zarkali, 2002, my translation].

Such poetry, and probably many similar oral works by pre-Islamic poets, are associated with one of the most established norms in Arab tribal societies, namely the obligation of a tribe to stand up for and relentlessly support their own at times of crisis, without questioning whether they are right or wrong. This was a simple social rule that carried substantial political consequences for the tribes of Arabia, one that established and induced a strong and reliable sense of security among the members of the tribe and thus contributed to the tribe's strength and cohesion (Heard-Bey, 2008, pp. 11–12).

Despite the central role of the tribe in the sociopolitical and economic systems of the Gulf region, most of the available literature on the subject has focused on the tribe before and during state formation, as well as the period that followed independence in GCC countries. However, as far as the revival of tribalism, especially in the 1990s, the subject has attracted very little interest, especially with respect to its political implications. The general view has been that while the tribe played an important role in establishing and reinforcing state legitimacy and the political order, the relevance of its role has diminished as it was replaced by the state as the central authority holding monopoly over political, economic, security, and other functions. The tribe as a concept, however, has not only endured the onslaught by the state, but it has also thrived, especially with the declining legitimacy of the state since the early 1990s. Moreover, the revival of tribalism has in itself may have become a factor that undermines the legitimacy of the state. The existing literature, however, offers very little information and few explanations on this issue.

For example, in *Oil and Politics in the Gulf*, Crystal (1990) studied the transformational shift in the relationship between rulers and the merchant class as a result of political and economic developments in the region. Crystal (1990), moreover, addressed the relationship between state and society from a political-economic perspective, arguing that new alliances emerged in GCC societies as a result oil revenue inflow, which in turn transformed into reinforced regime legitimacy and stability. The relationship between state and society in the GCC region, however, has mostly focused on dynamics from a "rentier state" perspective, that is, a transactional relationship between rulers and citizens that is based on oil revenues, and where citizens receive substantial welfare benefits in return for their loyalty to the state and rulers without any opportunity for political participation. In this framework

of analysis, however, the role of the tribe is rendered insignificant. Hence, this framework does not offer an understanding of how and why the revival of tribalism has occurred.

In contrast, in *State and Society*, Khaldoun al-Naqeeb (1990) argues that the tribe was not necessarily at conflict with the state, and that the process of the nation state did not undermine the tribe, but rather, it actually reinforced the tribe and its role in the political system. Al-Naqeeb (1990) introduced the concept of "political tribalism" to trace the tribal origins of political legitimacy of the state in the Gulf countries. Political tribalism is not limited to kinship or lineage ties, but rather, it is a system that provides the bases of group cohesion, services as an organising principle through the allocation of group resources and the rules of categorical inclusion or exclusion in the group, and represents a popular mentality that governs all forms of political relations in society. While al-Naqeeb (1990) was instrumental in developing the notion of political tribalism, his work was not comparative and has not been updated to capture the revival of tribalism in the decades that followed.

In tracing the evolution of the tribe-state nexus, it seems that tribe and tribalism did not only play a visible role in the formation of the state in the Gulf region, but also a substantial one. For example, in Kuwait and Qatar, the foundations of a modern state were based on the tribal structure and on tribal networks. Tribes were then practically mobilised and instrumentalised to consolidate power and to reinforce the stability of political systems during the second half of the twentieth century. This was attributed to and based on two factors. First, from a Weberian perspective, the state consolidated its power through kinship and tribal elements to establish state control, thus minimising any opposition and extending political power. As a result, individuals and groups were pushed to seek protection through their tribal affiliations with the ruling families as well as through the state institutions. Second, the states in both countries were underdeveloped and in the embryonic stage, suffering weakness and vulnerability, which in turn pushed rulers to capitalise on and to exploit tribes and tribalism as a means to reinforce their legitimacy. In the long term, however, this approach backfired, leading to the re-emergence of tribalism as a contentious force vis-à-vis the state, especially after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 which represented an existential threat and shock to the Gulf rulers and states at the time.

Still, the revival of tribalism in Kuwait and Qatar, as well as in other Gulf countries, is not necessarily an isolated development. In fact, it occurs at a time where the state in many countries all over the world is weakening and facing the threat of fragility as a result of a variety of factors such as globalisation, the encroaching influence of international organisations, the rise of ethnic and other internal conflicts, and a myriad of other internal threats and stressors (Midgal, 2001, p. 251). In fact, while globalisation has offered states an opportunity to benefit from opportunities to expand their economies, it has also triggered fears and threats on the political, social, cultural and economic levels (Clement & Springborg, 2010).

1.3 The Many Meanings of Tribe

Despite the extensive discussions of the tribe as a social concept, a final definition remains elusive as it seems to vary over time and with geography. According to Ibn Khaldun's Muqaddimah, the tribe represents the collective social, political, and economic framework that preceded the urban context. He defines the tribe as an organisation "that obeys its own inner laws" (Ibn Khaldun, 1967, p. 259). Within this organisational context, the essential link between individuals and a particular tribe is shared kinship and group consciousness (Heard-Bey, 2008, p. 12). This is explained by what Ibn Khaldun and his disciples, such as Abu Ya 'rub al-Marzouqi, Mohammed Abed Al-Jabri, and 'Ali 'Abd al-Wahad referred to as the 'asabiyya, or group solidarity and cohesion, a powerful glue that brought the members of the collective tribe together to act as a single human body (Ibn Khaldun, 1967, p. 263). An example that explains the complexity of 'asabiyya is depicted in the old, famous Bedouin apothegm: "I and my brothers against my cousin; I and my cousins against the stranger." (Barakat, 1993, p. 184) However, while Ibn Khaldoun emphasised the importance of 'asabiyya as the power that brought the members of the group together alongside "the natural virtues and fighting abilities of the rural tribes," and despite the relevance of kinship and lineage as critical factors in defining the tribe (Ibn Khaldun, 1967, p. 264), he also considered al-ard (territory) as an equally critical factor contributing to the strength, cohesion, and superiority of the tribe.

Interestingly, while kinship and lineage seem to have been dominant factors in defining the tribe, this may not have been based on reality as much as it perpetuated a shared myth that strengthened the sense of belonging among tribe members. Religion, for example, seems to be a prominent factor at play in this context. In reflecting on Ibn Khaldoun's work, Ritter (1948) argued that religion was an ideology that strengthened 'asabiyya. In contrast, Von Kremer (1927) argued that Ibn Khaldoun considered religion merely as an ideology that contributed to tribal solidarity and cohesion.

Philosophers such as Karl Marx, have also attempted to develop an understanding of the tribe as a notion and of its position in the models of transformation within Western civilisation, particularly in the republics of Athens and Rome. The tribe, according to Marx, did not undermine the transformation of Athens into a liberal democratic republic. To the contrary, the tribe was a fundamental factor that made the transformation successful and contributed to the class-based democracy model that prevailed in that republic through the division of labour within the tribes vis-à-vis their relationship to the city (Marx, 1979, p. 244).

Likewise, according to Weber, the tribe constituted a phase that preceded the state. Prior to the state, the tribe existed as "a stateless, segmentary social group characterized by a myth of common lineage and bound together by linear loyalties" (Weber, 2008, pp. 160–161; Tibi, 1990b, p. 131) and which acted as "autonomous estate functionaries." The modern state, on the other hand, argued Weber, constitutes "an institutional association of rule, which within a given territory has succeeded in gaining a monopoly of legitimate physical force as a means of ruling, and to this end

has united material resources in the hands of its leaders, after expropriating all the autonomous estate functionaries who previously controlled them in their own name" (Weber, 2008, p. 160). Similarly, Durkheim proposed the notion of "mechanical solidarity" in reference to the tribe, which he perceived as a social organisation of egalitarian descent groups (Durkheim, 1933, p. 278).

Thus, whether by kinship, lineage, religion, or any other ideology, classical authors did not seem to have agreed on the definition of the tribe, especially when taking into consideration the wide diversity of tribal structures and systems across various regions of the world.

More recently, Richard Tapper (1990) pinpointed at least three distinct concepts of the tribe held by anthropologists. The first concept is the definition of the tribe as a primitive society, in contrast to the state as the manifestation of modernity. This view, widely held in Western colonial thought, was based on linguistic and other common cultural factors shared by tribe members or ethnic groups (Tapper, 1990, p. 50). However, this definition has been widely contested, as it places the tribe within a primordial context and ignores the fact that the tribe and the state have, in many regions and cases, been very closely intertwined (Eickelman, 2001, p. 119).

The second definition, provided by British social anthropologists such as Evans-Pritchard, portrays the tribe as a political group defined by centralised authority and by dispute-settling mechanisms that are shared among the members of the group (Tapper, 1990, p. 50). This definition, however, does not acknowledge the critical role of kinship and lineage in bringing members of the group together, in which wealth, privilege, and status necessarily regulate the political relations.

The third definition is based on the idea of the tribe as an indigenous entity in relation to identity, unity, evolutionary scheme, and a "segmentary lineage system" in which kinship and descent play a critical role in its social and political organisation (Tapper, 1990, p. 50). This concept may perhaps be more applicable to tribes in the Middle East, especially in regions such as the Arabian Peninsula, where kinship and lineage are the focus of social and political organisation.

However, it may be challenging to reach a definition that is applicable to the many variations of tribal structures in the various regions spanning different periods of history. Nevertheless, three important considerations must be noted in the context of studying tribes in the Arabian Peninsula. First, kinship and lineage remain critical to the tribes of the region, although to varying degrees (Tapper, 2009). Secondly, the shared mechanisms of settling disputes have always been important for the tribes of the region. Thirdly, as Tapper (1990) highlights, it would be unrealistic to position the tribe at odds with the state or to claim that the tribe is opposed to the notion of modernity represented by the state, especially in the context of the Middle East, where the formation and the survival of the state has often hinged on its ability to deal with the tribes and to gain their approval and support. This view has also been echoed by Hudson (1977, pp. 56–57), who argued against the identification of the tribe as primordial in the Middle East, claiming that "it is too easy to assume that modernisation is performing an assimilationist melting-pot function in the area." As such, Dale Eickelman (2016, p. 226) argued that "tribes in the region have always co-existed with the state," and while their relationship may at times reflect a significant

degree of conflict, this cannot be depicted as a conflict between the pre-modern and the modern society.

1.4 Tribalism and the State: Sociological and Political Theories

Before addressing the relationship between the tribe and the state, it is important to refer on the literature on the state, the processes of nation and state-building, the legitimacy of the state, and the relationship between society and the state in general. To start with, several perspectives exist on explaining the state, specifically the culturalist, rationalist and institutionalist views. The culturalist perspective based on the works of Geertz (1973, 1980) and Thompson (1974) perceives the state as theatre, where a country's politics reflect the design of its culture (Geertz, 1973). According to Migdal (2001, p. 239), "Modern states are made of multiple agencies and bureaus with widely different tasks and interests. The forces pulling them in different directions—regional demands, interest groups leverage, international pressures—are tremendous." According to the system-dominant structuralist perspective, the coherence of the state depends on its ability to follow its own interests. Interestingly, Goldstone (1991) attempted to provide an explanation for the reasons that lead to state failure based on this perspective, arguing that states "crack" when they face a financial crisis, when the elites in society are torn by divisions, and when the social and political environments in a society provide opportunities for popular groups to mobilise. However, this perspective as Migdal (2001) argues, suffers a fundamental weakness as it removes agency from the hands of the state and of society.

The institutionalist approach, on the other hand, focuses on the rational goals of leaders and institutions in the state to explain the institutional path of the state but pays little attention to the impact of culture (Migdal, 2001, p. 245). Moreover, Migdal (2001, p. 250) argues that while the modern state presents itself as the ultimate authority over society, in reality, this authority is often tempered or even fractured by the nature of encounters that the state has with different cultural and social forces in society. Migdal (2001, p. 251) also argues that the state in the twenty-first century has been fractured and embattled by globalisation, divisive ethnic conflicts, and the growing power of supranational entities, all of which have undermined the myths of national unity that states had previously claimed.

Likewise, Mitchell (2018, p. 81) argues that "The popular Weberian definition of the state, as an organisation that claims monopoly within a fixed territory over the legitimate use of violence, is only a residual characterisation," and that traditional state-centred approaches to defining state suffer a serious weakness as they perceive the state as an entity that is separate from society. The state, according to Mitchell (2018, p. 95) is not a "freestanding entity" that is opposed to society as a separate entity, even if the distinction exists.

Two important processes that are relevant to the state as an entity are state formation and nation-building. State formation can be defined as a process by which states emerge in relation to societies, and this process may be influenced by the political, economic, cultural and historic conditions and circumstances that vary from one state to another (Bayart, 1993). Nation-building on the other hand can be defined as the deliberate processes and efforts by which a state attempts to unify the people and members of its society such that the country remains or becomes politically viable and stable in the long term, whether these processes involve reliance on national myths of imagined communities or the processes of building national institutions among others (Bendix, 1996; Anderson, 2006).

Both state formation and nation-building constitute critical processes in determining the stability of the state in the long term. However, another important factor is the ability of the state to maintain its legitimacy in the eyes of its own society. Lipset (1959, p. 86) defines legitimacy as "the capacity of a political system to engender and maintain the belief that existing political institutions are the most appropriate or proper ones for the society." Legitimacy, moreover, is not constant and is subject to the changing relationship between the state and the components and actors that constitute its society. For example, state legitimacy is vulnerable to questioning, not as a result of the fragility of state institutions per se, but rather, as a result of the absence of constructive linkages between state institutions and society (Clements et al., 2007, pp. 50–51). To achieve legitimacy, states can pursue multiple strategies which according to Hudson (1977, p. 2) include symbol manipulation, providing economic benefits to the people, enhancing traditional patterns and state coercion.

The implication of mainstream Western political analysis suggests that the tribe is a social and political entity through which individuals develop and express a strong sense of identity, and in which they fulfil certain duties and obligations in return for collective benefits, such as security and better opportunities to achieve prosperity. This analysis, however, considers the tribe to be a traditional unit that is essentially opposed to or at conflict with the modern state and its ideology. Hobsbawm (1997), for example, suggested that conflict between traditional tribalism and modern nationalism is a fundamental factor in weakening and undermining state formation and statehood. Khoury and Kostiner (1990) expressed a similar view in their characterisation of the tribe as the major pre-modernist structure responsible for the inadequate formation and building of states in tribal regions, such as the Middle East. They attribute this to the fact that the hierarchical order of the tribe is fundamentally based on coalition and kinship, two variables that are too narrow and restricted to include other social units and groups in society within a modern state.

This approach, however, has been widely discussed and challenged by several political scientists and sociologists. For example, Tapper (2009) argued that there is no causal relationship between nomadism and the tribe as an organisation, and that no universal features are shared among all tribal structures. Tribes can take many forms; for example, they may be based on pastoral economies or characterised by nomadic or semi-nomadic movements, whereas other characteristics may or may not involve organisation around descent and centralised chieftains. Hence, tribalism is a complex notion that cannot be limited to a single aspect, such as traditionalism

or nomadism, because as globalisation theorist Paul James (2006) put it, tribalism defines the way of being for certain communities. Moreover, while kinship and coalitions may represent a prominent aspect of tribalism, the construct is far more complex and may encompass other variables, such as complex systems of reciprocal exchange, economic means of production, cultural values, and the implications of an identity.

In studying the relationship between tribalism and the modern state in the Middle East, Layne (1994) argued that placing the tribe at odds with the modern state tends to distort reality. More importantly, she opposed the notion which considers tribalism to be static, arguing instead that it is not only dynamic, but constantly changing and adapting. In Jordan, for example, she argued that the notion of homeland or nation is not undermined or weakened by tribalism or the existence of multiple tribal identities within the state, but rather that both homeland and nationalism are defined and reinforced by tribalism.

In this respect, Caton (1990) reflected on multiple models that attempt to explain the tribe-state relationship in several tribal communities, such as the Nuer studied by Evans-Pitchard (1940), the Atlas tribes studied by Gellner (1990), the Kababish studied by Asad (1970), and the tribes of Yemen (Phillips, 2011). In these cases, the state apparently needs the tribe to maintain social order, but at the same time, by exploiting the tribe in this manner, the state eventually undermines and weakens the foundations of the tribe as a social structure, possibly leading to chaos. Phillips (2011, pp. 49–50) concluded in her study of the relationship between the tribe and the state in Yemen that the state depends on the tribe to maintain order since it lacks a monopoly over public coercion, but at the same time, the relationship of patronage between the state and the tribal sheikhs eventually undermines the authority and legitimacy of the sheikhs, leading to their failure to attain order.

While seemingly radical, Layne's (1994) argument about the dynamic nature of tribalism and tribal identities, and the role that tribalism plays in reinforcing the sense of cohesion within a society is not new, nor is it limited to societies undergoing social and political transformation towards modern statehood, such as Jordan. French sociologist and post-modern philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard (1970) suggested that identities in post-modern societies are not only dynamic but also highly susceptible to modern mythology and meta-narrative, which are propagated through modern media, and ultimately define new meanings and values in life, as well as new traditions that are shared by certain members and groups in society. The tribe, therefore, seems to exist in both pre-modern and post-modern societies. The difference may merely be in the means of communication and the sources of myths and cultural values. Likewise, Barth (1969) argued that tribal or ethnic identities do not necessarily thrive and survive in isolation, but are rather dynamic, even when they involve certain social processes of exclusion.

1.4.1 Tribalism and the State in the Arabian Peninsula

The survival of the monarchical Gulf states in their absolutist form is sometimes presented as an exceptional phenomenon in the modern world, resulting primarily from the interference of oil and the formation of rentier economies (Herb, 1999). This suggests that had it not been for the emergence of oil wealth, these states would not have been resilient or even capable of surviving the winds of change that have repeatedly swept through the region over the years (Herb, 1999, pp. 3–4). This view is in line with the hegemony analysis proposed by Ayubi (1995, p. 454), who applies a neo-Marxist theory to the state in the Middle East and argues that the ruling families in the Gulf are stable as a result of their oil-based economic autonomy from society. Yet, Ayubi further suggests that these states are weak because they lack Gramsci's elements of hegemony, and thus they lack the ability to develop a genuine political philosophy that propagates throughout society and manifests itself in the daily life of its citizens (Ayubi, 1995, p. 449).

Ayubi's analysis suggests that for all their strength, stability, and resilience, the monarchical states of the Gulf are structurally weak, and their assumed stability is attributed to the fact that their societies are significantly dependent on the state. In this context, three implications can be identified with respect to tribe and tribalism. First, while the tribe may still be relevant on the cultural and social levels, it is of little or declining relevance with respect to the state, partly because the state is autonomous from society, at least economically, and partly because the tribes and other components of society are substantially dependent on the state. Secondly, this view suggests that the weakness of the tribes vis-à-vis the state results in a fluid and dispersed social structure in which tribal affiliation and kinship are also weakened. However, this suggestion seems to ignore the ability of the ruling families in the Gulf to reinforce their legitimacy and develop extensive social and political alliances through marriage and tribal relations in society (Khuri, 1980, p. 9). The third implication is the suggestion that kinship and the cultural and political dimensions of the tribe are weakened to the point that they do not contribute to the political philosophy of the state. To the contrary, al-Naqeeb (1996, p. 21) argued that the process of state-building in the GCC region may have actually contributed to strengthening tribes and the traditional ways of political and social behaviour based on kinship and patronage rather than undermining them.

Peterson (2007), on the other hand, argued that the states in the Gulf have attained resilience and stability by harnessing the power of kinship. This resonates with Ibn Khaldun's (1978, p. 123) perspective on dynasties, specifically in the involvement of ruling family members, not only in actually contributing to the process of government but also in expanding and reinforcing kinship through building ties with tribes through marriage and business relations. Hence, ruling family members are appointed to key and sensitive positions in the state and, on the social level, the ruling family extends its legitimacy and ability to gain loyalty through building alliances by kinship and intermarriage with other tribes. In this context, tribes manifest both weaknesses and strengths vis-à-vis the political system and the state. As Gellner (1990) points out,

on the one hand, they enjoy strength and influence because they remain critical components for maintaining sociopolitical order in the system, but on the other hand, tribes have no control over the economy, security forces, or the military, which minimises their relevance and influence in the political system.

Overall, it seems that the classical characteristics of tribalism, specifically kinship, loyalty, and coalition, have all become institutionalised in the modern states of the Gulf region. As Herb (1999, p. 3) put it, the ruling families have transformed themselves into "ruling institutions," and this system not only includes the ruling family at the top of the hierarchy and at the critical junctions of the state but also the tribes, although in varying degrees. Likewise, Yom (2014) argued that the monarchies of the Gulf enjoy substantial legitimacy because of their ability to simultaneously combine traditional values, tribal practices, and religious leadership. The result is a mode of dynasticism in which the members of the ruling family are not only represented as heads of the state but also are active components in reinforcing the state and its institutions on the political, administrative, and social levels. In the latter sense, ruling family members play an important role in bringing the tribal fabric of society together in the process of expanding the tribal alliances and coalitions that prevent the emergence of any real resistance to its rule.

1.4.2 Tribes, Tribalism, and the State in Kuwait and Qatar

Many tribes of the Arabian Peninsula appear to share a common history and values, and even ancestry and blood ties. Moreover, the GCC states exhibit many similarities on the political, social, and economic levels, with respect to the status and role of the tribes and of tribalism in the formation of these states. It is not surprising, therefore, that the debate over tribalism and whether it contributes to or impedes state-building and modernisation has been raging in most Gulf countries since the 1960s and 1970s (al-Kandari, 2010). On the one hand, the tribe is presented as a social unit that is incompatible with modern statehood and the concept of citizenship, as it allegedly fuels divisiveness and undermines the loyalty of citizens to the state (Barakat, 1993, p. xii). On the other hand, tribalism is also touted as a cultural attribute and a source of diversity that contributes to national and social cohesiveness in the Gulf states (Barakat, 1993, p. xii).

Despite these apparent structural, political, economic, and social similarities, and the fact that the debate over tribalism and its relation to statehood and state-building continues in both states, tribalism is not necessarily perceived in a similar manner. As this book reveals, subtle, yet significant differences in the recent histories, structures, and political economies of Kuwait and Qatar may have contributed to substantial differences in how these states perceive tribalism, in the nature of the relationship

between the state and the tribe, and in the political implications of the state policy towards tribes and tribalism.[1]

Kuwait and Qatar recognised naturalisation and citizenship rights a decade apart, the former in 1920 and the latter in 1930. In both cases, many who arrived after these cutoff dates were perceived by Hadhar (the traditional merchant families) as Bedouin, which is a blurry classification rather than an objective distinction. For example, many Bedouins were not nomadic in their lifestyle and often shared the same ways of life as the Hadhar, as well as their values and lifestyles. However, the term Bedouin is specifically used in reference to the tribal families that arrived after the cutoff dates, in a way affirming their lower social status vis-à-vis the Hadhar. In fact, many of the Hadhar and Bedouin families descend from the same tribe, although from different clans, whereby one clan may have settled earlier than the cutoff date, hence becoming recognised as Hadhar, while their kin from another clan arrived are recognised as Bedouin merely because they arrived after the cutoff date. According to Cole (2003, p. 262), a clan constitutes of several lineages sharing a common ancestor, whereas a tribe often constitutes of multiple clans. Moreover, while one belongs to a tribe, most of the everyday life affairs are conducted at the clan level.

It is worth mentioning, moreover, that many of those who were unable to prove their permanent residence prior to the cutoff dates could have failed to do so merely as a result of negligence, ignorance of the procedures, or other factors (al-Nakib, 2014). It is not surprising, therefore, that many Hadhar and Bedouins in Kuwait, for example, could be first-degree relatives who share similar kinship and lineage (al-Nakib, 2016, p. 26). Another significant category that is worth noting in this respect is the stateless, also known as the Bidoun (meaning "without" or "without nationality"), many of whom are tribal groups with affiliations to "Northern tribes" (Parolin, 2009; al-Ghabra, 2014; Fisher, 2015; Beaugrand, 2018). According to Beaugrand, Northern tribes are "the tribes roaming the desert of Hamad, Hajara and the Syrian Jazira, whose territory stretched into the south, in the desert of Najd and Qasim in what is now Saudi Arabia." (Beaugrand, 2018, p. 4). Many of the Bidouns have probably been denied citizenship, not because of their inability to prove permanent residence in Kuwait, but more as a result of their questioned political loyalty (Beaugrand, 2018, p. 31). The Bidoun situation is not limited to Kuwait, where their population is estimated at 93,000, but applies to Qatar as well, which has an estimated population of 1200 Bidouns (Fisher, 2015, p. 2).

In contrast, the tribes that migrated from the mainland Arabian Peninsula in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries seem to have been more welcomed by the state in Kuwait and were eventually naturalised and granted Kuwaiti citizenship. The state also welcomed the Bedouin tribes through naturalisation under the 1959–1960 laws to ensure their political support and to keep the merchant class in check (Herb, 2016). Moreover, prominent members of these tribes were also staffed in the public

[1] It is worth mentioning that figures on the demographic structure and the demographic representation of tribes in Kuwait and Qatar are highly confidential. This is particularly the case in Qatar where an official at the Qatar Planning and Statistics Authority vehemently refused to provide any figures under the pretext that such data cannot be shared with the public. This issue is considered a highly sensitive political subject in both countries.

sector and in the military and security apparatuses, especially given their unwavering loyalty to the ruling emir. In addition to this, the Bedouin tribes were accommodated in the urban outskirts and enclaves around the city and were even encouraged to be political players in the Parliament as a means to undermine any opposition to the emir (Crystal, 1989).

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Hadhar of Kuwait often looked down on the Bedouins with suspicion (al-Nakib, 2016, p. 28). They were, after all, major actors in ensuring that the merchant class could never regain the political power that it had once enjoyed for centuries before oil was discovered (al-Nakib, 2016, p. 142). Accordingly, the accusations frequently made by the Hadhar that the state in Kuwait favoured the tribes and encouraged tribalism as a means of dividing and conquering, and to prevent the rise of any real opposition to the ruling family, were understandable (Longva, 2006).

In Qatar, the Bedouin tribes were also welcomed by the state, although in a different context. To start with, given the continuous population movements that characterised Qatar in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Al Thani were not a ruling family among peers (Rahman, 2005, pp. 8–9). Rather, they were a dominant tribe with a significantly large population which enjoyed political clout through alliances and marriage with other tribes. More importantly, while the ruling family of Qatar suffered economic and financial challenges in the pre-oil era, its members were economically active and to a great extent autonomous from the relatively small and weak merchant class (Anthony & Hearty, 2002). Moreover, while the ruling family enjoyed full economic independence with the discovery of oil, new tribal alliances were formed, paving the road for prominent tribal members to play a far more influential role in society, through economic influence and the opportunity to expand wealth. On the political level, however, the Al Thani family maintained almost full control of the state and its most sensitive positions, which suppressed or discouraged any challenge to their authority by other clans (Crystal, 1989, p. 428).

The dimensions of political alliances and political economy highlight a significant difference in how tribalism is perceived in Kuwait and Qatar. In Kuwait, the divide between the Hadhar and Bedouins can be understood in the context that tribalism was possibly encouraged by the state, at least in the early period of state-building that followed independence, partly to reinforce the political position and status of the ruling family, and partly to undermine the political position of the traditional merchant class (al-Ghabra, 2014). It is also in this context that the merchant class and the Hadhar in Kuwait have perceived the tribal groups, to which they refer as Bedouins, with suspicion and unease. The latter were welcomed as loyal supporters to the ruling family as the social contract between the ruling family and the traditional merchant class and Hadhar had witnessed rapid transformation following the discovery of oil (al-Ghabra, 2014).

In Qatar, tribalism does not seem to be have been perceived through this problematic prism by the traditional merchant class. In part, this is attributed to the recent history of demographic and population movements in Qatar, the weakness of the merchant class on the political and economic levels, and the dominant power of the

Al Thani ruling family, despite the fact that the arrival of the ruling family in Qatar is far more recent in comparison to the arrival of the Al Sabah family in Kuwait.

The policies of the state toward the tribe and tribalism in Qatar and Kuwait in the decades that followed independence have left significant marks on processes such as state-building and on the outcomes of these processes today. According to Longva (2006), the tribe has been at the centre of state-building in the Gulf countries, specifically through a process she refers to as the nationalisation of the tribe. In Kuwait, the state welcomed and empowered Bedouin tribes by naturalising them, providing them with accommodation around Kuwait City, and by assigning them to the most important and sensitive posts in the public sector as well as in the military and security forces. In one way or another, the integration of the tribe was thus part and parcel of the process of state-building. However, al-Nakib (2014) argued that the state's strategies for the integration of tribes in Kuwait were not necessarily effective, especially in the long term. While the role the Bedouin tribes played in supporting the ruling family was effective in the 1970s and 1980s, by the 1990s, these tribes had begun to shift their support to the opposition. Although they had been integrated into Kuwait society, their movement to the opposition was an expression of their discontent with their status, a demand for more rights, and an attempt to access more resources in society.

The failure may have been in the integration process itself. For example, one of the ways in which the tribes were integrated was through providing them with accommodation around the city, but decades later, this strategy has resulted in creating overcrowded neighbourhoods that suffer substandard infrastructure and which marginalise resident communities (al-Nakib, 2014). Hence, what was acceptable for these tribes in the 1950s and 1960s was no longer so in the 1980s and 1990s. Accordingly, the revival and rise of tribalism in Kuwait may not only be about cultural identity and political participation alone, but may reflect the demand for more rights associated with citizenship.

In Qatar, the revival of tribalism is also noticeable despite the differences in circumstances. For example, while the demand for political participation in Kuwait has contributed to fuelling tribal sentiments and demands for representation, this was far from being the case in Qatar until 2021, when the first Shura Council elections were held. However, as Fromherz (2012, p. 7) pointed out, the tribes in the Qatari context are not limited to the Bedouin tribes, but refer to one's family or extended tribe, as "the fundamental determinant of an individual Qatari's social position and future." Hence, the revival of tribalism can be perceived as the means through which individuals not only seek access to resources in the system, but, most importantly, social prestige, which is made possible by the opportunity to climb the social ladder and attain some degree of power.

1.5 Significance and Contribution

The revival of tribalism in the GCC countries, including Qatar and Kuwait, is manifested in the intensified expression and celebration of tribal identities, the heightened awareness of tribal identities, and occasionally in the form of social, political, and economic conflict and/or cooperation along tribal lines. More importantly, while most GCC countries have embraced the revival of tribalism as a form of cultural diversity and as a means of connectedness to shared history and national identity, in many cases, the GCC states have not yet decided how the revival of tribalism should be perceived and addressed. In fact, some governments perceive the revival of and rising tribalism as a major setback to the processes of nation- and state-building, especially in light of the radical ethnic, tribal, religious, and sectarian sentiments that have swept through the region since 1990. Other governments perceive this phenomenon as a strategic tool for surviving, negotiating and accommodating between state and society in the light of unprecedented sociopolitical changes and developments.

Thus, it is important to identify the extent to which the role and status of tribes today differ from what they it to be in the early decades that followed independence. The use of the term "revival" in this research does not in any way imply that tribalism had disappeared at any point in the past. Rather, it refers to the strength and intensity of tribalism in contrast to the early post-independence period in the 1970s and 1980s when tribalism was looked down at as primordial and opposed to modernisation. Although the tribal structure has always existed, the renewed intensity of tribalism is taking on many complex forms of interaction and exchange between the states and society. Thus, unlike the 1970s and 1980s when tribal affiliation was increasingly ignored and berated, since the 1990s, it has been regaining its importance and relevance as a significant factor in the decisions of young and educated citizens, even in matters such as selecting their future spouses. On a broader level, the rising intensity of tribalism is also seen in national events, such as the National Day celebrations and elections in Qatar, both representing opportunities for tribes to engage in heated contests to assert their identities, lineages, and distinction from other tribes and social groups. However, the revival of tribalism is not limited to these symbolic and social expressions. It also seems to be part of a process of institutionalisation, especially within the major tribes, in which tribal "consultation councils" promote the identities and interests of tribe members, much like the way in political parties and interest groups tend to function.

In the 1990s, multiple seminal works were published on the relationship between the tribe and the state in the Gulf. For example, one of the most notable works is Jill Crystal's book *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar* in the 1990s in which she presented an insightful discussion on Gulf rentier states and the shifting power between the state and merchants in Kuwait and Qatar. Another valuable contribution at the time was Michael Herb's *All in the Family* which provides a useful analytical framework to the understanding of politics in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states and also offers alternatives to reinter economy theory as he argues for placing monarchism as a political institution at the centre of

any explanation of Gulf politics. Since the 1990s, however, there have been very few valuable contributions to the comparative literature on GCC states concerning the tribe and tribalism or the relationship between the tribe and the state. A few other works have also addressed relevant issues such as state formation and state-society relations such as *The Merchants* by Michael Field which focuses on the shifting historical fortunes of major Gulf merchant families; Rosemarie Zahlan's *Making of the Modern Gulf States* which constitutes a compact historical summary of state creation in the GCC monarchies although it falls short on discussing structural developments; and Steffen Hertog's *Princes, Brokers and Bureaucrats* which provides a historical account on the formation of bureaucratic structures and the resulting shifts in state-society relations in Saudi Arabia.

It must also be noted that many previous works in the literature have focused on the impact of oil on tribes and the state as well as on state-society, discussing social, economic and urban transformations, while others have focused on either the transformation in the relationship between rulers and merchants or the survival of monarchic regimes. However, the interrelationship between the political system and the tribe has received little or no attention at all. Moreover, the revival or reawakening of tribalism has also been ignored in recent studies despite its growing intensity since the 1990s. Interestingly, there have been a few useful works published in recent years that cover the relationship between state and tribe, although outside the Gulf region. Most notable in this respect is the work of Lisa Anderson, *The State and Social Transformation in Tunisia and Libya: 1830–1980*, in which she analyses the impact of state penetration in these two countries during the pre-colonial Ottoman era, which resulted in undermining kinship and tribal ties, replacing them with networks of clientelism (Anderson, 1986, p. 95). Anderson's analysis echoes similar developments in the relationship between the state and tribe in the early years following independence in Qatar and Kuwait where the state replaced the tribe as the provider of economic, social and other services to the public, but it does not offer any insights on the revival of tribalism as it is seen today. A similarly valuable work is Peter Evans' *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation* in which he argues that development is undermined by the scarcity of bureaucracy rather than by its prevalence and where he defined embeddedness as "a concrete set of connections that link the state intimately and aggressively to particular social groups with whom the state shares a joint project of transformations" (Evans, 1995, p. l59), thus setting up a promising framework for the study of the dynamic relationship between the state and the tribe and other components of society.

Given the limited studies and analyses of the dynamic relationship between state and tribes in the GCC and the lack of literature to explain the factors contributing to the reawakening of tribalism in the region, this book attempts to address this gap, specifically by focusing on the following dimensions:

- Tracing and illustrating the ways in which tribe and tribalism have been deployed and redeployed to meet political and social projects.

- Analysing the factors contributing to the intense revival of tribalism in the context of strong centralised states rather than weak or failing states, an issue that, to the researcher's knowledge, has not been covered by the literature before.
- The role and impact of tribalism on state legitimacy and on the process of nation-building have been well-studied. However, the impact of the revival of tribalism remains understudied in states which are supposed to be highly centralised and where the nation does not seem contested, such as Qatar and Kuwait. This study will shed light on this new phenomenon and on its implications for state legitimacy as well as on the processes of nation- and state-building.

1.6 Research Methods

Research is greatly facilitated by the selection and use of a good methodology. However, the biggest challenge that most researchers face is identifying an appropriate and effective methodology that will enable them to achieve their research goals. In the field of political sociology, researchers face many different challenges. One major issue they face is in identifying and knowing their position in dealing with human behaviour on the individual and social levels. Human behaviours and interactions are not always easy to predict, identify, explain, and verify, not to mention that they are subject to change. Change can happen abruptly or over a long period of time, for reasons that may be obvious or vague and mysterious. In addition, researchers in a specific field often deal with controversial issues. One such issue pertains to the revival of tribalism in countries of the Arabian Peninsula, which presents a number of immediate challenges. Addressing the issue of the revival of tribalism was challenging in itself, as this subject has not been widely studied or documented. In fact, as far as the GCC countries and societies are concerned, the revival of tribalism has only recently been highlighted, mostly in the media, and by a few analysts and researchers, amidst general controversy in relation to the definition, scope, and impact of this phenomenon.

1.6.1 Author's Positionality

As a Qatari woman conducting research in two Gulf countries, I had to pay special attention to my positionality on the subject that I am studying and its relevant issues. This is particularly true since I am a woman who comes from one of the biggest tribes in Qatar. Additionally, I was also aware of the need to maintain my objectivity while investigating the history and the relationship between the tribe and the state, especially when taking into consideration that the subject of the study is on the revival of tribalism and tribal fervour. Hence, a major challenge that I went through as I conducted my research and completed this book was not only to maintain my

objectivity, but also to act as an impartial observer and to put aside any stereotypes or pre-existing notions that I might have had as a citizen and a member of a tribe.

On the other hand, as a woman, I was also aware that my ability to collect data and to conduct interviews was compromised for two reasons. The first is my gender, which immediately meant that I had to face many traditional restrictions in contacting and interviewing males, not to mention the restrictions on attending men's groups and majlis. While I was able to overcome these difficulties by employing the help and support of family and friends who facilitated the interviews at several majlis councils, I still had to be careful not to cross social barriers regarding communication, the limitation on insisting on answers, or the questioning of inconsistencies if any, in the information given by an interviewee. Meanwhile, I also had to put aside my worldview as a woman and to keep the focus on the subject matter. Yet, while my gender was at times an impediment, at others, it actually allowed me to have quick and direct access to female interviewees who were forthcoming and fully supportive once I was successful in building rapport with them.

Another issue that I was aware would have an impact on my positionality was the so-called Khawaja complex, that is, the superior foreigner complex. In Qatar, a local researcher, let alone a woman, is associated with a negative stereotype because of the prevailing belief that foreign researchers, especially those from European or Western origin, are more competent. Hence, I had to maintain the highest level of earnestness and professionalism in my appearance and demeanour, and asserting mutual respect with the individuals I interviewed.

Interestingly, when I returned in Qatar in 2017, and although I had been out of the country for less than two years, I felt like a foreigner. People were stressed out over the GCC crisis and the fears concerning an impending Saudi invasion, and the concern that the whole state of Qatar was facing an existential threat. Having been away during the whole period when the crisis erupted, I faced difficulty in relating to the anxieties and fears expressed by others, that is, until I started listening to people more carefully, especially before starting the interviews. For example, I realised that several interviewees wanted to talk about the crisis and to discuss it as part of their answers despite the fact that this subject was not relevant to the research, and I had no choice but to respect their will.

In addition to all this, I had to take into consideration that when interviewing individuals who belonged to tribes other than mine, they would be reluctant to speak out openly about their experiences or to express their views. To overcome this hurdle, I had to make it clear from the very beginning that my study was academic in nature at a foreign university, and to make my interviewees feel comfortable that I maintained an objective position with respect to the questions and topic.

Ironically, things were much easier in Kuwait with respect to addressing issues pertaining to my positionality. To start with, I had almost no knowledge of tribal politics and dynamics whatsoever, and more importantly, in the eyes of my interviewees, I was simply the friendly and oblivious outsider who knew nothing and who had no stake in any issues. As a result, maintaining my objectivity was much easier because I was simply curious to know. At the same time, people were much more willing to open up and speak out without any reservations because they saw me as a harmless

outsider, and they were more generous with details because they wanted me to have a full understanding of the context. Still, I was fully aware of the fact that I had to leave any beliefs and expectations that may be related to Qatari tribes. I trained myself carefully to treat Kuwait as a completely foreign country, even pretending that I had never been to the Gulf before.

All in all, I think I had a successful experience in managing my positionality and in making sure that whatever thoughts, beliefs, and previous experiences I had before starting the study, had no implications on my work, whether in making assumptions, in conducting the interviews, or in collecting data.

1.6.2 Case Type, Scope, and Boundaries

The main purpose of this comparative study is to develop an in-depth understanding of a specific phenomenon in two different contexts, Qatar and Kuwait. In other words, its aim is to study the phenomenon in both contexts and to identify the similarities and differences in these two contexts, and to reflect on the potential causes and factors that may be responsible for such similarities and differences.

Furthermore, the comparative case study in this context is limited to a number of specific boundaries. The first set of boundaries relates to interrelationship between the political system and society in Qatar and Kuwait, although it is possible to refer to other systems and societies in other countries. Secondly, the cases under investigation are limited in terms of time, since they cover a specific period of history from the turn of the twentieth century to the present, that is, the period before and after state's independence, with specific emphasis on the period after the 1990s as the turning point. This latter period witnessed a significant and rapid revival of tribalism, during which the tribe started to regain its relevance, and sometimes its social and political power, although often on the basis of a new understanding of the tribe.

On the other hand, there are no strict limitations on the nature or type of variables and factors that the case covers during the investigation of the phenomenon at hand. For example, while cultural factors are the most important factors contributing to the rise of tribalism, other types of factors are involved, including the political and social ones, which also contribute to understanding the phenomenon.

The researcher's choice to opt for a comparative study is justified by multiple factors. To start with, politicians, intellectuals, journalists and even citizens have been complaining about the rising intensity of tribal division in different Gulf countries. Yet, the intense revival of tribalism remains a new phenomenon that has not been studied and that is still subject to debate. What is evident, however, is that it is taking place all over the Gulf region. At the same time, while tribes and the context in which they have emerged and evolved in the region seem to share many common characteristics on the surface, they also reflect fundamental differences at those levels which further complicates the efforts to develop a framework to study and understand tribes and tribalism in the region. One possible solution to overcome these complications is to use a comparative approach where the researcher compares

two or more cases that have some level of similarity, which allows to compare the similarities and contrast the differences, hence the choice of Qatar and Kuwait for the study.

Other factors were also involved and instrumental in making the choice of a comparative approach focused on Kuwait and Qatar. First, as a Qatari citizen who is very concerned by and interested in the process of tribal revival and its manifestations, I found this subject highly significant and relevant on a personal level. At the same time, while Qatar and Kuwait share many similarities in a number of areas, such as their small population size, demographics, and tribal structures, the two countries also have significant differences, which will contribute to enriching the study. For example, while Kuwait has experienced significant democratisation over the years, Qatar has undergone minimal political reforms of this nature. Yet, tribal revival seems to be strongly evident in both societies. This implies that tribal revival is not the result of the slow pace or limited scope of political reforms in the GCC countries.

Additionally, while Kuwait and Qatar share a number of common attributes, they also stand in contrast to their much bigger and more densely populated neighbour, Saudi Arabia. Moreover, the tribes and ruling families in both countries share another attribute, namely their migration from the mainland Arabian Peninsula. Even on the economic level, the two states are characterised by a number of similar characteristics. For example, both relied heavily on the pearling industry until its collapse in the late 1930s (Anthony & Hearty, 2002, pp. 129–130). Eventually, both states shifted to resource-based economies, with Kuwait relying on oil while Qatar relied first on oil and later on natural gas. On top of this, both states are characterised by very small indigenous populations relative to the massive numbers of foreign expatriates and workers residing in their territories (Al-Shehabi, 2015b).

Given the scarcity of published literature on the subject, the diversity of available definitions and views, and the high relevance of context, a case study seemed to be the most appropriate approach, specifically a comparative one. According to Yin (2004, p. 13), the case study approach is an appropriate choice when context is highly relevant and when the phenomenon is contemporary and embedded in a real-life context. More importantly, when multiple case studies are involved in the designed case study, this allows the researcher to conduct cross-national comparisons or to draw conclusions on the same phenomenon as it is manifested in more than one country or region.

Similarly, Ritchie, Lewis and Elam (2006, pp. 82–83) underscore the importance of the case study approach when the researcher is investigating a phenomenon on which multiple and diverse perspectives exist. They further argue that this approach permits the researcher to study complex social phenomena and to "unpack meanings" that may or may not be immediately evident, to draw new ideas, to expand existing concepts and to develop the relevant theories. Likewise, Ponelis (2015) argues that a case study allows the researcher to build or test theory, or to do both at the same time, hence engaging both in inductive and deductive methods simultaneously. Therefore, the use of a comparative approach in a case study design contributes to enriching the researcher's ability to investigate the phenomenon from multiple perspectives.

Yin (2004) also highlighted the advantage of using multiple cases in a case study, but pointed out the need for caution when selecting the cases. Still, it is possible to select cases that are very similar to confirm findings or those which are apparently very different to study the phenomenon from various angles. In this case, Kuwait and Qatar share a number of similarities. For example, they are both small countries with small populations; they both have deeply rooted and visible tribal communities; they are both ruled by ruling families that have established their legitimacy through kinship and tribal ties; and both countries have witnessed an intense revival of tribalism. At the same time, the two countries are different in a number of ways. For example, Kuwait has a history of parliamentary democracy and elections whereas Qatar lacks such institutions and experience; and the trajectories of state-building were different in the two countries. Hence, the purpose of this comparative approach is to study the revival of tribalism in the Gulf region by understanding the factors contributing to and fuelling this phenomenon in two countries that share several similarities but are also different in other ways. This offers the researcher the opportunity to develop more insights and a better understanding of the phenomenon, its underlying causes, and its manifestations, which in turn is useful when attempting to derive conclusions about the phenomenon under study.

1.6.3 Data Collection

The phenomenon of the rise of tribalism may be associated with a wide variety of behaviours and activities that may not necessarily be documented in a formal or even in an informal way. Thus, extensive fieldwork was conducted intermittently from October 2017 until April 2019, divided roughly into two months in each country and during which I relied on interviews and personal observations. Interviews enable the researcher to seek data from a variety of experts or subjects involved directly or indirectly in the phenomenon under study.

Interviews are an important method of data collection in case studies, especially as they enable researchers to access the insights and perspectives of experts or individuals who may be involved directly or indirectly in the phenomenon under study. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2001, p. 267) for example argue that interviews "enable participants to discuss their interpretation of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view." This is highly relevant when investigating a phenomenon that is highly contextual and embedded in culture as well as in perceptions and behaviours. Two categories of interviewees were recruited for this study based on the type of data sources needed. The first category constituted academic researchers and Gulf experts from relevant fields such as sociology, political science, and Gulf history. The second category included individuals who were directly involved in the phenomenon under investigation such as tribe members, individuals associated with tribal groups and activities, politicians and cabinet members, parliament members, students, and tribal sheikhs and chiefs. The purpose of interviewing these individuals is to gain access to their

unique insights on relevant issues and to explore the potential motives, if any, that may be motivating them to fuel the revival of tribalism.

It is also worth mentioning that interviews were conducted either in English or in Arabic, and they were all face-to-face interviews. All interviews were conducted after acquiring verbal approval from the interviewees. The researcher avoided asking for a written approval because in the cultural context, individuals tend to be reluctant to speak freely upon signing written forms.

In all, a total of 55 interviews were conducted between October 2017 and December 2019. Of these, 28 interviews took place in Qatar, including with a tribal sheikh, a judge, professors of sociology and political science, female members of a tribe, a former member of the Shura Council, and a number of scholars, democracy activists, and university officials, mainly at Qatar University and Hamad bin Khalifa University. 27 interviews were conducted in Kuwait with several political science, media, and history professors, historians, political activists, a prominent TV presenter, history students at Kuwait University, several individuals with pronounced tribal affiliations, and a former Parliament member who was known for his tribal affiliation and who had been jailed on the basis of "threatening the political order."

The interviews focused on the perceptions of the interviewees on the following issues:

- The relationship between the tribe and the modern state.
- How the role of the tribe has changed since independence vis-à-vis the state.
- The tribe as an alternative to political parties, and the extent to which it is used for political representation or participation.
- The relationship between tribal identities, national identities, and citizenship.
- The role of the state in tribal revival and how it is responding to it.
- The impact of tribal revival on the state, individuals, and women.

I began my first fieldwork experience in October 2017, starting in Kuwait, and I was able to obtain appointments with several high-profile subjects who were willing to provide considerable information and fundamental insights concerning the research. At the beginning, I thought it would be a rough and challenging experience, as I was not familiar with the country and did not have a network of family members and friends in Kuwait. However, I was able to locate participants, with the valuable assistance of my supervisor, whose help and support greatly facilitated the contact and relationships with them. Another important factor which boosted my fieldwork efforts was that participants were willing to engage in interviews, expressing generosity, support, eagerness to share information, and openness in sharing their stories and opinions.

I also attended several sociopolitical events and ceremonies, including two weddings, Kuwait University students' union elections, and a liberal movement gathering. I began interviewing participants on a regular basis and interacting with several prominent figures in the country, such as tribal members, political activists, members of Parliament, and professors of sociology, media, history, and political science. One of the most important experiences I had during this period was visiting a male diwaniyya, which, as a Qatari woman, I had never experienced before. I was

surprised when one of the interviewee's friends invited me to attend their daily gathering. As a woman, it was very challenging to interact with men from the Bedouin and Hadhar tribes. However, despite the short visit, I was able to complete several interesting interviews, which provided me with a rich understanding of different perspectives. I was impressed by the degree of transparency and freedom of speech the men in this group had towards the issues.

After three weeks in Kuwait, I travelled to Qatar for my second fieldwork experience. Despite the fact that I had prepared myself for it, it was very challenging because of the ongoing GCC crisis and embargo, and it was difficult to interview people during this politically charged and sensitive period. This crisis had started on June 5, 2017, when Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the UAE and Egypt formed a hostile coalition, severed their diplomatic ties with Qatar, and imposed an embargo on land borders and airspace. This was a highly tense period for most Qataris, especially as propaganda from the coalition pictured Qatar as a hostile neighbour and spread rumours about a possible military invasion. There were also real fears about serious economic repercussions since Qatar was cut off from the GCC market and its ability to import goods and food products was undermined. On top of this, there were fears that Saudi Arabia would attempt to instigate tribal tensions and divisions as it had done in the 1990s by inciting tribal groups that belong to bigger tribes that extend into Saudi Arabia, such as al-Ghufran tribe (al-Kuwari, 2019, p. 45).

However, as a member of Qatar University, I was able to begin interviewing members of academia from Qatar University and the Qatar Foundation who provided valuable help in organising and scheduling interviews. Moreover, I used my family and friend connections, which was instrumental for gaining the confidence of participants, especially since Qatar is a small country and social reputation and status are highly important. My father and uncle are well-connected among the tribesmen through business and intermarriage, and this enabled me to interview tribal sheikhs and tribesmen. Besides the interviews, I observed and participated in the National Day celebrations of 2017 and 2018, which were different from previous National Day celebrations as the tribal ceremonies were permanently cancelled by the government following the embargo imposed on Qatar in 2017, possibly to calm tribal divisions and to fortify national unity.

In December 2018, I started the second phase of my fieldwork, this time beginning in Qatar. I observed Qatar's 2018 National Day celebration and noticed the militarised nationalism which the state promoted among citizens to enhance social cohesion by displaying military symbols through parades, public speeches, and clothing. Besides attending the National Day ceremony, I was able to attend and observe three weddings as well as the local musical performance known Shila which is traditionally played at weddings. The Shila is a traditional Nabati poetry that has been performed for centuries by the Bedouin tribes of Arabia and which is highly valued as an instrument of expressing and boasting tribal identities and affiliations.

In December 2019, I visited Kuwait for a second fieldwork and I was fortunate to directly observe university elections. My involvement with the students was very productive and provided me with an excellent overview of how individuals interacted and participated through the process of elections, especially since I had not

had the chance to observe the major parliamentary elections in 2016. Along with the interviews, including one with a Kuwait University professor and his wife with whom I had a fruitful conversation about elections, marriage, tribalism, and the role of women, I was able to attend two weddings in Kuwait, which offered me the opportunity to interact with young tribal women and to understand their perspectives on the research topics, especially marriage. In the last week of my visit, I had the most exciting experience of visiting a women's diwaniyya and listening to the heated and vibrant discussions. I spent a fruitful time exploring the diverse perspectives of daughters, mothers, and grandmothers of various (Hadhar and Bedouin) backgrounds, as well as the evolving habits and traditions in society in relation to gender differences. Those conversations enabled me to reflect on how tribal cultures and traditions (or tribal inheritance in general) reproduce themselves and flourish in modern GCC societies.

In April 2019, I decided to return to Qatar and observe the 2019 municipal election campaigns. Fewer participants were involved in these elections in contrast to 2015. This may be explained by the fact that, following the blockade in 2017, people were far more concerned by the ongoing crisis and less so by elections. Consequently, only 800 candidates ran for election, and the electoral campaigns were mostly conducted online and on smartphones. Traditional forms of communication and physical interaction between the candidates and citizens were therefore minimal. During the electoral campaigns, I was able to interview a few candidates and citizens, concluding my fieldwork with the realisation that the Central Municipal Council has made no significant progress since 1999.

There generally is a lack of documents or documentation related to the phenomenon of the revival of tribalism in Qatar and Kuwait—probably because of the sensitivity of this subject. However, I collected recently published documents, reports, and academic papers on tribes and tribalism (in Arabic and English), namely government reports that cover demographic patterns and tribal activities. Also, informal documents relating to the activities or status of some tribes have been collected.

I have gathered primary source material in Kuwait during visits to the National Library of Kuwait, Kuwait University Library, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyya organisation, Kuwait Financial Centre (Markaz), and Ibtkar Strategic Consultancy; and, in Qatar, at the Qatar National Library, Qatar University Library, Qatar's Ministry of Education, and Qatar's Ministry of Development, Planning and Statistics. Although these resources provided important documents, I found a substantial number of more important documents and reports at the British National Archives and Kew Gardens Archive, as well as the Old Library at the University of Exeter, which included historical facts and information about the tribes in Qatar and Kuwait.

Many of the materials relating to tribes and tribalism have been produced in audio-visual format, especially as documentaries and television programmes broadcast by the national media, websites, blogs, and other social media, which can be accessed through public and commercial archives, both online and in libraries. These documents have been extremely useful.

1.7 Book Structure

This book is divided into six core chapters. Immediately following the introduction to this work, the second chapter explains the relationship between the tribe and the emergence of the modern state in Kuwait and Qatar and identifies the geopolitical and tribal factors that contributed to the rise of the ruling families in these two states. In Chap. 3, the discussion focuses on the transformation of the state-society relationship with the discovery of oil and the flow of oil revenues, a development that significantly tilted the power dynamic in favour of the ruling families, even to the point of redefining the nature of the relationship between the ruling family and other political, economic and social actors in society. Chapter 3 also discusses the major challenges to the power of the ruling families in both countries during the 1950s and 1960s, especially the rise of Arab nationalism which undermined the legitimacy of the ruling families and ultimately led to the efforts to exploit the Bedouin tribes to attain political gains and undermine the opposition in Kuwait.

In Chap. 4, the emphasis is on mapping the political scene in Kuwait and Qatar after the failure of Arab nationalism and the position of tribal elements within this context. The chapter also discusses the divide-and-conquer strategies applied by ruling families to exploit tribalism to their advantage, which in turn led to detrimental consequences on nation-building and national identity, citizenship and naturalisation policies. Chapter 5, on the other hand, discusses the dynamic and consequences of the effort made by states to instrumentalise tribalism, especially following the invasion of Kuwait and the attempted coup in Qatar, and the strategies applied by both states to contain or appease tribalism as a potential threat to national unity or political stability, whether through electoral laws in Kuwait. Chapter 6 discusses the impact of the revival of tribalism and its growing intensity on everyday lives, especially the lives of women in Kuwait and Qatar, and the extent to which tribes have reasserted and expanded their role as an influential social actor. Finally, the conclusion restates the findings and reflects on the political and social outlooks in Kuwait and Qatar as the tribe asserts itself as a conservative force at a time when the new generations of citizens insist on being heard, seen and represented.

Chapter 2
The Grand Bargains and the Emergence of Ruling Families

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the geopolitical historical context of the rise of ruling families in Kuwait and Qatar, with emphasis on political, geographic and economic factors. To start with, the present-day territories of Qatar and Kuwait were presumed to be scarcely populated by the ancestors of today's inhabitants until the second half of seventeenth century (Abu-Hakima, 1984, p. 23). This assumption, however, is contested because transitory trade settlements in the area date back to ancient times (Crystal, 1990, p. 15). Severe droughts and growing tribal conflicts in the central Arabian Peninsula had forced the tribes of 'Utub to migrate north and east, and by the early 1800s, they had settled in large numbers in present-day Kuwait, while comparatively smaller numbers migrated to the peninsula that constitutes present-day Qatar (Zahlan, 1979, p. 28). The 'Utub constitute of different tribal groups of the 'Anaiza, a tribe from Najd (al-Reshaid, 1978, p. 23). Historic accounts claim that the 'Utub were originally heading to the peninsula of Qatar, but were forced to settle in Kuwait as a result of tribal conflicts with the al-Musallam tribe that controlled the peninsula at the time (Abu-Hakima, 1984, p. 24). In Kuwait, political conditions were friendlier and more welcoming under the waning rule of Bani Khaled controlled much of Arabia at the time (Shalak et al., 2005; Qassem, 1997, pp. 321–322).

Historians generally agree that the 'Utub constituted of three major related families, namely Al Sabah, Al Khalifa and Al Jalahima, and the three seem to have formed a stable alliance during their migratory movement (Shalak et al., 2005, p. 65). In 1750, the last ruler of Bani Khaled passed away amidst conflict with the Wahhabis who were expanding their rule in Central Arabia; his death left a political vacuum in Kuwait and East Arabia (al-Awadi, 2016, p. 592). On the other hand, Qatar's Al Thani family descended from the al-Maʿāḍīd clan of the Bani Tamim tribe, who had also migrated from Central Arabia, specifically the region of Najd at the end of seventeenth century. Needless to mention, the remoteness, climate and scarce population of present-day Kuwait and Qatar contributed to making both regions unattractive to the Ottoman

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Empire, the dominant power in the Middle East at the time. Amidst the turmoil that followed the death of the Bani Khaled ruler, Al Sabah emerged as a new power in Kuwait (Shalak et al., 2005, pp. 65–66). The emergence of the Al Thani in Qatar came much later in the nineteenth century when Qatar was dominated by transitory sheikhs amid the absence of a real central authority. In other words, local tribes in Qatar such as al-Naʿīm, al-Sudan, Al-Sulīṭī, al-Bua'ynayn, al-Muhānida, al-Khalīfī and others, had their own tribal chiefs and disputes were frequent among them.

2.2 The Emergence of Al Sabah and Al Thani as Ruling Families

Despite the difficulty of accurately determining the timeline of Al Sabah and other 'Utub tribes' arrival in Kuwait, it seems that they had already settled in the region by the time the last Bani Khaled ruler died in 1750. At the time of migration, an alliance based on the division of labour seems to have formed between the Al Sabah, Al Khalifa and Al Jalahima tribes; according to this alliance which lasted well after settlement in Kuwait, Al Khalifa managed commercial and financial affairs, Al Jalahima dealt with sea activities, whereas Al Sabah were solely in charge of governance, administration and political mediation between the clans (Shalak et al., 2005, pp. 65–66). The exact factors that motivated this alliance remain open to debate, but according to Yusuf bin ʿIsa al-Qinaʿi, a prominent authority on the history of Kuwait, as the settler population expanded in Kut (Kuwait town today), the three families needed a leader to manage their affairs (al-Qinaʿi, 1987, p. 15). Regardless of the reasons behind this division of labour, it eventually paved the way for the rise of Al Sabah to power. The primary driver of Al Sabah's power was neither economic wealth nor military might, but rather their diplomatic and negotiating skills, which may explain the claim that Sabah bin Jaber was elected as ruler of Kuwait in 1750 by Al Khalifa and Al Jalahima, reflecting a balance of power and a state of equality among the tribes. The election of Sabah bin Jaber was followed by a successful military campaign against the Banu Ka'ab tribe, bringing Kuwait and the strategic coastal area of Shatt al-'Arab under the full control of Al Sabah (Yaghi & Shaker, 1980, p. 113). This may have enhanced the shift in the status of the tribal sheikh to that of ruler, starting with Shaikh ʿAbd Allah (1762–1812) whose reign witnessed the building of the Kuwait harbour which flourished as a centre for pearling, fishing and shipbuilding (al-Reshaid, 1978, p. 62). In later periods, four sons peacefully succeeded their fathers and a fifth his brother: Jabir (1812–1859), Sabah (1859–1966), ʿAbd Allah the second (1866–1892) and Muhammed (1892–1896). As nomadic Bedouins gradually adopted a sedentary life and became Hadhar in the city, they embraced the concept of being permanently attached to a fixed location (al-Qinaʿi, 1987, pp. 65–66). In turn, this created a political unit, where the economy became linked to sea activities and pearling, as well as to defined land routes, where desert caravans carried rice, spices, wheat, dates, fruits and vegetables from Basra

(al-Qinaʿi, 1987, pp. 65–66). Another characteristic that enabled Al Sabah's to gain power was tribal ideology, which according to Jill Crystal (1990, p. 20) was based on the genealogy of 'Utub as heroes, bestowing upon them the right to rule and discouraging any potential challenge to their political power.

Shortly after Al Sabah's accession to power, conflicts started to arise with the Al Khalifa allies. These conflicts may have been attributed to Al Khalifa's realisation that they had few or no opportunities to pursue political power under the Al Sabah rule. Irrespective of the real motives, in 1766, the Al Khalifa migrated to Bahrain and later to Zubarah in Qatar, where they became the de facto political power before deciding to finally confine their rule to the island of Bahrain in 1811 (Wright, 2011, p. 113). Despite the loss of an ally and potential rival, the voluntary migration of the ambitious Al Khalifa tribe enabled the Al Sabah to consolidate their political power as the only major tribe capable of governing Kuwait, especially since the Al Jalahima did not express any political ambitions (Shalak et al., 2005, p. 70; Yaghi & Shaker, 1980, pp. 112–113). With Al Khalifa out of the picture, the former agreement over the division of labour was probably transformed, enabling the Al Sabah to add trade, commerce and financial management to their mandate.

During his reign, "Mubarak the Great" (1896–1915) was able to expand the political borders of Kuwait and to reinforce the political rule of his family. His success was attributed to three major developments: the political vacuum created with the demise of the Bani Khaled rule following their defeat by the Wahhabis in Arabia (Lust, 2014, p. 592); the Wahhabis' post-war preoccupation with extending their rule in central Arabia Peninsula which forced them to neglect the less relevant Kuwait; and the Ottoman annexation of Kuwait to Basra in 1871, which was nothing more than a symbolic gesture with no negative political or economic implications since it bestowed a certain degree of recognition upon Al Sabah but without requiring them to pay taxes to the Ottoman Empire (Yaghi et al., 1980, p. 71).

In the last quarter of the eighteenth-century rapid changes swept through the region. More specifically, the Wahhabis had successfully consolidated their power and expanded into al-Ahsa' region, which implied that they could revive their claims to Kuwait, or at least force the Al Sabah to pay tribute taxes as the Bani Khaled before them (Abu-Hakima, 1984, p. 127). On the other hand, growing French interest in the Levant and Egypt was perceived as a threat by Britain which started searching for new alliances to extend its presence in the Gulf region (Abu-Hakima, 1984, p. 46–47). This probably led to signing a series of agreements with Mubarak, further consolidating his political power over Kuwait. Additionally, the Persian occupation of Basra in 1775 threatened Britain's trade with India, forcing the British to search for alternative trading stations to oversee regional marine trade lines (Khazaal, 1962, p. 57). By the end of the eighteenth century, Kuwait suddenly found itself in the middle of regional and imperial rivalries. On the one hand, these conflicting interests represented a threat to the tiny emerging polity, but on the other, they also offered opportunities for Al Sabah to reinforce their legitimacy and seek protection from major powers (Sluglett, 2002, pp. 784–785; Yaghi et al., 1980, pp. 71–72).

Unlike their counterparts in Kuwait, the Al Thani tribe emerged politically at a much later period. Qatar was an arid peninsula with has no significant tribal settlements. It was probably a temporary station for tribal migrations, and its lack of a central authority may have contributed to the emergence of Al Thani. To illustrate, following their migration from Kuwait in 1766, the Al Khalifa settled in Zubarah, but soon found themselves in conflict as they refused to pay taxes to the ruling Al Musallem tribe (Yaghi & Shaker, 1980, p. 109). By 1778, the Al Khalifa had successfully established themselves as a political power in Zubarah and were interested in expanding into Bahrain, then under Persian control. Zubarah eventually flourished into a major pearling and customs-free trading centre, attracting migrating merchants and foreigners (Zahlan, 1997, p. 28). In 1783, the Al Khalifa formed a coalition with local tribes around Zubarah and successfully established their rule there after ousting the Persians. The coalition collapsed shortly when al Khalifa refused to share the territorial and political gains with their allies, especially Al Jalahima, Al Bu Kuwara, Al Sulaiti and Al Musallam, resulting in a conflict that forced Al Khalifa to withdraw from Zubarah and to confine their rule to Bahrain (Rahman, 2005, p. 21).

In 1793, the Wahhabis extended their rule over Zubarah to benefit from its strategic location in their ongoing war with the Omanis of Muscat (Yaghi & Shaker, 1980, p. 110). This war left the peninsula in turmoil over the next two decades until the British-Egyptian coalition invaded Arabia in 1811, bringing an end to the Saudi state following a seven-year war. This allowed Al Khalifa to form a coalition with Muscat and reinforce their rule in Bahrain. They also destroyed Zubarah to ensure that it would never be used as a platform for future Wahhabi military campaigns against them, forcing local tribes to move eastwards to al-Bidda', near present-day Doha (Rahman, 2005, pp. 29–30).

With the collapse of the Saudi state in 1818, the Wahhabi influence in the peninsula dwindled, and the tiny coastal towns were ruled by local tribes (Zahlan, 1979, p. 31). However, oppression by Al Khalifa eventually forced the local tribes to rebel. In 1828, for example, they imprisoned the prominent tribal sheikh, Muhammed bin Khamis al-Bua'ynayn, and then destroyed the al-Bua'ynayn fort in Doha, forcing the tribe to leave the city (Zahlan, 1997, p. 33). In 1841, the power conflicts within the Al Khalifa spilled over into the peninsula of Qatar, where local tribes in Doha supported opposing factions. When Muhammad bin Khalifa Al Khalifa emerged victorious, he turned against the tribes that had supported his rival, and destroyed Doha in 1847, throwing the peninsula into another wave of turmoil. In 1851, the second Saudi State emerged and began expanding out of Najd, launching attacks into Qatar to establish a platform for the invasion of Bahrain (Rahman, 2005, p. 63).

A looming Saudi invasion may have triggered the fears of the local tribes on the peninsula of Qatar, and with the prevailing political vacuum, this may have set the grounds for the rise of Al Thani. Although the Al Khalifa had destroyed Doha, they refrained from exercising direct political power over the peninsula of Qatar (Rahman, 2005, pp. 75–76), creating an opportunity for the emergence of the Al Thani family of the al-Maʿāḍīd clan of Bani Tamim, one of the 'Utub tribes that had migrated from the Arabian Peninsula with the Al Khalifa, Al Jalahima and Al Sabah in the seventeenth century. The rise of al-Bidda' near Doha as a market place led

several small merchants, semi-nomadic groups and other migrants to settle around the town where a maritime economy flourished. The flourishing town attracted the attention and interest of Muhammad bin Thani, the tribal chief of Fuwairit in search of better economic opportunities in the late 1840s (Rahman, 2005, p. 75). He took advantage of the power vacuum, quickly established himself as a local leader, and successfully negotiated a peaceful agreement with the Saudi leader, Faisal bin Turki (r. 1843–1865) (Mansour, 2019, pp. 60–61). Although this step fostered renewed tensions with the Al Khalifa of Bahrain, Muhammad bin Thani preferred peace with the Saudis since the Al Khalifa had a more serious interest in exercising permanent control over the Peninsula of Qatar. The more aggressive and powerful Saudis, on the other hand, were interested in Bahrain and were more likely to succeed in defeating the Al Khalifa (Shalak et al., 2005, pp. 85–87; Fromherz, 2017, p. 168).

Although Muhammed Al Thani's successful rise to power was attributed to his prominent tribal origin as well as to his personal and political traits, matrimonial alliances may have also played a central role. According to Muhammed al-Kuwari, Assistant Professor at the Humanities Department at Qatar University (personal interview, 4 December 2017), Muhammed Al Thani forged a strong alliance when he married the daughter of a prominent merchant sheikh of al Bu Kuwara, a tribe that outnumbered other tribes at the time. Moreover, Muhammad's daughter was wed to the son of Al Khalifa, Ahmad bin Muhammad, in an attempt to bring an end to their disputes (al-Shaybani, 1962, p. 75).

As the war between the Saudi state and Bahrain intensified, it became a threat to Britain's interests in the region, forcing Britain to prohibit both sides from attacking each other. The peace accord imposed by Britain safeguarded Bahrain and Qatar from a potential Saudi invasion as both sides ended up paying taxes to Faisal bin Turki Al Sa'ud until his death in 1865 (Mansour, 2019, p. 108). This enabled Muhammad bin Thani to consolidate his power among the Qatari tribes and to reinforce Qatar's independence from its neighbours. In 1868, Qatar became an independent political entity from Bahrain after signing a protection treaty with Great Britain. Under the benevolent but firm tutelage of the British government, Muhammed bin Thani eventually transformed himself from a tribal chief to an effective political ruler responsible for negotiations on behalf of the local tribes and in charge of domestic affairs in all significant matters. According to William Palgrave who visited Qatar at the time, by 1863, Muhammed had become the ruler of the entire peninsula of Qatar (Palgrave, 1865). Consequently, many historians consider this date as the point at which Qatar became an independent political entity, marking the beginning of the Al Thani rule (Al-dabbagh, 1961; al-Shaybani, 1962; Snan, 1966). The late nineteenth century also witnessed the gradual transfer of power from the ailing Muhammad bin Thani to his son Jassim (r. 1878–1913) who was even more adamant about ruling independently (Shalak et al., 2005, p. 87).

British presence and protection also contributed to the rise and consolidation of Al Thani's power. For example, Britain responded with punitive measures against Bahrain and Abu Dhabi when they breached the British treaty by attacking Wakra, Doha and other small towns (Snan, 1966, p. 89). More importantly, the British recognised Muhammad bin Thani as the official and legitimate ruler of Qatar, which was

critical for the assertion of Al Thani's political power. Palgrave (1865) described Muhammed Al Thani in 1862 as an old, but well-acknowledged man, a smart trade bargainer who looked more as a merchant than a governor (Mansour, p. 25, 1980). Still, in an attempt that was probably intended to keep the British influence at bay, Muhammad bin Thani agreed to fly the Ottoman flag in 1871, designating Qatar as part of the Ottoman Empire, and allowing a small Ottoman garrison to be posted on his territories. Muhammad bin Thani appointed his son Jassim as qa'im maqam, a local governor of the Ottoman Empire (Mansour, 2019, p. 189). The official appointment legitimised Jassim regionally and enabled him to avoid direct conflict with the Ottomans. Ottoman interferences, however, created tensions that forced Jassim Al Thani to resign as qa'im maqam in 1890 and to refuse to pay taxes to the Ottomans, although Qatar still remained part of Ottoman rule (Mansour, 2019, p. 190).

2.3 Kuwait: Challenging the One-Man Authority in Pre-independence Era

By 1896 the Al Sabah rule in Kuwait was already established and secured vis-à-vis the class of merchants and the pearl dealers or tawawish (sing. tawwash), mostly constituted of members of prominent families such as Ahmad bin Razq and Halal Mutari, whose origins were traceable back to the 'Aniza tribe (al-Qinaʿi, 1987, p. 66). Rivalry was simmering in the house of Al Sabah and it is generally believed that Mubarak rose to power in 1896 after murdering his two brothers, Muhammed and Jarrah.

Both the British and Ottomans were growing increasingly apprehensive about the incursion of other major powers into the region, especially the French, Russians and Persians. Mubarak Al Sabah was recognised as qa'im maqam by the Ottomans in 1897. Two years later he signed a security treaty with the British to secure his reign both domestically and in the face of any foreign threat (Albaharna, 1968, p. 250; Blumi, 2012, p. 39). According to the treaty, Great Britain recognised Mubarak's sovereignty over domestic affairs and, in return, the latter pledged to end all piracy activities against Britain, vowing to refrain from selling, renting or surrendering any territories to any foreigners or foreign powers, and committing to not receive ambassadors or foreign emissaries without British consent (Albaharna, 1968, pp. 43–44). Creating such treaties with ruling families throughout the region safeguarded British commercial and strategic interests at a minimal cost since the British did not have to occupy the impoverished territories or to preoccupy themselves with domestic affairs. British recognition of a local ruler also assured some stability in those territories through the continuity of peace accords and treaties.

The British treaty reinforced Al Sabah's political authority and security, both locally and regionally. As a result, the Al Sabah were able to focus on governing their local affairs. Although British protection made it nearly impossible for any other

local force to contest Al Sabah's rule (Albaharna, 1968, p. 44), members within the ruling family and merchants could still challenge the incumbent ruler.

2.3.1 Merchants and Diwaniyyas: Opposition Before the State

Emboldened by his secure position, Mubarak started to expand his political power and his revenues, which brought on a clash with the merchants. The extent to which the ruling family and Emir were involved in pearling and other economic activities, namely dhow trade and imported food supplies from Iraq, is unclear. However, it is apparent that the Emir exercised substantial power over the merchants, levying taxes and customs on both trade and pearling (al-Ghanim, 1998, pp. 138–139). As politically powerful as Mubarak may have been, his ability to exercise his authority over the merchants was tested in 1908 when he attempted to raise taxes and customs. Rather than challenge the Emir, several major traders and brokers went into voluntarily exile in Bahrain, Qatar, Iraq and Persia. The majority of these traders belonged to the 'Utub tribe, also known as the original families (asl), that had migrated to Kuwait alongside the Al Sabah. In other words, they were considered social equals to the Al Sabah in terms of status and prestige (Herb, 1999, p. 53). These families included the Najdi, al Nisf, al Marzouq, al Khalid, al Shaya', and al Hamad among others. Emir Mubarak found himself in a difficult position as the voluntary exile of these wealthy merchants deprived him of vital revenue, and in the absence of substantial resources or state institutions to rely on, he was forced to give in to their demands and invite them to return (Slot, 2005, p. 37). This event was a turning point in the modern history of Kuwait with several implications on the formation of the state and the relationship between the state and tribes (Nosova, 2015, p. 83).

Although Mubarak had allegedly murdered his two brothers to gain power and negotiated with both the Ottomans and the British to secure his rule, his political power was not absolute because he still depended directly on the taxes and customs he collected from merchants. As powerful as he may have been, he simply could not control them once they decided to consolidate their ranks and form an organised opposition against him, even if they simply decided to go into exile rather than politically confront him (Slot, 2005, pp. 36–37). Despite having settled for generations as Hadhar in the city (Nagy, 2006, p. 128), the merchant nobles still retained their tribal statuses and allegiances, which they exercised in the form of peaceful opposition to express their disdain with his actions.

The organised nature of this opposition sheds light on political activity in Kuwait at the time (Nosova, 2015, p. 83). Although merchants could be compared to a present-day lobby, they still acted as tribesmen; their action, in tribal traditions, can be understood as the withdrawal of allegiance and walking away from land as symbol of resentment whenever they were in a conflict with the ruler. This behaviour was likely intended to pressure the ruler to change his behaviour rather than completely

abandoning him, especially since the merchants quickly returned once the Emir accepted their demands (Slot, 2005, p. 37).

The crisis of 1908 may have been short-lived, but it empowered the merchants who realised the extent of their economic and political influence (Nosova, 2015, p. 83). In 1898, Kuwaiti notables had already started establishing their diwaniyyas to help distribute aid to the poor when the region was struck by famine (al-Hajeri, 2010, p. 30). Diwaniyyas are salons or reception areas annexed to households of prominent wealthy men who can afford to welcome people to hold meetings and discussions. These diwaniyyas resembled political institutions that facilitated communication and consensus building existed long before actual state institutions were created, and were important in the development of the modern state. To this day, diwaniyyas remain at the core of business, politics and social affairs. This centuries-old tradition dates back to the Islamic tradition of seeking council, not to mention that ancient Bedouins would receive guests in tents to discuss important affairs (al-Hajeri, 2010, pp. 24–25).

Salim al-Mubarak Al Sabah (r. 1917–1921) came to power in 1917 and reigned through turbulent times that witnessed World War I and then, shortly before his death in 1921, a short border war with Saudi Arabia. Hamad Al Saqir, a prominent merchant originally from Najd who had travelled extensively to Iraq and was influenced by political transformations there, pressured Salim to recognise a council constituted of 10–12 dignitaries (Segal, 2012). According to Hashim (1984), the 1921 reform movement in Kuwait was influenced by the objectives of the 1920s uprising in Iraq, which had emphasised the importance of a constitutional and parliamentary government. This reform movement quickly gained followers in Gulf Sheikhdoms such as Kuwait, and its objective was to protect the prestige and influence of the merchant class, whose members provided the backbone of the economy (Hashim, 1984, p. 60). In 1920, Salim ordered his fidāwīa (Bedouin bodyguards) to arrest and assault several merchants in an attempt to intimidate and subdue any opposition to his rule, specifically targeting Hamad Al Saqir (Alebrahim, 2019, pp. 38–39). A few months later Salim dissolved the council after securing the support of the British (al-Hajeri, 2010, p. 33). He was succeeded by Ahmad al-Jaber Al Sabah (r. 1921–50) who was only 35 years old at the time. Given the regional turbulence and his young age, Emir Ahmad was in no position to challenge rising popular demands for political participation. Under pressure, he accepted the demands of the merchants for joint rule through a consultative council shortly after ascending to power in 1921.

Organised through diwaniyyas, the council was a major institutional development in the early years before the first formal state institutions of Kuwait were formed. Despite its ability to mobilise and impose its conditions through a proto-institutional framework, the opposition led by the merchants was still unable to maintain unity or achieve political gains for more than a few months. The council had no real legislative power and members were appointed rather than elected. In fact, the elite council also failed to represent significant segments of society such as the Bedouins in the periphery, Shiʿa families and the lower classes (Alebrahim, 2019, p. 47).

2.3.2 The 1930 Municipality

The formation of the Municipality in 1930 was one of the most significant institutional and state-level developments in pre-oil Kuwait. The Municipal Council was also formed by the merchants and its undertaking of state functions represented a direct challenge to Emir Ahmad (Nosova, 2015, p. 83). As an institution of elected members, the Municipality set up a local police force that took charge of security within the city of Kuwait; it also levied some taxes and rents, financing itself independently of the Emir (Crystal, 1995, p. 160). The success of the Municipality further emboldened the merchants who, in 1936, formed other councils of elected members to serve in the fields of education and health without seeking the Emir's approval (Zahlan, 1989, p. 27). In line with the tradition of accepting the legitimacy of Al Sabah, all these opposition-led institutions, councils and movements were headed by rivalling members of the Al Sabah family, specifically Sheikh Fahd al-Salim and Sheikh ʿAbd Allah al-Mubarak (Crystal, 1995, pp. 162–163). Hence, although they constituted some form of organised opposition, these groups still acted within the existing sociopolitical framework in which the reign of Al Sabah was still recognised.

2.3.3 The Legislative Council of 1938

The success of the Municipal Council eventually led merchants to form the National Bloc, demanding free elections and the formation of modern state institutions to manage the affairs of the emirate. This occurred at the height of economic hardship in Kuwait which had been worsening since the Great Depression in 1929 and the collapse of the pearling industry in the 1930s. Despite dwindling profits and shrinking returns, Kuwaiti merchants and mariners continued to participate in land and sea activities. Australian adventurer and mariner Alan Villiers notes that dhows from Kuwait continued to travel the routes between coastal Arabia, India, and East Africa in the 1930s (Bishara et al., 2016). To make matters worse for Emir Ahmad, this period was also politically charged with growing Arab Nationalism in Kuwait, with growing bitterness towards his ally, Britain, a central actor opposed to Arab interests in Palestine (Zahlan, 1989, p. 27). The Emir appeased the merchants and held elections in June 1938, leading to the formation of the Legislative Council which elected Shaikh ʿAbd Allah al-Salim, a member of the ruling family, as its president. The Legislative Council drafted a constitution, granting itself sweeping legislative powers. The Emir, however, rejected these powers, dissolved the Legislative Council and called for new elections. A second Legislative Council was formed and was presented with an alternative constitution by the Emir. The alternative constitution was rejected by the Legislative Council since it practically took away most of its legislative power, concentrating most political power in the hands of the Emir. As a result, the Emir dissolved the second Legislative Council in early 1939, bringing

an end to the last real effort by the merchants to achieve a power-sharing agreement with the ruler (Herb, 2016, p. 13).

The 1938 Council represented a very serious threat to the existing political system because it essentially aimed at taking absolute power away from the ruling family by separating legislative and executive powers. The threat was so serious that Emir Ahmad resorted to the use of force; he employed Bedouin tribes to prevent an uprising and practically neutralised the recently established Municipality police force in charge of the city (Salih, 1992). He also founded the state security police as well as other security apparatuses manned by loyal members of Bedouin tribes that answered to him alone (Crystal, 1995, p. 162). Despite its ephemeral existence, the Legislative Council was active in forming committees and specialised sub-councils intended to run the different affairs. The Council's dissolution resulted in the termination of what may have been a profound step towards the foundation of a modern democratic state in Kuwait. The confrontation with the rebellious Council did, however, motivate Emir Ahmad to embark on building modern state institutions although these were security-oriented and intended to reinforce the Al Sabah rule (Salih, 1992).

The discovery of oil in 1938 was also another factor that may have enabled the Emir to clamp down on the opposition and to impose a new, unprecedented degree of political control in Kuwait (Zahlan, 1989, p. 28). Oil revenues went directly into the Emir's coffers, enabling him to prioritise what he saw as the most important aspect of state-building, namely regime security apparatuses, whose recruits were mostly members of loyal tribes (Salih, 1992). State departments were eventually formed to organise and control welfare services, making it almost impossible for a citizen to live or operate outside the structure of the state. In a study of the history of policing and state institutions in Kuwait, Jill Crystal (2005, p. 167) details the implications of establishing multiple state security and intelligence agencies as well as institutions that required registration to create a dominant image of the state: "To get married (and receive housing), to have children (and receive money), to get an education, a job or prescription filled, to walk down the street, you went through the state." At the same time, the discovery of oil motivated the merchants to protect their interests as the Emir's control over oil revenues allowed him to enjoy financial independence from them, effectively eliminating their political role and clout (Crystal, 1989, p. 428; Zahlan, 1989, pp. 27–28). Since oil discovery and eventually exploration and export were of great relevance to the British Empire, it is not surprising that Britain played an instrumental role in supporting Emir Ahmad's decision to dissolve the Council and maintain absolute power. As far as the British were concerned, maintaining the Emir's reign was vital for British oil interests in the region (Crystal, 1989, pp. 428–429).

2.4 Qatar: Bin Thani and Tribal Unification

By the end of the nineteenth century, unlike the well-established Al Sabah rule in Kuwait, the Al Thani rule in Qatar was still nascent (Crystal, 1989). Despite their rapid rise to power, the Al Thani faced the challenge of establishing their legitimacy

as uncontested tribal leaders. An opportunity to accomplish this goal presented itself in 1867 with the renewed conflict with the Al Khalifa of Bahrain. A Qatari Bedouin of the al-Naʿīmī tribe was taken prisoner by the Bahrainis, and in response, Jassim bin Muhammad Al Thani formed an army of Qatari tribes and attacked Al Khalifa's garrison in Wakra (al-Shaybani, 1962, p. 76).

The Al Khalifa then invited Jassim to Bahrain for negotiations where they took him prisoner before launching a counterattack with the help of the ruler of Abu Dhabi, resulting in the destruction of Wakra, Doha and several other villages (al-Shaybani, 1962, pp. 75–78). Qatari tribes retaliated the following year by attacking Manama, defeating the Al Khalifa army, destroying the Bahraini fleet and capturing multiple prisoners who were later exchanged for Jassim (al-Shaybani, 1962, pp. 79–80). Consequently, Jassim Al Thani who was already a prominent tribal chief known for his involvement in trade, the management of everyday affairs, the mediation of disputes and heading Friday sermons, emerged as a local hero (al-Dabbagh, 1961, pp. 197–198).

These events were critical in forging tribal relations and marking the first time the tribes of the peninsula effectively united behind a single ruler. Moreover, the repeated destruction of Qatari towns and villages in the early nineteenth century had also created an urgent need for a strong leader who could unify the tribes offer protection and safety for all towns and villages. Additionally, victory against the dominant Bahraini neighbour created a sense of pride among the Qatari tribes which until recently had been divided and helpless. Another milestone in cementing tribal support behind Al Thani was the Battle of Wajba in 1892, in which Jassim Al Thani led a tribal force which included all members of al-Manasir, Bani Hajer and more than 400 members from other Qatari tribes to defeat the Ottoman forces (Rahman, 2005, p. 107). This battle was a turning point as it fortified Jassim's leadership and reinforced the legitimacy of Al Thani as the undisputed leaders of Qatari tribes and the rulers of the peninsula.

Immediately after the Ottoman's formal renunciation of their claims over Qatar in 1913, Al Thani entered into a treaty with the British under the trucial system in 1916 (Freer, 2015, p. 61; Zahlan, 1979, p. 92). This resulted in a period of political stability which enabled the Al Thani to domestically expand their economic power and influence through the thriving pearling industry. Table 2.1 illustrates pearling activities (pearling season extended from May to September) in Eastern Arabian Peninsula ranked by pearling fleet size:

The critical importance of pearling, the core of economic activity in the region since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is best illustrated in the words of Qatar's ruler Muhammad bin Thani: "We are all slaves of one master, the pearl" (Palgrave, 1865, p. 100). Table 2.1 reveals the dominance of pearling as an economic activity which employed approximately 48% of the population, including many Bedouins who were also attracted to work on the dhows by the lucrative returns (Bishara et al., 2016). Likewise, British sources, most notably Lorimer (1908), point out that almost half the population of Doha was involved in pearling. In addition to their rising political prominence, the Al Thani were also successfully involved in pearling to the point that they eventually dominated the industry. For example,

Table 2.1 Represents the pearling industry (pearling season starts from May to September) in Eastern Arabian Peninsula ranked by pearling fleet size

Region	Boats	Men	Percentage of population
Trucial Coast	1215	22,045	31%
Bahrain	917	17,633	18%
Qatar	817	12,890	48%
Iranian Coast	960	9230	0.3%
Kuwait	461	9200	25%
al-Ahsa' Coast	167	3444	10%
Total	**4537**	**74,442**	**26% of Eastern Arabia**

Source Bisharaet al. (2016) The economic transformation of the Gulf. In: Peterson, J. E., (ed.) The Emergence of the Gulf States: Studies in Modern History. Bloomsbury Publishing, London, UK

Jassim Al Thani alone reportedly owned up to 25 pearling boats before his death in 1913 (Mansour, 2019, p. 33). Other Al Thani members were also active in pearling, which suggests that they controlled much of the trade. This allowed them to enjoy economic independence, which made levying taxes unnecessary (Mansour, 2019, p. 34). Exempting the local tribes from paying pearling taxes may have likely played a significant role in bolstering Al Thani's political power and influence.

Although merchants played a major role in the thriving economy of the peninsula, their political leverage over the Al Thani was limited since the ruling clan was wealthy and economically independent. In case of dispute, the merchants of Doha were unlikely to imitate their Kuwaiti counterparts by going into voluntary exile to pressure the ruler economically, simply because the ruler would have responded by expanding his control over the entire pearl industry. Still, disputes occurred and several discontented tribes chose voluntary exile before the Great Depression, such as al Bin Ali who left to Bahrain and al-Bua'ynayn who settled in Kuwait (personal interview, 28 December 2018). However, despite his economic independence from these tribes, the ruler was still forced to negotiate the return of these tribes because they had been important political allies of the Al Thani (Snan, 1966, p. 96). This shows that tribal alliances were critical in forming political alliances and building the legitimacy of the ruling family.

In the late nineteenth century, Doha had already replaced Zubarah and Wakra which were more vulnerable to Bahraini attacks, as the most prominent urban and economic centre on the peninsula. Settlers were mostly recent; even the Al Thani were relative newcomers, having moved to the town from Fuwairit in the late 1840s (Ulrichsen, 2014, p. 15). Consequently, the social fabric was still forming and merchants had not yet developed the organisational complexity that would have enabled them to challenge the ruler if they had to. Hence, it is unlikely that the merchant class had the ability to challenge Al Thani's rule, especially since they were unorganised and feared the potential volatility and foreign invasions. Visiting Doha in 1863, Palgrave (1865) described al-Bidda' at the outskirts of Doha as "consisting of mass of small and dingy houses separated by irregular lanes, with a long,

narrow and dirty market-place; population 6000 including Bahrein shop -keepers and artisans and immigrants from Hasa." (India Office Records, 1904).

Just as the peninsula of Qatar started to enjoy political security and stability, however, economic catastrophe struck, making any form of political development and state-building almost impossible. The first signs of economic hardship were in 1907 when a severe drought forced most nomadic tribes to send their livestock to al al-Ahsa' (Rahman, 2005, p. 181). The second more devastating strike was the development of Japanese industrial pearling in the early twentieth century, leading to the collapse of the pearling industry in the entire Gulf region. The Great Depression soon followed in 1929, taking its toll on international trade (al Jaber, 2002, p. 37). Unlike Kuwait which had developed trade and other industries near water routes, Qatar suffered severely because its economy was heavily dependent on pearling, and its geographic isolation offered it no opportunities to be part of regional trade routes. Despite the economic impact, merchants and tribes of Kuwait did not abandon their territories, as they managed to find other economic alternatives and continued to engage in diving season after season (Bishara et al., 2016). On the Qatari peninsula, on the other hand, economic alternatives were so scarce that much of the population left to neighbouring territories such as Bahrain and Persia within a short period of time. One chronicler of Qatar described the collapse of pearling as "a disaster which almost overnight removed the one export on which the people of the Gulf could rely to bring in foreign earnings" (Ulrichsen, 2014, p. 18). In 1930 alone, the population dropped from an estimated 27,000 to fewer than 10,000 (Elsheshtawi, 2008, p. 225), leaving the peninsula to struggle with serious and lasting social, economic and political consequences.

The economy was all but destroyed, resources almost non-existent and poverty widespread. The Al Thani and a few allied tribes remained and held their ground as they struggled to adapt to older ways of life (Senger, 2010). Most tribes and clans resorted to fishing, rearing livestock, specifically camels, and agriculture wherever possible (Zahlan, 1979, p. 24). Tribal sheikhs also resorted to engaging in the trade of slaves and arms. In 1930, Sir George Maxwell wrote, "slavery is still common in this region, and is mainly 'industrial', since this desolate coast depends almost entirely on the pearl trade" (India Office Records, 1930), and the slave trade on the peninsula ended only when it was abolished by Sheikh Ali bin Abdullah in 1952 (al-Mulla, 2017). Despite the extremely harsh conditions, no evidence suggests any form of political opposition to the ruler during this period. The urgency of survival may have discouraged political opposition, or it may have prevented the formation of a sophisticated political opposition similar to that initiated by the merchants of Kuwait. This may have also had to do with the fact that the economic crisis was not blamed on the ruling family which suffered hardship and the loss of wealth just as the other tribes did. According to Qatari historian Ali Al –Fayyad the onset of the worldwide Depression in 1929 was known "Sanatu Al-'asr" (the year of hardship) in which the pearling industry was decimated, resulting in the collapse of markets ("Al-shīkh 'abdu Allah Bin Jāsim qāda Qaṭara taḥt waṭ'ati 'azmatin 'iqtiṣādīa," 2014). Even Abdullah bin Jassim went into debt and had to address the economic crisis by attempting to reform and organise the economic system (al Jaber, 2002, p. 40). However, the

severity of economic conditions spared no one, including Muhammad al-Manāʿī, one of Qatar's richest merchants, who wrote to Sheikh 'Abdullha bin Jassim complaining about hardship, informing him that he had no choice but to declare bankruptcy ("Al-shīkh ʿabdu Allah Bin Jāsim qāda Qaṭara taḥt waṭʾati ʾazmatin ʾiqtiṣādīa," 2014). At this point, the Al Thani rulers were governing what was a forsaken peninsula that attracted neither locals nor outsiders.

It must be noted that before the discovery of oil, building political institutions was not a priority or even an objective for the rulers of Qatar. Even if Al Thani wished to build Qatar as an independent political unit with active institutions, this would have been impossible with the substantial population loss, the lack of resources, and the severe poverty and the poor economic conditions that followed the Great Depression. Accordingly, the ruler himself carried out multiple state functions, acting as a tribal chief, mediator, and diplomatic contact along with his judicial duties (al-Dabbagh, 1961, p. 188). While this style of leadership was dictated by necessity and the lack of resources, it kept Al Thani rulers close to people, involved in public affairs, and in continuous contact with tribal allies.

2.5 A Tale of Two Families: Comparative Review

The ruling families in Kuwait and Qatar emerged as political actors as aspiring local tribal chiefs took advantage of shifting geopolitics and following significant migratory movements that resulted from a variety of factors in Central Arabia such as internal unrest, the absence of a central authority, climate change, and scarce economic resources. At the core of their successful emergence to power was their ability to build and maintain effective tribal alliances and functions. While the Al Sabah came into power in Kuwait almost a century prior to the emergence of the Al Thani in Qatar, both families were concerned with consolidating their power under the protection of the Ottomans or the British, and they occasionally manipulated the regional powers to expand their individual powers and to enjoy as much independence from these major powers as possible (Blumi, 2012, p. 39).

The two ruling families faced different challenges as they attempted to expand their rule and to build a state during the pre-oil era. The city of Kuwait was a convenient location where major tribes had settled, especially with the arrival of the 'Utub families led by Al Sabah. Kuwait also enjoyed a milder climate, more economic resources and more relative stability than the Qatari Peninsula. The political stability of Al Sabah was attributed, partly to their ability to build tribal alliances while keeping the power of merchants in check, and partly to protection by foreign powers. Furthermore, the location of Kuwait was not strategically attractive to expansionist neighbours such as Al Khalifa in Bahrain and Al Sa'ud in Najd.

Qatar, on the other hand, was an arid peninsula, characterised by harsh climate and scarce economic resources. Despite its unattractive strategic location, it was a frequent target of conflicts and invasions, and the towns Zubarah and al Wakra

repeatedly became a battlefield between the Wahhabis and Al Khalifa, leaving them and surrounding villages in a state of turmoil.

Regional political factors, however, played an instrumental role in the emergence of ruling families in Kuwait and Qatar. To start with, the fact that Kuwait was strategically unimportant for major regional powers allowed the ruling family to cement its status and to build its political power undisturbed at a time when external powers were preoccupied with their own conflicts (Troeller, 1976, p. 8). Similarly, the unwillingness or inability of the Al Khalifa to impose their political will over the Qatar Peninsula, coupled with the lack of serious British or Ottoman interest, enabled Al Thani to transform into a ruling family by uniting local tribes. Secondly, the unstable populations and the lack of central authority created a power vacuum that allowed politically ambitious clans or families to pursue power. Hence, Kuwait was not under any direct threat as the Al Sabah emerged to power, although the region was in a state of uncertainty resulting from the collapse of the Bani Khaled rule and ongoing regional conflicts. Similarly, Al Thani emerged at a time when local tribes were in disarray, suffering external threats resulting from occasional clashes of regional powers, specifically the Al Khalifa and the Al Sa'ud. While the peninsula of Qatar itself was not the target of occupation, it repeatedly suffered the immediate consequences of nineteenth-century regional conflicts.

In addition, both Al Sabah and Al Thani were able to effectively establish a sense of order and address security needs which legitimised their power and standing with local tribes and communities. The leaders of both families showed interest in political autonomy and were willing to take advantage of regional conflicts to maintain independence from the British and Ottomans whenever possible, while still enjoying the protection of these powers. The heads of both ruling families attempted to find a balance in their relationships with the occupying empires, negotiating for domestic independence while avoiding direct conflict or confrontation with either power. For example, both the Al Sabah and Al Thani rulers agreed to raise the Ottoman flag on their territories in recognition of Ottoman rule though they successfully avoided paying any taxes.

Despite the formation of the city in Kuwait, tribal links remained relevant. After generations of settling as Hadhar, the merchants in Kuwait were still tribes in a loose sense, maintaining kinship ties and origin for the purpose of status, prestige and social class (Alebrahim, 2019, p. 31). Their tribal origins were instrumental in legitimising their own political opposition since it positioned them as equals to the Al Sabah. Therefore, Kuwait witnessed a movement towards building political institutions such as diwaniyyas, the Municipal Council and the Legislative Council as a result of initiatives led by the merchants on the opposition rather than by the ruler. The successful but short-lived push for political representation through elections and the formation of a Legislative Council also reflected a sophisticated understanding of political participation among Kuwaitis. The discovery of oil, therefore, came to the detriment of the merchant opposition which was hoping to use economic and financial lobbying against the Emir to achieve its political goals (al-Hajeri, 2010, p. 34).

Likewise, Al Sabah rulers resorted to Najdi Bedouin tribes that settled around the city of Kuwait for protection and warfare, whether in their conflicts with the Al Sa'ud in 1920 or in asserting their power against the ambitious merchants in the 1920s and 1930s. Bedouin tribes such as Mutair, 'Aniza and Shammar, from which the Emir's bodyguards and state police were recruited, originally settled in Kuwait to seek the Emir's protection from persecution in Najd (Crystal, 2005, p. 175). While the merchants resorted to their tribal kinship and affiliations to build their opposition, the Emir relied on loyal tribal outsiders who were capable and willing to act as his security and military forces against any domestic or external threat.

In the peninsula of Qatar, the town of Al Zubara was a thriving economic centre that came under the control of local tribes which ruled the town for over a generation until Al Khalifa arrived, established their dominance, and started taxing the local tribes. By the time the Al Thani emerged as a political power, economic and political activity had shifted to the town of Doha while the peninsula was in a state of disarray, leaving the local tribes to suffer uncertainty and insecurity as well as threats from invading neighbours in Najd and in Bahrain. The leaders of Al Thani were successful in building their power as well as status and prestige by cultivating tribal alliances and politically motivated marriages. When economic catastrophe hit the peninsula following the Great Depression and the collapse of pearling, the personal style of leadership and management adopted by the Al Thani suggests that as rulers they still depended on building and maintaining tribal affiliations and alliances to maintain peace and order at a time when survival was the most urgent goal for all. In fact, the migration of many merchants during the years of hardship left some power vacuum that was effectively filled by the Al Thani in ways that reinforced their political, social and economic influence among the local tribes once the hardship came to an end with the discovery of oil.

2.6 Conclusion

The historic account of Kuwait and Qatar reveals that in both cases, the ruling families negotiated with major powers for independence as well as for protection, confronting external threats and, at the same time, addressing internal economic and political difficulties and obstacles to build and strengthen tribal alliances. Both Al Sabah and Al Thani successfully established and consolidated their power as ruling families under British protection by the beginning of the twentieth century, and this granted them the necessary security to protect their legitimacy and pursue economic expansion. However, the two ruling families faced what seemed to be insurmountable challenges to their rule in the 1930s. By the end of the 1930s, the collapse of pearling and the Great Depression left the Al Thani rule with a depopulated territory that suffered impoverishment and had no prospects for a sustainable future. Meanwhile, the Al Sabah rulers were facing serious challenges to their ability to exercise absolute power as the merchants challenged their legitimacy by pushing for power sharing.

The discovery of oil in the 1930s, however, eventually changed the entire scene in both cases. In Kuwait, it was the discovery of oil coupled with British assistance that shielded the Al Sabah from power sharing and the growing political challenges from the merchant class. In Qatar, the discovery of oil and British support implied an end to the years of economic hardship and poverty, while at the same time promising to reinforce the power and legitimacy of Al Thani.

Chapter 3
The Winds of Arab Nationalism

3.1 Introduction

In the 1950s and 1960s, the political and economic significance of tribes in Qatar and Kuwait witnessed increasing decline. This may be attributed to two major factors. First, growing oil revenues enabled the ruling families to gain financial autonomy and to exercise political power independent of the tribes (al Naqeeb, 1996, pp. 23–24). Second, the emergence of a small intelligentsia and a militant working class created a fertile ground for Arab nationalism which perceived tribalism and tribal affiliation as an obstacle to the process of nation-building and nationalism. Arab nationalism was particularly bolstered by the rapid emergence of Nasser in Egypt and his call for the unity of all Arabs in one nation (Dawisha, 2003, p. 291).

This chapter sheds light on the period of Arab nationalism in the 1950s and 1960s and investigates its influence on the relationship between the state and the tribe in Qatar and Kuwait. It also explores the extent to which Arab nationalism challenged the legitimacy of ruling families and the monarchical political system. The chapter reveals that rulers and tribes in both countries perceived Arab nationalism through a lens of opportunities and threats. Moreover, both Al Sabah and Al Thani made efforts during this period to deploy Bedouin tribes, either to reinforce their legitimacy or to avert potential threats to their rule.

3.2 The Influence of Arab Nationalism

Arab nationalism emerged in Syria, Egypt and Iraq in response to growing Turkish nationalism within the Ottoman Empire and the influence of national ideologies in Europe at a time when nation states were emerging in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, Arab nationalism differed from other forms of nationalism on a number of levels. According to Myhill (2010), Arab nationalism

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was not based on a coherent or clearly defined identity or any concept of the body politic. For example, the Arabs that Arab nationalism referred to did not constitute a common political unit, possess a national church or even share a commonly defined region (Choueiri, 2001, p. 68). The most fundamental tenet of Arab nationalism was the common language of Arabs; in this sense, Arab nationalism resembled German nationalism that inspired many Arab intellectuals, such as Sati' al-Husri. The linguistic concept of Arab nationalism has remained the most dominant of all Pan-Arab ideas despite the fact that Arabs spoke numerous variations and dialects of Arabic and only 10% could speak standard Arabic (Tibi, 1990a, p. 20).

Arab nationalism was also driven by other social and political factors such as the emergence of cultural nationalism, the budding of an urban intelligentsia, and the organisation of a working-class movement against Western colonialism (Ayubi, 1995, p. 136). El-Rayyes (1988) argues that although Arab nationalism gained substantial traction in the Arab world because of its antagonism to the West amidst growing tensions over the Palestinian question, in reality, it was merely based on nationalist fervour, emotional aggression and its opposition to everything Western and foreign; it did not include democratic values and individual liberties; and it was characterised by a refusal to accept self-criticism or any sense of responsibility and accountability (El-Rayyes, 1988, p. 72).

Despite its secular nature, Arab nationalism did not oppose or reject Islam; rather, it emerged from a long history of religious narrative and built its legitimacy on its association with modernism, its opposition to the West and its anti-colonial call for liberation and independence (Choueiri, 2001, p. 71). Hence, it gained significant appeal in countries such as Egypt, Iraq and Syria, which actively opposed Western domination and demanded independence from Western influence, while borrowing from socialist and Marxist discourses and endorsing values such as equality and social justice. The turning point for Arab nationalism was the rise of Nasser in Egypt, especially after his military confrontation with Britain, France and Israel during the Suez crisis in 1956, a confrontation which bolstered his legitimacy, status and leadership, and transformed him into the most influential and charismatic leader across the Arab world (Shahdad, 2007).

While political Islamic movements are often perceived as latecomers to the political scene in the Arab world, in reality, major Islamic ideologies had already been evolving long before the 1940s and alongside nationalism in the region. For example, the conservative, fundamentalist form of Islam known as Wahhabism had been established long before nationalist influences gained traction in the Arab world, although as a creed it remained limited only to Saudi Arabia and the tribes of Qatar (Zubaida, 1993, pp. 47–48). Islamic reformist movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood led by Hassan al Banna in the 1940s, had also been prominent in Egypt since the late nineteenth century. Al Banna's Islamic political thought combined influences from three major Islamic schools: al-Afghani's (1838–1897) political activism, Muhammad 'Abdū's (1849–1905) reformism and Rashīd Riḍā's (1865–1935) conservatism. All were opposed to Western ideas and argued for the necessity of returning to the practices of the first generation of Islamic rulers for inspiration (Aly & Wenner, 1982, p. 338).

Moreover, the Muslim Brotherhood played a significant role in Nasser's successful rise to power before he eventually turned against the movement, imprisoned or executed its leaders, and forced many of its sympathisers into exile (Freer, 2018, p. 24). Hence, many of the educated Egyptians who moved to work in the Gulf region in the 1950s and 1960s were affiliated either with the nationalist movement or with the Muslim Brotherhood and were widely recruited as teachers, administrators, bureaucrats and advisors at a time when Gulf states such as Qatar or Kuwait lacked the qualified human resources to staff state departments and schools with nationals (Freer, 2016, p. 19; ADDI, 2017, p. 4). The discussion in this chapter, however, focuses only on the impact of Arab nationalism, because Muslim Brotherhood suffered four major weaknesses that prevented it from being equally effective in Kuwait or Qatar during the 1940s and 1950s.

First, most Brotherhood associates were not involved in political activity and were mainly focused on social services in Kuwait and education in Qatar (Freer, 2018, p. 46). Second, the movement did not enjoy the backing and support of an appealing ideology or a charismatic leader with growing regional and international clout and presence as the case was with Nasser and his brand of Arab nationalism (Alkandari, 2014, p. 136). In fact, the members of the Muslim Brotherhood were Nasser's sworn enemies and openly opposed him, and this may have made them unpopular both in Egypt and across the Gulf region. Third, while the Brotherhood was successful in penetrating the social fabric in Egypt by building and maintaining a network of welfare-oriented institutions that offered educational and healthcare services, it lacked the resources to replicate this approach in either Kuwait or Qatar (ADDI, 2017, pp. 3–4). Lastly, in addition to facing challenges from the rising impact of Arab nationalism, the Muslim Brotherhood faced substantial competition from other Islamist streams which limited its ability to exert a monopoly over religion as a source of its legitimacy.

In fact, Nasser's successful rise to power, his charismatic appeal among the masses and his initial success in confronting and challenging Western powers were probably among the most important factors that contributed to the prevalence of Arab nationalism across the Arab world at the expense of any Islamic movements in the 1950s and 1960s. The influence of Arab nationalism reached its peak between 1958 and 1961 when Egypt and Syria formed a union under the United Arab Republic. With Egypt's humiliating defeat in the 1967 Six-Day War against Israel and Nasser's subsequent death in 1970, Arab nationalism rapidly lost its appeal, offering Islamic movements the opportunity to resurge and expand across the Arab world (Milton-Edwards, 2000, pp. 123–124).

Apart from their religious dimension, Islamic movements did not differ significantly from the ideological tenets of Arab nationalism, particularly in terms of opposing Western influences and the West, or in terms of their inherent authoritarianism. Both Wahhabism and the Muslim Brotherhood, for example, were mainly concerned with imposing and maintaining conservative religious values and rules on society through the state, but they lacked a coherent political programme and did not embrace the ideology of establishing an Islamic state (Knudsen, 2003, p. 1). The only Islamic movement that openly embraced such a position was Hizb al-Tahrir

(The Islamic Liberation Party), a small militant party that sought to reinstate the caliphate after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire (Burgat, 2003, p. 34). In this sense, mainstream Islamic political movements were not necessarily at odds with Arab nationalism, at least not in the 1950s and 1960s (Zubaida, 2000, pp. 12, 48–49). In fact, as François Burgat (2003) argues, various forms of Islamic fundamentalist movements were, for the most part, a mutation and replacement of Arab nationalism after the latter lost its appeal among Arabs, especially with its lack of a coherent alternative identity (Burgat, 2003, p. 36).

3.3 Pan-Arabism in Kuwait and Qatar

By the mid-1950s, the influences of Arab nationalism were rapidly felt in various parts of Arabia, especially with Nasser's successful revolution that toppled the long-established monarchy in Egypt. Even in the conservative kingdom of Saudi Arabia, nationalism appealed to members of the intelligentsia as an alternative to the official creed of Wahhabism, resulting in numerous confrontations with the government which forced many of them into exile (Dawisha, 2016, p. 235).

Today, the reflection of Arab nationalism can barely be seen in books, novels, poems as well as artworks. One day in the summer of 2019, I sneaked into an abandoned building in Kuwait in the dead heat of noon. I was stopped temporarily by a security guard, who was friendly and welcoming. The building, dating back to 1961, had once housed al-Ra'i al-'Am newspaper. In the middle of the building yard, I found a huge sculpture (see Fig. 3.1) of Sheikh 'Abd Allah al-Salim Al Sabah (r. 1950–1965) sitting on a throne. The work resembled the famous statue of Abraham Lincoln (constructed 1914–1922). 'Abd Allah al-Salim Al Sabah was known as the democratic leader who presided over the 1938 Legislative Council, adopted an anti-British stance and sympathised with Arab nationalists. Many academics frequently describe him as being liberally inclined (al-Rashoud, 2015, p. 285).

The sculpture was constructed in 1971 by Sami Muhammad, one of the most prominent pioneers of the cultural and artistic movements in the Gulf region. At the time, Arab nationalism was already losing steam and was no longer the driving power of politics in Kuwait. In contrast, the Islamist movements, namely the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafi movement, were rapidly gaining traction, especially among Bedouin tribes. At the time, the sculpture was a new and provocative art form in the eyes of the conservative Kuwaiti society. In fact, this sculpture remains hidden from the public eye inside the old al-Ra'i al-'Am building as a result of a petition to parliament drafted by the Muslim Brotherhood's Social Reform Association, also known as Al Islah Society. The petition protested the statue as an object that violated the tenets of Sharia (Islamic) law which prohibits human representations in artworks.

In an interview with Art Reader (2015), Sami Muhammad reminisced saying, "The first person to object was my mother, God rest her soul, who asked me not to become a professional sculptor since this was prohibited in our religion. The list of those who objected grew to include other family members and acquaintances."

Fig. 3.1 Sami Muhammad, "Sheikh 'Abd Allah al-Salim Al Sabah," 1972, bronze. Image taken by the researcher et al. -Ra'i al-'Am building

Despite the opposition, Muhammad offered an explanation for his work and passion: "I focused my interests on accomplishing works from a purely aesthetic basis, which do not espouse any political or social issue. I sought to highlight the sensuous side in my sculptures, away from any political influence or ideological motive." (Michele, 2015).

This backlash that led to concealing the sculpture from the public eye sums up the confrontational relationship between the Arab Nationalists and Islamist representatives with tribal affiliations. It is not surprising, therefore, that political life in Kuwait is characterised by intense divisions that appear to be political on the surface, but which, in reality, are a reflection of social, class and tribal divisions (Okruhlik, 2012).

3.3.1 Arab Nationalism in Kuwait: Between Political Legitimacy and Opportunism

The relationship between Kuwait and Arab nationalism emerged in 1938 with the Majlis movement aiming for power sharing. The movement was influenced by Arab Nationalists, who at the time had gained popularity and clout in Iraq (Alebrahim, 2019, p. 60). This growing influence had both domestic and regional implications. On the regional level, Arab nationalism was the leading ideology opposing Zionism and Westernisation, deriving substantial legitimacy not only from its appeal to the sentiments of a united Arab world, but also from its opposition to monarchical regimes.

On the domestic level, Arab nationalism became the ideology of choice for any opposition to existing rulers. In fact, this applied even to prominent members within the ruling family, such as ʻAbd Allah al-Salim, who mobilised national support in the second half of the 1950s in his quest for power (al-Rashoud, 2016, p. 285). Likewise, members of the merchant class, including the educated effendiyya (known locally as the muthaqqafīn), were attracted to Arab nationalism because it legitimised their political activity and probably protected them from appearing disloyal to the ruling family (al-Rashoud, 2016, p. 284).

At the same time, Arab nationalist influences were infiltrating Kuwait on a number of levels. For example, Hertog (2016, pp. 323–252) argues that by the 1950s, Kuwait's middle class was forming with the emergence of a rising elite from within the merchant class which further exposed Kuwait to the influences of Arab nationalism at the time. Although establishing public clubs was forbidden in Kuwait in the 1940s, Abdulrahman Alebrahim (2019, p. 112) refers to the role of the intelligentsia, especially students who had studied abroad in Lebanon and Egypt, in contributing to the development of national and political awareness among Kuwaitis by establishing public clubs and institutions. These included al-Nadi al-Adabi (Literary Club) in 1946 and several nationalist magazines such as al-Talīʻa (The Vanguard) and Kazima in 1948. It must be noted that these initiatives were supported by Yousf Ahmad Al-Ghanim who came from a merchant family and was a close friend of Sheikh Ahmad. Likewise, the merchants and elites' club, Nadi al Muʻallimin (the Teachers' Club) and al Nadi al Thaqafi al Qawmi (the National Cultural Club) served as meeting locations for the Kuwaiti Arab nationalists (Zahlan, 1989, p. 32).

Moreover, Sawt al-ʻArab (The Voice of Arabs), Nasser's influential radio station, reached the entire Gulf and appealed to wide audiences in Kuwait and other Gulf countries as it preached the pillars of nationalism and called upon Arabs to act against their governments (Melikian, 1988, p. 120). More importantly, given the lack of qualified human resources in the Gulf countries at the time, thousands of Egyptians, Syrians, Lebanese and Palestinians were recruited and staffed in the various administrations and schools. In fact, even the majority of writers and editors in newspapers and other media came from these hotbeds of Arab nationalism (Melikian, 1988, p. 122).

Many Kuwaitis were also concerned by the growing Iranian immigration to Kuwait in the 1920s and 1930s during the reign of Sheikh Ahmad al-Jaber, who recruited them in droves in the police and military. According to Talal al-Rashoud (2016, p. 246), Arab nationalists in Kuwait were suspicious of and hostile to Iranian immigrants, fearing their threat to the Arab identity of Kuwait and believing that their immigration was a conspiracy by the Iranian government to take over the Gulf states. This notion was asserted in many Kuwaiti publications in the early 1950s, which urged Kuwaitis to replace Iranians at work. For example, in al-Ra'id (The Teacher's Club Journal) (1952–1954), Fahad al Duwairi, a Kuwaiti author and a pioneer in the Kuwaiti cultural and literary movement, penned an article demanding that Kuwaitis be employed instead of migrant labourers (al Duwairi, 1952, p. 11). It is also worth noting that Bedouins were often perceived as incompetent and stigmatised as such. In this respect, Kuwaiti scholar ʻAli al-Kandari (personal interview,

18 October 2017) confirms that in the 1950s and 1960s, most citizens with tribal affiliations often avoided having their tribal names written on their identification documents, as they were more interested in becoming assimilated as Hadhar citizens and keen on escaping the stigma associated with tribal affiliation. One of the provocative examples is noted in al-Duwairi's article of 1952, in which he describes the Bedouin tribes as uncivilised and undeveloped subordinates to the ruler. He clearly pointed to the sense of inferiority of the tribes vis-à-vis the ruler in the following lines (al-Duwairi, 1952, p. 11):

> ...those Kuwaiti Bedouins who inhabit Kuwait's desert and are subordinate to His Highness the Great Ruler of Kuwait, and espouse the ancient and inveterate Kuwaiti nationality, have the right to be associated with the welfare of the country. It is possible to **prepare** them and **settle** them in fixed homes,[1] and to supply the labour force in Kuwait with human resources that has more right to work than others. The Office[2] must gradually convince those who can be **convinced** about the need for Kuwaiti Bedouins to end the Bedouin–urban dichotomy, by constructing houses for them, provided that they pay for what was built for them at certain intervals. The Office shall also provide them with jobs and oversee their health and spiritual affairs, along with their finances, and **rapidly develop them** until they **are at par with the civilians**, and include them in the rights and obligations guaranteed by the social security project on the condition that **only** those who comply with the social security legislation are assisted, and that they are Kuwaitis whose **patronage** to the government of His Highness is verified after reviewing the zakat records. Accordingly, we can close the gate of flowing immigration tight and be satisfied to the extent possible with national labour.

Despite its proclaimed superiority vis-à-vis the Bedouins, the merchant class had in fact lost much of its power and influence as oil revenues secured the economic independence of the ruler. In this context, Arab nationalism did not seem to present a real threat to the political system, even when it was exploited by the merchants or by disenfranchised members of the ruling family to oppose the ruler. To quieten any serious opposition, moreover, the emir economically appeased the merchant class by sharing and distributing some of the oil revenues through a variety of schemes. Such schemes included market investments and mechanisms, but more importantly, a land reform plan, by which the state acquired the lands owned by the merchants at significantly inflated rates that made many of them extremely wealthy (Crystal, 1989, p. 431; Herb, 2014, p. 156). For example, Ghanim al-Najjar (1984, pp. 1–2) argues that by 1951, the government of Kuwait had implemented a land acquisition policy (LAP), wherein land that was initially in the hands of the Al Sabah family was acquired, not only for state development projects such as constructing roads, schools, public offices and services, but also to serve the ruler's political interest; in the latter case, the land was distributed among loyalists, including merchant families, the ruler's bodyguards and other groups loyal to the ruler (Al Najjar, 1984).

Although the distribution of wealth meant that the merchant class remained intact with a strong sense of identity as merchants, rather than as tribes or sects, it also made them increasingly dependent on the state and simultaneously discouraged them

[1] Bedouins are known to be itinerant.

[2] This is a preparation office in the Ministry of Social Affairs that oversees all aspects related to manpower.

from demanding radical changes in the political system. As a result, some of the traditional merchants simply abandoned political activity, while others embraced Arab nationalism but without upsetting the regime or the ruler. In contrast, ruling family members challenging the emir seem to have endorsed Arab nationalism as a mask for their opposition and as a means to attract popular support.

The wave of Arab nationalism, however, continued to gain momentum across the Gulf region, not only as a result of Nasser's growing popularity following the Suez War in 1956, but also with the creation of the United Arab Republic in 1958. However, it is unlikely that Kuwaiti merchants or aspiring members of the ruling family who embraced Arab nationalism were seriously interested in seeing Kuwait unite with other Arab countries (Zahlan, 1989, p. 38), especially not with Iraq whose claims to Kuwait concerned and angered both the ruling family and the merchants. Still, Ahmad al Khaitb, the leader of Kuwait's Arab nationalist opposition movement, was an enthusiastic supporter of the United Arab Republic, as evident from his statement: "All wish to unite with U.A.R." (al-Rashoud, 2016, p. 325). Additionally, the power and influence of Arab nationalists in Kuwait became evident in 1958 when the kingdoms of Iraq and Jordan formed the Arab Union in opposition to Nasser's United Arab Republic, and invited Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to join them. The Arab Union was supported by Western powers, including Britain, since it was intended as a political response to the formation of the United Arab Republic. The Emir of Kuwait declined the invitation, possibly out of the realisation that Kuwait would end up bearing the financial costs of the union, but more importantly, because of concerns over the potential uproar among Kuwaitis opposing such an alignment with a pro-Western scheme (Romero, 2015, p. 188).

Thus, it was only logical for the Emir and most members of the ruling family to begin perceiving Arab nationalism as a threat to their rule for two major reasons. First, the ideology of Arab nationalism openly considered tribes and the institution of monarchy as forms of backwardness, while its proponents in Egypt and Syria made no effort to conceal their animosity to monarchic rule. For example, the ex-police director and prominent nationalist Jassim al-Qatami called for the end of the tribal rule, stating "if the Kuwaitis have been content with tribal rule since the time of Sabah the First, the time has now come for popular, democratic rule in which the people will have their constitution and ministers" (al-Rashoud, 2016, p. 325). Secondly, on the political level, Arab nationalism was the means through which Arab nationalist leaders, especially Nasser, attempted to impose their political will over other Arab nations. However, it must be noted that Arab nationalism was also a source of anxiety for other social groups, particularly the Bedouin tribes, 'Ajam and Shi'a, as they felt marginalised and politically excluded (al-Najjar, personal interview, 21 October 2017). Consequently, Arab nationalism became a divisive factor in Kuwait, empowering the merchants and other nationalist groups while raising concerns among the ruling family and their loyalists such as the Bedouins, 'Ajam and Shi'a. Ironically, a military coup in Iraq replaced the monarchy with a leftist regime in 1958, reshuffling the ideological and political map in Kuwait altogether.

On the eve of independence in 1961, and despite the fact that the Emir had already gained financial and significant political independence with the flow of oil revenues, Kuwait itself was in a precarious position, both externally and internally (Kinninmont, 2012, p. 4). On the external front, as Kuwait's independence loomed in 1961, the revolutionary government of Iraq expressed its claim over Kuwait and announced its intentions to annex Kuwait as part of Iraq's historical territories (Zahlan, 1989, pp. 38–39). This seems to have persuaded Emir Sheikh 'Abd Allah to realise the benefit of establishing a political system that reflects the independence and representation of the Kuwaitis, which in turn would reinforce both stability and legitimacy (Zahlan, 1989, p. 39). Tetreault (2000, p. 62) argues that "Kuwait's Constitution was part of a strategy of co-optation by which forms of republicanism associated with Arab nationalism were incorporated to preserve and protect the monarchy after its relationship with Britain had ended." Likewise, Herb (2016, pp. 14–15) refers to the combined effect of threats from Iraq and the pressures from Egypt and Britain to maintain the image of a state that enjoyed popular support and legitimacy. Even more ironically, both Nasser and the British suddenly shared an interest in protecting Kuwait and its independence, although for different motives. For Nasser, Iraq's annexation of Kuwait would have bolstered the political and economic power of his Iraqi rivals, seriously undermining his chances to lead the Arab world under the banner of Arab nationalism. The British, on the other hand, not only had a historic commitment and a political interest in protecting Kuwait, but they and the United States perceived the leftist regime in Iraq as part of the growing Soviet threat in the region, and hence vehemently opposed the annexation (Dawisha, 2003, p. 229). Amidst these complexities, the threat of an Iraqi invasion to annex Kuwait, the end of British protection, and the risk of relying on Egyptian troops for protection offered little or no assurance for the newly independent state (al-Ghabra, 1998, pp. 30–31; Kinninmont, 2012, p. 4).

On the domestic front, the ruling family was increasingly concerned over the rising tide of Arab nationalism and its implications on its power and legitimacy (Baaklini, 1982, p. 360). For example, according to Brown (2002, pp. 55–56), the surviving members of the 1961 Constitutional Convention "insist to this day that the Constitution is best viewed not as a unilateral grant from the Emir (which presumably could be retracted in the same manner as it was given) but as a contract between the Emir and the Kuwaiti citizenry about how the country should be governed."

Given the external and internal threats, the emir expressed a significant degree of political shrewdness in managing his relationship with Arab nationalists in Kuwait. First, four Arab nationalists and two members of Al Sabah were appointed to the six-member committee that drafted Kuwait's Constitution on the eve of its independence in 1962 (Herb, 2014, p. 92). Second, two hawkish prominent members of merchant families were appointed to senior government positions; Ya'qub al-Humaydi was delegated to the Emir's diwan (office) and Jassim al-Qatami was selected as the director of police (Nafisi, 2019). In 1965, the latter resigned from his post, protesting the repression of demonstrators as he made no attempt to hide his Arab nationalist inclinations (Herb, 2014, p. 94).

In the 1958 and 1962 elections, the National Assembly was dominated by Arab nationalists who at this point still supported the Emir, while the Bedouin tribes led the opposition as they protested their exclusion from much of the political process. Even various professional and cultural associations were dominated by Arab nationalists and merchants (al-Khatib, 2007, pp. 163–164). However, once the Emir secured support from Nasser and cemented Kuwait's membership in the Arab League and the United Nations, the honeymoon with the Arab nationalists came to an end, especially following the repression of the demonstrations protesting the collapse of the United Arab Republic in 1961 (Herb, 2014, pp. 94–95).

The Emir also expressed shrewdness in supporting and financing Arab nationalist clubs as a way to appease Arab nationalists and the merchants until he consolidated and secured his position. He also placated Nasser by appointing prominent Arab nationalists in state departments. Appeasing Nasser was strategically important, not only to fend off potential Iraqi and Saudi threats and influences, but also to undercut any Arab nationalist opposition to his rule in Kuwait. As a result, throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Kuwait maintained a pro-Arab nationalist foreign policy, at least on the surface, while Arab nationalism gradually weakened politically on the domestic level (Herb, 2014, p. 95).

Overall, the assessment of the rise and decline of Arab nationalism in Kuwait yields a number of interesting observations. First, Arab nationalism enjoyed substantial legitimacy in Kuwait, just as it did on a popular level in many Arab countries. It is this legitimacy that qualified it as the ideology of choice for the merchant class and intelligentsia as they sought legitimacy for their demands and as they attempted to acquire political gains within the evolving state (Herb, 2014, p. 104). Nevertheless, Arab nationalism also triggered a political division between the opposition that constituted of the merchant class and the older traditional tribes on the one hand, and the Bedouin tribes which supported the Emir and the ruling family on the other (Herb, 2014, pp. 155–156). Yet, Emir ʻAbd Allah al-Salim himself sometimes opposed the Bedouin tribes and sided with the Arab nationalists as part of his balancing-of-power strategy to maintain his power and influence (Alebrahim, 2019, p. 122).

This rift grew wider following the death of ʻAbd Allah al-Salim in 1965. To illustrate, under the reign of Sabah al-Salim, the 1967 National Assembly witnessed the emergence of five distinct groups; the Shiʻa, the Bedouins, the merchants, the independents, and the opposition. The Shiʻa and the Bedouins, according to Al Najjar (1984), were the only groups which demonstrated consistent loyalty to the government during the National Assembly vote. This consistent loyalty to the monarch was attributed to the government's support to the tribal primary elections, which was part of the Emir's policy of manipulating tribal groups to secure their loyalty.

Similar manipulation was seen in the 1975 elections during which the Emir boosted the political fortunes of peripheral groups that had previously been marginalised in the old city of Kuwait, such as the Bedouin tribes and other social minorities. Al Najjar (1984, p. 66) noted this new phenomenon which reflected the rising political significance of several ethnic groups: Sunni ethnic Persians such as the Kanadra and ʻAwadhiyya; and ethnic Arabs that migrated from Persia such as the

Fawadra; and the Salab nomads. The government, moreover, manipulated the electoral weight of minorities by concentrating minority votes in a single constituency, namely Qadisiyya.

By the mid-1970s, Arab nationalism had lost much of its lustre as a political tool through which the Emir could appease the intelligentsia and the merchants. Instead, the Emir resorted to economically appeasing the merchant class, not only through land acquisition in return for generous proceeds from the government, but also via the distribution of investment transfers. Meanwhile, the Bedouin tribes were also appeased through jobs in the public sector, in addition to subsidised housing, education, healthcare and other services (Crystal, 1989, pp. 431–432).

According to Alebrahem (2019, p. 124), data from the Kuwaiti Municipal archives dating back to 1954, show that more than 46 requests were sent to the head of the municipality Fahad al-Salim to grant houses to members of the Bedouin tribe of ʻAjman. These requests were accepted and housing units measuring 500 sq. ft. were granted as political rewards for loyalty to the Emir. Additionally, several Bedouin tribes were rewarded through intermarriage with the Al Sabah family, granting them the privileges that came with these marriages. For example, Jaber al-Ali al-Salem Al Sabah, the former head of the Electricity Department, granted lands in the village of Abu Halifa to his in-laws from the ʻAjman tribe (Alebrahim, 2019, p. 125).

The final blow to Arab nationalism in Kuwait came with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. The Iraqi regime had long characterised itself as a nationalist regime whose ultimate goal was achieving Arab unity. The Iraqi invasion enjoyed support from several Arab states such as Jordan and Yemen, but more importantly, from Arab nationalists in many Arab countries as well as the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, a major symbol of Arab nationalism and its struggle against imperialism and Zionism (Hassan, 1999, p. 170). It is not surprising, therefore, that following the liberation of Kuwait, over 350,000 Palestinians were targeted and many were evicted from Kuwait (Whitley, 1993, pp. 39–40). Further, with a prevailing sense of betrayal among Kuwaitis, Arab nationalism lost their appeal almost completely in Kuwait (Ajami, 1991).

3.3.2 Arab Nationalism in Qatar: From Labour Movement to Political Activism

While the ideology of Arab nationalism dominated much of Kuwaiti politics in the 1950s and 1960s, its influence was not witnessed in Qatar until the mid-1950s. This may have been attributed to a number of factors. To start with, unlike its neighbouring states, where the benefits of oil revenues were more pronounced, Qatar at the time was still very much a poor country. Even with the discovery of oil in 1949, poverty remained prevalent, especially as the ruling family treated oil revenues as their personal wealth (al-Misnad, 1984, p. 60). At the same time, many Qataris relied on employment in Shell Petroleum which after 1950 became Petroleum Development

Qatar Company, with over 2200 Qataris employed mostly as drivers and unskilled labourers in the early 1950s (al-Kuwari, 2015, p. 49). Meanwhile, creating public sector jobs as a means to distribute wealth was difficult since state institutions barely existed and were severely underfunded as 59% of revenues went to the coffers of the ruling family (al-Kuwari, 2015, p. 301). Furthermore, the public sector was still rudimentary to the point that even in the early 1970s, the majority of houses in Qatar did not have running water or electricity, and needless to mention, unemployment among Qataris was rampant (al-Kuwari, 2015, pp. 301–302). Moreover, given the poor socioeconomic conditions, Qatar lacked educational institutions and facilities at the time and the literacy of the vast majority of Qataris was limited to kuttab (travelling educators), where education was limited to Arabic language and the recital of the Quran (al-Misnad, 1984, p. 51). Another factor was the complete absence of any form of local media which kept Qatar politically isolated from its surroundings for long periods of time (Zahlan, 1979, p. 48).

During the reign of Sheikh Ali bin ʻAbd Allah (r. 1949–1960), specifically between 1950 and 1956, Qatar witnessed multiple labour strikes and demonstrations by various labour groups such as oil workers and taxi drivers, but these were devoid of political motives and were merely focused on labour demands. Such demands included higher wages and fewer working hours, improved working conditions, access to clean potable water and larger meals, in addition to the repeated protests against the dominant power of Indian and other foreign officers in the oil sector (Shahdad, 2012, p. 610). It is worth noting that the labour movement during this period was highly organised and motivated, mainly because many of the Qatari, Arab and Iranian workers at the petroleum company had previously worked in Bahrain's oil sector, where they had gained experience in labour activism by participating in organised labour movements and protests. One case in point is Abdulrahman al-Nuaimi, the founder of Bahrain's leading opposition group, who then moved to Qatar permanently (al-Kuwari, 2015, p. 321).

Moreover, Qatari petroleum workers were emboldened by the explicit support they received from several prominent merchants as well as ambitious members of the ruling family, who hoped to gain popular support in their bid for power (Shadad, 2012, p. 615). A prominent example was Sheikh Khalifa Al Thani, also sided with the labourers against the petroleum company in the hope of winning their support for his opposition to Sheikh Ali (r. 1949–60) and his son Ahmad (al-Jaber, 2002, p. 148). During this period of unrest, the British played an instrumental role in pressuring the management of the petroleum company to appease the labour movement by improving working conditions and raising wages and to avoid the possible transformation of the labour protests into a political movement.

However, it was only a matter of time before Arab nationalism became aligned with the labour movement. Revolutionary media, especially Nasser's Sawt al-ʻArab, started reaching Qatar and mobilising the youth. Bahrain radio and nationalist newspapers from Egypt, Iraq and Bahrain were spreading propaganda among the small but growing number of Qatari students. M. H. (not his real name) is a prominent Qatari citizen who asked to remain anonymous as he reminisced his participation in the labour movement of 1956 which ended him in jail, "We were affected first by the

Algerian Revolution, and we used to read one newspaper only, al-ʻArab (personal interview, 20 December 2018). This increase in Arab nationalist media was followed by the formation of several sports clubs that were given names inspired by Arab nationalism and revolutionary discourse, such as al-Talīʻa (The Vanguard), al-ʻurūba (Arabism), al-Taḥrīr (Liberation), Al-Naṣr (Victory) and others" (Shahdad, 2012, p. 606).

M. H. adds, "Consequently, the youth of the al-Talīʻa (The Vanguard) Club met in a sports stadium known at that time as the 'Youth of the East' Club, and decided to change the name of the stadium to al-Taḥrīr (Liberation) Sports Stadium. Demonstrations demanding rights such as access to electricity were organised at this stadium. The demonstrations were not against the government, but rather, they were attempts to demand rights" (personal interview, 20 December 2018). In fact, despite bearing an Islamic title, even the Islamic Library Club established in 1953 was in reality a centre for Arab nationalist intellectuals, and it was shut down by the government in 1956 (al-Jaber, 2002, p. 393).

In addition to sports clubs, schools became a fertile ground for Arab nationalism. Shahdad (2012, pp. 607–608) points out that schools often served as battlegrounds between Arab nationalists and supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood, noting in particular an interesting altercation between the two groups, one led by the pro-Nasserist son of the Minister of Education, Hamad bin Jassim, and the other headed by the son of 'Abd al-Badiʻ Saqr, the Director of Education, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood. Furthermore, one of the most prominent Arab nationalist intellectuals at the time was Sheikh Suhaim bin Hamad, who was none other than the nephew of the ruler.

Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal in July 1956 was a turning point for Arab nationalism in Qatar. A month later, a labour strike paralysed the petroleum industry and massive demonstrations blocked the streets of Doha with protesters chanting pro-Nasser slogans and attempting to attack the British Consulate in the city (al-Jaber, 2002, p. 156). In October, riots swept Doha again following the assault on Egypt by Britain, France and Israel. During this incident, the ruling family faced an unprecedented challenge to its rule and legitimacy as well as the flow of oil revenues, not only because the rioters were able to disrupt oil flow, but also because over 200 Qataris enlisted to fight in Egypt, while fundraising was organised nationwide to finance the Egyptian army (Shahdad, 2012). Sheikh Ali bin 'Abd Allah was able to defuse situation only by financially appeasing his rivals within the ruling family, reducing the number of local labourers, and increasing the number of foreigners brought in to work in the oil sector (Shahdad, 1992).

Several other demonstrations mixing labour demands with support for Arab nationalism and Nasser broke out between 1956 and 1960. In addition to demonstrations, Arab nationalism inspired colloquial songs, poetry and plays, leading the British authorities to pressure the government to arrest and savagely assault nationalist activists. In M. H.'s words: "The al-Talīʻa Club became controversial and received too much attention from the government, especially after a play was performed on theatre. British spies reported the news to the ruler and exaggerated the gravity of issues. We were watching TV one night et al.-Talīʻa Club, and suddenly the

army broke in and surrounded us from every side. The army was one of the militias, and we used to call them 'The Bedouins'" (personal interview, 20 December 2018). M. H. and his colleagues became Qatar's first political prisoners for performing in a theatrical play that criticised the government and British agents. Political protests, however, did not stop. M. H. adds, "We were arrested and then jailed. We were a large number of people (18 in all), and we stayed in prison for 21 days. We went on a hunger strike, and there were attempts to persuade us to calm things down and end the strike, but we persisted with our stance and the hunger strike continued for 3 days. The majority were taken to hospital due to the consequences of the strike, leaving only Ali al-Kuwari, myself and Ahmad al-Khal" (personal interview, 20 December 2018).

By the early 1960s, however, tensions had come to an end as the increase in oil revenues enabled the ruler and the petroleum company, at the advice from the British, to address many of the labour demands in the hope of breaking their connection to Arab nationalism (Shahdad, 2012, pp. 616–617). The new ruler, Sheikh Ahmad bin Ali (r. 1960–1971) was also successful in appeasing the few merchant families whose political influence had suddenly resurged during the period of instability between 1956 and 1960, especially al-'Atiyya and al-Misnad. Concurrently, Sheikh Ahmad bin Ali secured Bedouin support by appointing many of them in the military (al-Kuwari, 1974, p. 29).

The relative peace, however, ended suddenly on April 17, 1963, when more than 5000 labourers, intellectuals, merchants and even members of the ruling family led massive demonstrations in support of Nasser's proposition of a union between Egypt, Iraq and Syria (al-Kuwari, 2015, p. 85). Slogans and photos supporting Nasser and denouncing Qatar's ruler as well as the Saudi and Jordanian monarchs were coupled with the demand that Qatar join Nasser's proposed union. The demonstrations continued relentlessly as the streets of Doha were blocked on a daily basis, and the situation became extremely grave when the ruler's nephew murdered a protester. It was only then that the ruler intervened personally, promising to address all demands and to punish his nephew for his crime (al-Kuwari, 2015, p. 184).

The protesters then formed the National Union Front which constituted 107 founding members representing various tribes, merchants, middle-class dignitaries and the labour movement. The National Union was co-led by two prominent dignitaries; Nasser al-Misnad, whose father was a merchant and the tribal leader of al-Khor district; and Hamad al-'Atiyya, also a merchant who had supported the labour movement for years while simultaneously holding a senior office both in the Department of Finance and at the ruler's diwan (al-Kuwari, 2013, pp. 131–135).

It must be noted that several Qatari tribes were either not interested in joining the protests and demonstrations, or simply not aware of them because these tribes were isolated in the suburbs away from Doha by the lack of local media and the poor infrastructure and public transportation (personal interview, 20 December 2018). On the other hand, the majority of protesters consisted of merchants, dignitaries, and prominent middle-class members mostly from the Hadhar tribes and families. In addition, the protestors included other social groups, such as Hadhar, semi-Hadhar/Bedouin, 'Ajam and Hawla, and few members of Bedouin tribes reflecting the public opinion

at large. Table 3.1 shows a partial list of the National Union Front membership, indicating the diversity of the protest movement at the time.

Moreover, the National Union Front was an integral part of the labour union and a stepping stone for new players and actors entering the political stage and joining the nationalist movement. These players included members of the al Hamad and al Ahmad branches of Al Thani who were striving to acquire political clout and legitimacy (Shadad, 2012, pp. 620–621). As Table 3.1 illustrates, the movement included groups of Qatari tribes and families, such as al-Atiyya, al-Suwaidi, al-Muhannadi, al-Kuwari and al-Maʻāḍīd, all of which enjoyed significant recognition and prestige as well as kinship with the ruling family. Among the participants were also prominent merchants, such as al-Manāʻī, al-Jaida and Fakhrū. Finally, many of the Arab nationalists were sons of elites and merchants who had been educated alongside peers from middle-class backgrounds in Qatar and abroad (Shadad, 2012, p. 621).

Table 3.1 List of names of members who participated in the National Union Front and the 1963 demonstration

Family/Tribal affiliation	Name of the member
Al-Hatmī (al-Hitmi)	Hatmī ʾAḥmad al-Hatmī Mubārak bin Hatmī al-Hatmī
Al-Khāṭir (al-Khater)	ʻAbdu Al-ʻAzīz al-Khāṭir ʻAlī bin Yūsuf al-Khāṭir
Al-Kūārī (al-Kuwari)	Saʻid bin Rabīʻa al-Kūārī Khalīfa bin Muḥamid al-Kūārī Jabr bin Sulṭān Tawār al-Kūārī
Al-Manāniʻa (al-Mannana)	ʻIsā bin ʻalī al-Manāʻī ʻAlī bin Muḥamid al-Manāʻī
Al-Muhānida (al-Muhannda)	Saʻd bin Musnad al-Muhannadī Fāris bin ʻAbdu Allah al-binʻalī Nāṣir bin ʻAbdu Allah al-Musnad ʻAlī bin Hasan al-Muhannadī
Al-Dosari	Abdul ʻAziz Muhammad Buzwair
Al-Jaida (al-Jaida)	Jāsim al-Jaida Muḥamid Yūsuf al-Jaida
Al-Naʻīm (al-Naimi)	Fīṣal Jabr al-Naʻīmī Khamīs bin Faḍl al-Naʻīmī
Fakhrū (Fakhroo)	ʾAḥmad Nāṣir ʻUbaidān ʾAḥmad bin ʻAbdu al-Raḥman ʻUbaidān
Al-Sūdān (al-Sudan)	Khalīfa bin Khālid al-Sūydī Sālimīn bin Khālid al-Sūydī
Al-ʻAṭīa (al-Attiya)	Khalīfa bin ʻAbdu Allah al-ʻAṭīa Ḥamad bin ʻAbdu Allah al-ʻAṭīa

Source Al Kuwari (2015). Al-ʻAwsaj: Sīratun wa Dhikrayāt [Al-Osaj: Bio and memories]. Beirut: Manshūrātu Difāf Publishing. (pp. 205–206)

On the institutional level, however, Bedouins such as Hawajer, al-Murra and al-Manasir constituted the backbone of the army, police and security forces (al-Kuwari, personal interview, 25 December 2017). They were known as fidāwīa literally meaning bodyguards who were willing to risk and sacrifice their lives in the service of the Emir. According to Ali al-Kuwari fidāwīa mostly comprised Bedouin tribes, slaves, and mercenaries from outside the emirate (al-Kuwari, 1974, p. 29).

Qatari writer ʻAbd al-ʻAziz al Khater further points out that fidāwīa have been associated with the political history of the Arabian Gulf. They accompany and follow a prominent figure, whether an emir, shaykh or a senior official, blindly and strictly obeying orders or committing whatever is necessary to carry those orders out. Moreover, they were informally employed without any official documents and only offered financial rewards for their services. Yet, despite the predominant representation of the Bedouins in the fidāwīa, several Bedouin tribes were not associated with them and were in fact involved in the protests. As Table 3.1 shows, few members of Bedouin tribes, particularly the al-Naʻīm and al-Dawasir tribes, were among those involved in the protests and demonstrations.

In April 1963, the National Union Front presented a list to the ruler that included dozens of demands reflecting the variety and diversity of grievances within Qatari society. For example, they included the demands to abolish foreign non-Arab labour, to provide access to free water and electricity for all, especially since the members of the ruling family did not pay utility bills, and to establish schools and hospitals that provided free services to the public.

Several demands reflected the tensions between the ruling family and its Bedouin and merchant loyalists on the one hand, and the merchants and Hadhar and semi-Bedouin tribes characterised as the opposition on the other. For example, the National Union Front demanded the formation of a municipality, organising municipal elections, and banning members of the ruling family from using diplomatic plates on their cars (Shahdad, 2012, pp. 626–627). They also wanted members of the ruling family to pay their outstanding debts to merchants, and to have them banned from participating in commerce or holding commercial interests. Furthermore, they demanded the recognition of labour unions and the implementation of land reform and redistribution. Most importantly, they wanted to ensure financial oversight through an official budget and demanded that flow and distribution of oil revenues be controlled (Shahdad, 2012, pp. 626–627).

With guidance from the British, Sheikh Ahmad bin Ali promised to carry out these reforms almost immediately. Indeed, reforms started a month later, but were limited to addressing basic economic and welfare needs concerning access to electricity, potable water, hospitals, schools and transportation. On the other hand, no administrative or political reforms that could have allowed political participation or power sharing were undertaken. Moreover, all 107 members of the National Union Front were jailed, and a few were exiled to Kuwait, the UAE, Bahrain and other Arab nations (al-Jaber, 2002, pp. 465–467). According to a former member of the National Union Front, “Hamad al-Atiyya’s death in prison in 1963 was shockingly difficult for the Qatari people to accept, especially for Nasser al-Misnad who was his close friend. One of the consequences was the migration of al-Muhannadi tribe to Kuwait in

1964, thus ending one of the oldest tribal alliances with Al Thani" (M. A, personal interview, 20 December 2018). When probed to give more details on the scope of this migration, M. A. responded, "It was a massive immigration that conveyed their anger and discontent; the entire al-Muhannadi tribe migrated to Kuwait. Eventually, most of them returned, but a few still live there till this day" (personal interview, 20 December 2018).

Nevertheless, the demise of the labour movement and the impact of Arab nationalism seem to have been inevitable. This was attributed to several factors such as the relentless British support to the Emir, growing oil revenues, repression of protests, the successful rapid implementation of economic reforms, and most importantly, the structural weaknesses of the merchant class and tribes (El-Rayyes, 1988, p. 78). Moreover, accepting the demand to recruit Qataris into the security forces and the military was instrumental in ending the protests (al-Kuwari, 2011, p. 131), especially given the hostile public opinion to violent oppression by the security forces whose members were recruited by the Emir from among Bedouins, slaves and mercenaries without going through the political and administrative channels (al-Kuwari, 1974, p. 29).

Despite Sheikh Ahmad bin Ali's success in avoiding demands such as authorising the formation of labour unions and implementing real political reforms to increase popular participation, two important considerations must be noted. First, as Sheikh Ahmad bin 'Ali effectively marginalised the prominent tribes in Qatar, tensions started to escalate between the ruling family and elites on the one hand, and the tribal leaders, merchants and labourers on the other. These divisions and tensions enabled Sheikh Khalifa to embrace Arab nationalism as an opportunity to win the popular support for his accession to the throne. Secondly, it was at this stage that Sheikh Khalifa started to play a major role in supporting the labourers; he was known as Nasir al 'Ummal, the advocate of labourers, as he supported their demands and offered them financial assistance, which in turn motivated more strikes and demonstrations (Shahdad, 2012). It was the demonstrations that paved his path to the throne following the so-called al-Harakatu Al-Taṣḥīḥīa (Corrective Movement) after dethroning his cousin, the incumbent Sheikh Ahmad bin Ali. Like his predecessor, however, Sheikh Khalifa (r. 1972–1995) had to rely on the loyalty and support of factions and members of the ruling family to consolidate his rule, especially by appointing his son Hamad as head of the armed forces and minister of defence. At the same time, he adopted an intense policy to naturalise Bedouin tribes that had recently migrated from Saudi Arabia, and in doing so, he invoked tribalism to win over the allegiance of these and other tribes to maintain power (Kamrava, 2013, pp. 109–111).

3.4 Implications of Arab Nationalism in Kuwait and Qatar

Both Qatar and Kuwait were swept up by Arab nationalism, and in both cases, the power of the ruling family was questioned or threatened at one point or another. Moreover, in both cases, the ruler had to give in to some of the demands of the Arab

nationalists who were unsurprisingly led or backed by the merchant class as well as rival members of the ruling family. The implications for power sharing, political participation and class and tribal divisions, however, were significantly different.

To start with, although the merchant classes in Qatar and Kuwait both embraced Arab nationalism as a legitimate ideology through which they could bargain for power and concessions from the ruling family, major structural, social and political differences led to different outcomes in each case. In Kuwait, the merchant class was much more significant in terms of size, education and influence as a result of its highly organised nature and ability to mobilise political opposition to the emir. More importantly, Kuwait was in the middle of a regional political rift which exposed it to external threats and influences from Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. While the merchant class enjoyed unity in its demands as well as its identity, it opposed the Bedouin tribes that were openly loyal to the ruler despite being socially and politically marginalised. This friction intensified the social and political divisions within Kuwaiti society, leading to the weakening of the opposition and the sub-division between al-Qatami's and al-Khatib's groups, enabling the ruler to appease the nationalists as a means of reinforcing his legitimacy and to strengthen his power, both locally and regionally. Moreover, he was able to exploit the tribes to eliminate the power of the merchants and Arab nationalists, mobilise political support and gain legitimacy. Additionally, British support and the flow of oil revenues played a central role in enabling the emir to attain stability, create a welfare state and eventually defuse any threat from the merchant class and Arab nationalism.

In Qatar, the merchant class was much smaller and weaker despite the fact that it was able to form a coalition with a member of ruling family and tribes by merging the labour movement with Arab nationalism. Moreover, geographic isolation shielded Qatar from external risks flowing in from Egypt or Iraq, especially given the continued British support to the ruler. Moreover, unlike the sophisticated political demands of the Kuwaiti intelligentsia that complicated the struggle with the ruling family there, the majority of demands expressed by the labour movement, merchants and tribes in Qatar were much more centred on economic issues and welfare. These demands later became political and eventually threatened the ruler in 1963. However, none of the political or social forces of the opposition had the ability, or possibly the will, to pursue radical political change, and this was also coupled by the fact that the Al Thani have constituted a significant percentage of the population, especially in the aftermath of the severe depopulation process that afflicted Qatar following the collapse of the pearling industry in the 1930s. Thus, a combination of significant economic and welfare-oriented reforms, coupled with oppressive moves against members of the merchant class, in addition to British assistance, enabled the ruler to defuse the tensions and pressures until Sheikh Khalifa successfully came to power in 1972.

Eventually, the influence of Arab nationalism faded in both countries. By the early 1970s, the merchant class in Qatar had already been substantially weakened as a result of economic integration as well as the ability of the rulers to use oil wealth to build alliances with various families (Herb, 2014, p. 69). At the same time, the political power of the tribes was undermined through an extensive programme of hiring tribal members for state jobs. The government granted preferential hiring

treatment to nationals as well as to those who were in the opposition, offering them lucrative jobs in the oil industry, public sector and diplomatic positions (Freer, 2015, p. 185). For example, Ahmad al-Khal, a critic of the ruling family and a member of the al-Talī'a Club, became an ambassador to Germany from 1973 to 1997 (personal interview, 20 December 2018). Both the tribes and the merchants, therefore, became politically impotent with the sudden and enormous growth of the state as employer, provider and caretaker.

Arab nationalism in Kuwait had faded significantly by the 1970s. The rulers enjoyed similar success in economically appeasing the tribes and the merchant class and preventing them from aligning themselves politically, partly through the creation of an enormous welfare system and partly by sharing wealth and providing investment incentives and support. However, the situation in Kuwait was different in one respect; both the merchant class and the Bedouin tribes were able to maintain their different social identities and in-group cohesion. This is attributed to the visible segregation between these two groups on a number of levels, such as their living in different neighbourhoods and quarters, seeking employment in different state departments which each group treated as its own turf, as well as the traditional political division between loyalist tribes and oppositional merchants. As Arab nationalism faded and lost its appeal after 1967, it was eventually replaced by political Islamic influences (Freer, 2015, p. 101).

Chapter 4
State Building and Conflicting Identities

4.1 Introduction

As discussed earlier, the relationships between ruling families and tribes, and subsequently the relationships between the state and tribes, have transformed substantially and radically as a result of changes to the political economies of Qatar and Kuwait (Herb, 2014, pp. 61–62). In the pre-oil era, the ruling families in both countries depended politically and financially on their abilities to forge close ties and alliances with prominent and powerful tribes and families, partly through marriage and financial arrangements (Crystal, 1990, p. 4). For example, prior to the discovery of oil, the ruling family in Qatar was a dominant merchant family itself that was directly involved in pearling while enjoying close ties with and support from tribes. In Kuwait, social and political limitations prevented the ruling family from engaging in economic activities or competing with the merchant class, and consequently, the ruling family was almost completely dependent on financial contributions and taxes from merchants (Crystal, 1989).

However, by the early 1970s, both states had gained independence and the fortunes of major players had also been reversed. Oil revenues made the ruling families extremely wealthy and politically independent, while the merchants and other social forces became economically dependent on the state (al-Mezaini, 2013, p. 44). Consequently, the financial and economic links between ruling families and tribes and between the ruling families and mainstream society are far less critical (Kamrava et al., 2016). The ruling families now enjoyed unique opportunities to not only consolidate their power and limit their political and social dependence on tribes, but also to independently engage in economic development to modernise their states. In practice, however, the states were not completely centralised as their economic development and reform encountered numerous obstacles, such as declining oil prices in the 1980s and the early 1990s; rapid population growth; increased demand for development and citizens' political participation; and a failure to diversify the states'

M. Al-Kuwari, *Tribal Reawakening and the Future of State-Building in Kuwait and Qatar*, Gulf Studies 20, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-9663-2_4

oil-dependent economies (AlShehabi, 2015b, pp. 24–25). These obstacles and challenges left significant impact on the social contract in these countries and strained the ability of the state to build national identities.

This chapter discusses state policies that aimed at exploiting tribes and tribalism to bolster the political power and stability of the state in Kuwait and Qatar. In the pre-independence era, ruling families in both countries adopted divisive policies that resulted in the social fragmentation rather than national unity to serve short-term political goals such as maintaining political control, and weakening and undermining any political opposition. Furthermore, this chapter argues that the intense revival of tribalism was the result of such short-term policies, which in the long term resulted in fuelling social and political tensions among social groups and between these groups and the state. As the investigation reveals, these policies were not viable in the long term, whether in Kuwait where social tensions and political paralysis prevail, or in Qatar, where the revival of tribalism became a source of threat to national security.

4.2 Challenges with National Identity Projects Since the 1980s

As discussed in previous chapters, tribes were a critical component of the process of state formation. Enjoying the allegiance of tribes and their support, the ruling families were able to develop new political structure without any real opposition or difficulty (Eickelman, 2016, pp. 223–240). Shortly after independence, British protection ended and new serious threats emerged, specifically from two neighbours, Iraq and Iran. It was within this context that the Gulf Cooperation Council, GCC, was formed in 1981, both as a regional organisation and as a project for a new regional identity among GCC countries, sharing common social and economic characteristics, especially tribal associations (Zahlan, 1989, p. 135). The GCC also incorporated the so-called Khaleeji identity which had been developed by the GCC states as they formulated their national identities and created state institutions in the 1960s and 1970s (Partrick, 2009).

The Khaleeji identity is a vague construct that was invented and promoted in the early 1980s at a time when the GCC nations were still preoccupied with state and nation-building following independence. The Khaleeji identity simply refers to someone from the Gulf region, but more specifically, it is an identity associated with citizens of monarchies whose economies are oil-dependent. Hence, for example, it excludes Yemen although it is located within the Arab Peninsula, and it also excludes Iraq although it is an oil-rich republic with a shore on the Gulf. Al-Ghithami (2009, p. 231) argues that the Khaleeji identity was an invention based on an exaggerated illusion that was born out of the oil flux, but in effect, it contradicted the national identities that Gulf states were individually attempting to build and develop.

The structure of the GCC and the Khaleeji regional identity may have even disrupted nation-building projects in individual GCC states and created an imaginary world in which these nations were unified against common threats. Ya'qub al-Kandari, Professor of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Kuwait, describes the relationship between two concepts, "Two contradictory projects were at work in each state in the late 1970s and early 1980s. That is, each country had a national project through which it was seeking to invent a national identity and establish legitimacy over its society and territory. Each state was also committed to a regional project in that it was seeking to celebrate a unified Khaleeji identity and consider national borders and differences meaningless" (al-Kandari, personal interview 19 December 2019). These two projects, however, contradicted each other. Furthermore, according to al-Mutairi (2011), the national identities could not be justified with the promotion of the Khaleeji identity and open border policies among the GCC states, and the Khaleeji identity project eventually evolved at the expense of individual national identities.

Furthermore, while rulers of the Gulf states may have had substantial oil revenues to consolidate power and build state institutions without any serious domestic challenges, regional factors such as the emergence of threats from neighbouring Iraq and Iran, and the promotion of the Khaleeji identity seem to have played an important role in undermining their efforts to build national identities. As Davidson (2015, pp. 230–231) noted, several internal and external pressures, such as population growth, increased youth, unemployment, inequities in the distribution of wealth, oil price fluctuations and increased numbers of expatriates, raised doubts about the future of these states and created a sense of discomfort and insecurity among citizens. For example, demographic changes after the 1970s were substantial as foreign residents outnumbered local populations which in turn complicated state-citizen relationships and the concept of citizenship in these countries (Vora, 2013, p. 16). These states experienced rising unemployment rates among their citizens which further reinforced the growing perception that expatriates were a threat to demographic stability, national identity and the economic interests of citizens (Vora, 2013, p. 52).

In Kuwait, negative attitudes towards immigrant labourers were motivated by rising unemployment rates among the youth, increased burdens on public facilities and services such as transportation and healthcare, and slowing economic growth. Tribes competed to address and exploit these issues and grievances by presenting and positioning themselves as alternative reliable safety systems (al-Kandari, personal interview, 19 December 2019), and it was not until 2012 that the government promised to reduce foreign labour by 100,000 immigrants annually until 2022 in an effort to address these concerns (Fargues & De Bel-Air, 2015, p. 159). Ultimately, however, this reinforced the image of tribes as a safety net in the minds of members and at the expense of the state.

Timing may have also played a role in complicating the efforts of states to build national identities. In the 1980s, these states were struggling to build national ideals and values and promising modernisation, but optimism among the middle class was in crisis and declining in many parts of the world. Although the middle classes in the GCC countries were in fact thriving at the time, the loss of optimism and uncertainty

about the future were eventually expressed by the middle class in the form of rising tribalism (al-Ghithami, 2009, p. 213). The rapid wealth enjoyed by Gulf populations and the adoption of modern and Western lifestyles was also a cultural shock and represented a threat to traditional lifestyles and values (Crystal, 1990, p. 178). This too may have played an important role in fuelling the revival of tribalism, especially in Kuwait where the ruling family had an interest in appeasing the tribes in the face of opposition from the merchants and Hadhar.

By the 1990s, the revival of tribalism had become evident across the GCC (al-Ghithami, 2009, p. 226). This reawakening of tribalism was manifested in numerous ways, especially in shifting discourses that focused on the interests and grievances of the tribe and its members. The revival and intensity of tribalism were no longer limited to political and public circles, but were adopted on the individual and private levels. For example, families started to research their tribal family trees and symbols which were openly displayed in schools, at social events and even the licence plates of private vehicles. The display of tribal symbols on private vehicles was used not only to boast tribal affiliation, but also to mobilise support for protection in the event of a car accident or a road rage brawl (al-Ghithami, 2009, p. 226). Hence, it seemed as if citizens were turning to their tribes for support and protection rather than relying on the state to provide such functions.

4.3 State Policies and Technicalities of Citizenship and Naturalisation

Citizenship in the Gulf states is often perceived from a rentier economy perspective; that is, citizenship is often difficult to obtain and is an exclusive construct through which national identity is protected (Zeineddin, 2014, p. 156). The value of citizenship is linked to the welfare benefits offered by a state as part of a social contract that organises the relationships between the state and society; such contracts developed when each country gained independence (Vora, 2019, p. 36). Indeed, in the Gulf states, citizenship became a privilege held by citizens and was attached to descent, ethnicity and religion (al-Naqeeb, 1996). In other words, citizenship in the Gulf does not only constitute an individual being a member of a society, but it also entails a substantial set of exclusive benefits that are linked to oil wealth.

The social contract in the Gulf states, moreover, was built on the notion that the welfare state takes care of its citizens in return for their loyalty. In theory, this undermined the need for tribal identities since the state became the provider of welfare to its citizens, a relationship in which tribes had little or no influence or clout. However, demographic and economic changes have pushed this social contract between Gulf states and their citizens to the limits as these social contracts come under tremendous social, economic and political pressures (Diwan, 2014). Peterson (2012) referred to this conundrum as a "fraying of the social contract" in Gulf countries. Pressures on the social contract meant that the ability of the state to continue providing

excellent welfare services and high standards of living to its citizens was sooner or later going to reach its limit, which in turn would have resulted in undermining the legitimacy of the state and the ruling families, and in growing demands for political participation and power sharing.

Many of the contemporary practices related to citizenship and naturalisation in GCC countries, especially those associated with segregation and exclusion are inherited from the British colonial period (al-Shehabi, 2019, pp. 211–212). In fact, the idea of citizenship was intimately influenced by the British residency in the region in 1928 and 1929. Belgrave (1954) noted that the travel passport system was first introduced to the sheikh of Bahrain in 1928 during a time of tension between the British and Persian Empires. The purpose of the travel document was to define Bahrain as a political unit separate from Persian ports and to record traders and passengers travelling between Bahrain and Persia (Belgrave, 1954, p. 387). According to al-Muraikhi (1987), the first passport in Bahrain was called a khitab, or travel letter, and it was a one-page identity document carrying the details of the holder, including their full name and profession. Citizens could not obtain a travel letter without the personal consent of Bahrain's ruler and approval by the British Accreditation Council (al Muraikhi, 1987, p. 57).

British practices only enhanced the notion of citizenship as a formal status, but the definition of citizens and those who were entitled to be perceived as such was more related to the myths and traditions shared by the local communities. According to Hobsbawm (1997, pp. 47–57), these myths and traditions "seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies certainty with a historic past. In fact, where possible, they normally attest to establish continuity with a historic past." Based on the national myth of Kuwait, the tribes that lived in the region before 1920 selected Sheikh Sabah bin Jaber as their first leader, participated in building the wall around Kuwait City and fought in the battle of Jahra against the Ikhwan, an army from inner Arabian Peninsula. Accordingly, members of these original tribes were eligible to become Kuwaiti by asl, or origin (Longva, 2006). Likewise, in Qatar, the tribes that had settled and remained in the Peninsula before 1930 (Crystal, 1995, 150), fighting alongside Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed in the battle of al-Wajba, were recognised as original tribes, qaba'il al-'asila, and their members were thus entitled to citizenship (al-Kuwari, personal interview, 4 December 2017).

Hence, as the modern states of Kuwait and Qatar began to evolve, tribal identity was an essential component in defining the citizens of these states. Moreover, the distinction between those classified as members of original tribes and others who arrived at later dates inevitably led to a complex system of stratification and classification as far as citizenship is concerned (Al-Shehabi, 2015, p. 102). According to Kuwait's Nationality Law of 1959, citizens are classified into two tiers (Longva, 1997, p. 206). The first category is bi-l ta'sis (residence in Kuwait since 1920); these are inhabitants of Kuwait City, and they primarily have access to social, economic and political rights (Longva, 1997, p. 206). The second category is bi-l tajnis (naturalised citizens); many of these are Bedouin nomads who moved to the region after 1920 and are known by the names of their tribes (Longva, 1997, pp. 48–49; Alebrahim, 2019,

p. 139). Thus, for example, in both Kuwait and Qatar, first-tier citizens enjoy substantial legal and economic rights and benefits, whereas those who were naturalised after 1920 in Kuwait or after 1930 in Qatar are denied such rights and entitlements (Barbar, 2014), such as the right to vote for parliamentary elections in Kuwait or municipal elections in Qatar. Similarly, tier one citizens in Qatar are entitled to a plot of land in addition to a substantial financial gift from the state at the time of marriage, whereas those who were naturalised after 1930 and their descendants receive no such benefits ("Law No. 2 of 1961 Qatari Nationality," 1961).

In fact, this system of citizen classification aims at organising and maintaining the welfare system which offers financial and non-financial benefits to citizens (Crystal, 1990, p. 139). More importantly, the system is intended to highlight the value of citizenship as a notion intimately linked to wealth-sharing and other benefits as a means to block any demands for political power sharing or participation (Ross, 2011, p. 4). However, this approach has serious caveats. First, while it may have worked in the short term with very small populations, it may not be viable in the long term as GCC countries face serious economic challenges and deficits, especially with the uncertainty of oil prices and the growing populations (al-Shehabi, 2015b, p. 107). Indeed, several GCC countries have recently started introducing taxes such as the Value-Added Tax for the first time since independence (Osborne, 2015). The second issue is that the introduction of taxation will undermine the model on which the social contract has been based for decades, and it is only a matter of time before taxpaying citizens begin to demand political participation and representation (Althani, 2012, p. 6). This is particularly going to be the case if GCC states are eventually forced to levy income taxes to manage their budgetary deficits and expand their welfare services.

It must be noted, however, that the political systems in the Gulf did not only use citizenship as a means appease their societies, but also as a tool to manipulate the demographic and social structures of these societies to confront any political opposition to their rule (Al Hajeri, personal interview, 19 October 2017). For example, in the 1960s, Kuwait's Nationality Law of 1959 was amended to allow newly arrived Bedouin tribes to obtain political rights through naturalisation. These naturalised tribes were not only loyal to the ruler, but also exercised their political rights to counter the opposition in parliament (Longva,1997, p. 48). In addition to enjoying political rights, these naturalised Bedouin tribes were also given economic and social benefits, such as land, jobs and scholarships. As al-Hajeri (personal interview, 19 October 2017) noted, "when the government pushed Bedouin tribes to participate in the political game, merchant families and Arab nationalists expressed […] anger because most of those Bedouin tribes had dual citizenship, but instead of revoking their citizenships, the government naturalised them as first-class citizens." In all, throughout the 1950s and 1960s, over 200,000 members of various Bedouin tribes from Eastern and Central Arabia became Kuwaiti citizens through this process of naturalisation (al-Ghabra, 2014, p. 30).

First and second-tier citizenship classification was also adopted by Qatar in 1961. A first-class citizen was a member of a tribe that had settled in Qatar prior to 1930 and had maintained its nationality since then ("Law No. 2 of 1961 Qatari Nationality,"

1961). A second-class citizen was a descendant of a resident who had been naturalised (al-Sayed, personal interview, 19 December 2017). According to al-Sayed (personal interview, 19 December 2017), this system of citizenship was "based on certain rules and regulations that contribute[d] to strengthening the tribe and, consequently and perhaps cautiously, tribalism." (personal interview, 19 December 2017). For example, the Qatari Naturalisation Law [stated that] "Any adult foreigner may acquire Qatari nationality, by decree, provided that: he and his family have been regular residents in Qatar for not less than twenty consecutive years, or fifteen consecutive years if he is an Arab that is a native of an Arab country; free from impediments; good repute and has not been convicted of any offence impugning hi[s] honour; good knowledge of the Arabic language." ("Law No. 2 of 1961 Qatari Nationality," 1961). Accordingly, naturalised Qataris did not enjoy the right to vote, and their access to social and economic benefits was limited (al-Sayed, personal interview, 19 December 2017). According to a Qatari employee at the Ministry of Interior, "[the] Qatari passport consist[s] of eight number[s,] and I can tell who is Qatari by naturalisation from the last three digits; this identification is unique [to] naturalised individuals." (personal interview, April 2019). Moreover, as in Kuwait, Qatar has a significant population of stateless (bidūn jinsīa), estimated at 1200 individuals (Fisher, 2015, p. 2); some, who were from the al-Ghufran clan, had been stateless for 20 years (Human Rights Watch, 2019).

In October 2021, Qatar finally held its first Shura Council elections after repeated delays over many years. This is when questions of citizen classification emerged to the surface and became a major issue of contention (Marzooq, 2021). Based on the Electoral Law 2005, only original first-class citizens aged 30 and above are qualified to run for elections to compete for 30 of the 45 available seats while the remaining 15 members would be appointed by the Emir. At the same time, second-class or naturalised citizens were not only excluded from running for elections, but they could only vote if they were born in Qatar and if their grandfather was also a naturalised citizen (al-Hajeri, 2021). Although the limited political rights of naturalised citizens had been in place for many years, they had never represented a contentious issue prior to 2021 simply because Shura Council elections had never been held before. This also triggered the first incident of organised political protest, mainly by the al-Murra tribe, who were disgruntled as their candidates were excluded for running given their status as naturalised citizens (al-Hajeri, 2021).

The political tensions of 2021, however, did not emerge in a vacuum, especially as tribalism and tribal identities had been on the rise for years. For example, as second-class citizenship extended to the recognition and classification of relatives, tribal recognition became important at the national level. As al-Sayed (personal interview, 19 December 2017) argued, "descent… became crucial for determining the authenticity of citizens and defining citizenship. Most importantly, any person who claimed Qatari descent had to prove it through [a] number of witnesses from their tribe." Consequently, many Qatari families began to attempt proving their descent in a variety of ways. For example, "in the middle of a majlis, you will witness a family tree hanging on the wall as an essential way to define members as descendants of

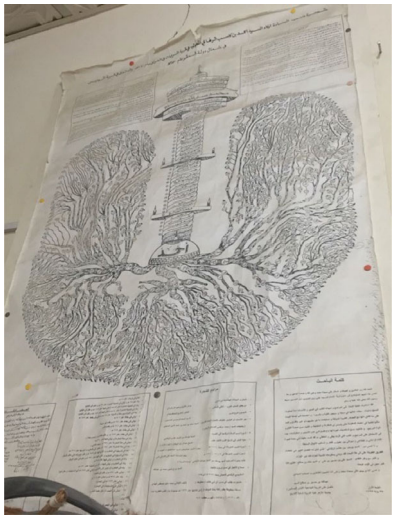

Fig. 4.1 Examples of family trees displayed in Qatari majlises. **a** Tree for the al-Kuwari tribe and **b** Tree for the al-Sada tribe. These lineages are traced to the prophet Mohammed's companions, and the descendants are located across the Arabian Peninsula (Images taken by researcher, 11–12 December 2017)

the tribe and to trace their roots to protect their citizenship" (al-Sayed, personal interview, 19 December 2017) (Fig. 4.1).

Moreover, as in Kuwait, Qatar too resorted to the political naturalisation of Bedouin tribes. On 22 February 1972, Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad Al Thani deposed his cousin Sheikh Ahmad bin 'Ali while the latter was on a hunting trip in Iran in what became known as the Corrective Movement, or al-Harakatu Al-Taṣḥīḥīa. To consolidate his power and ensure tribal loyalty, the new ruler increased spending on social programmes, including public housing benefits, housing units and food cooperatives; he also welcomed newcomers to Qatar and naturalised Bedouins and other citizens (al-Khater, 1989, pp.17–18). However, while the government was effectively undermining the power of the tribe by building state institutions, social settlement, service programmes and education policies, tribalism was yet revived as a result of housing policies which outlined areas inhabited by tribal and sociologically distinct categories. For example, Five Bedouin housing complexes were built in 1988, constituting a total of 1953 public housing units that were allocated to specific tribes; al-Murra (496 houses), Mua'ither (209 houses), al-Manasir (42 houses), al-Shahaniyya (242 houses) and al-Rayyan (964 houses), and these compounds were fully equipped with schools, clinics, mosques, police stations and markets (al-Khater, 1989, p. 21). These districts were considered Bedouin territory, since the majority of their inhabitants were affiliated with Bedouins tribes.

The new ruler also placed his family members in key positions and increased the size of the country's armed forces by hiring large numbers of Bedouins and appointing them in vital security and defence forces (Kamrava, 2013, pp. 113–114).

According to a retired Qatari military officer, the emir therefore maintained a unique relationship with a particularly large Bedouin tribe within the country, namely the al-Murra tribe, leaving other Qatari tribes to feel marginalised (Anonymous, personal interview, April 2019).

Overall, citizenship and naturalisation laws were used in Kuwait and Qatar to consolidate the new social contract whereby citizens were offered welfare services, generous benefits and a share of the wealth, and in return were expected to give up on demands for power sharing through political participation. These laws were discriminatory in nature, favouring the original tribes and families that had settled prior to 1920 in Kuwait and 1930 in Qatar. However, the two states resorted to naturalising newly settled loyal Bedouin tribes that arrived from Eastern and Central Arabia. Members of these tribes were also naturalised as first-class citizens and granted full economic and political rights to ensure their loyalty. In Kuwait, they were also encouraged to participate in parliamentary elections against the opposition. In Qatar, these naturalised tribes were treated favourably and their members were staffed in the most sensitive security and military posts shortly after independence. In both states, these policies and the purposes for which they were designed sowed the seeds of division along tribal lines, thus undermining the future prospects of building national identities.

4.4 Tribal Fragmentation: The Bedouin–Hadhar Dichotomy

Most of the populations in both Kuwait and Qatar have been urbanised since the nineteenth century (Crystal, 1995). Indeed, while many Bedouin tribes maintain nomadic lifestyles, the capital cities of Kuwait City and Doha are urban centres wherein political and economic activities thrive. Most urban families have common ancestors with nomadic tribes and families that settled in urban centres and adopted urban lifestyles associated with pearling in the early twentieth century (al-Nakib, 2014). However, they generally perceive themselves as Hadhar, or urban dwellers, rather than as Bedouin (al-Nakib, 2014).

As al-Nakib (2014, p. 6) noted, in the post-oil period and by the 1970s, 99% of Kuwait's population were living in towns and had never lived in a tent, despite a continued distinction between the Hadhar and Bedouin tribes. Indeed, it was a cultural and sociological distinction between permanent Arab residents of Kuwait who arrived before 1920 and residents who were naturalised after that date. The distinction between the two groups, however, was not clear. For example, most Hadhar who lived in Kuwait before 1920 had tribal origins and affiliations and even had relatives who were classified as Bedouins (al-Nakib, 2014, p. 6). Moreover, as previously discussed, while all Hadhar were first-class citizens, many Bedouins were second-class citizens since they settled in Kuwait after 1920, except for those who

were specifically naturalised as first-class citizens in return for their loyalty to the rulers.

Lifestyle distinctions also existed. For example, most Hadhar were permanent settlers in a city or village and had come into wealth as a result of their involvement in commerce and agriculture, which the economy and elite were dependent upon (Zahlan, 1989). In contrast, most Bedouins were known to work in land or desert activities, such as breeding livestock, rather than in trade, but they were also involved in pearling. According to al-Shawi (1994), "the Bedouins fished for pearls and had some urban families that kept sheep and goats. When the fishing season was finished, they… herded the animals. Some Bedouins also joined the urbans in al-Ghous (diving for pearls), seeking economic gain" (p. 7).

Figure 4.2 supports this; it shows a Bedouin tent that belonged to Bani Hajer in al-Hofuf, an area in the desert between Qatar and Saudi Arabia, dating back to 1904 (Annegret & Herbstreuth, 2006). Presumably, they were fidāwīa of Shaikh 'Abd Allah bin Jassim Al Thani (r. 1913–1949) (personal interview, 11 December 2017). At the top of the tent, a small fishing boat is erected. Likewise, for Hadhar tribes, as a Qatari man from the al-Hitmi family, a branch of the Hadhar tribe Al bin 'Ali, explained, when I was young, I used to work as a pearl diver all summer until the rain season. Then, when shrubs and trees covered the desert… for our animals, I would leave my pearl diving territory and start a pasture in the desert, especially when there was a chance of good grazing and… a plentiful supply of wood' (personal interview, 17 December 2018). Similarly, Bedouin tribes in Kuwait also shared professions with the Hadhar at different times of the year (al-Hajeri, personal interview, 19 October 2017). Moreover, the Bedouin used boats both in Kuwait and Qatar because at times of drought, when winter passed into summer without a spring, the tribes were sometimes forced to abandon their normal territories to follow water holes, even travelling to Hadhar coastal areas in search of relief (Annegret & Herbstreuth, 2006).

Another common trait between the Hadhar and Bedouins of Qatar was that they both despised sales jobs. Even merchants did not engage in selling products in the markets since such a function was perceived as a tribal stigma and considered absolutely shameful (al-Hitmi, personal interview 17 December 2018). Sales jobs were generally left for the Hawla and 'Ajam tribes and clans who had migrated to Persia after the collapse of pearling and returned before independence (al Hitmi, personal interview, 17 December 2018).

Despite the many similarities, the single most important factor that differentiates Bedouins from Hadhar in Kuwait and Qatar is the date in which the tribes or families were settled in the country, that is, 1920 in Kuwait and 1930 in Qatar. This explains the fact that some families and clans from the same tribe are perceived as Hadhar while others are identified as Bedouin. Citizenship classification is also another factor, especially in Kuwait, where most Bedouins are second-tier citizens since they were naturalised after 1930, whereas a few were naturalised as first-class citizens to reward their support and loyalty to the Emir.

Another sociopolitical differentiating factor between the Hadhar and the Bedouin is the manner in which family and tribal names are used. The internal structures of

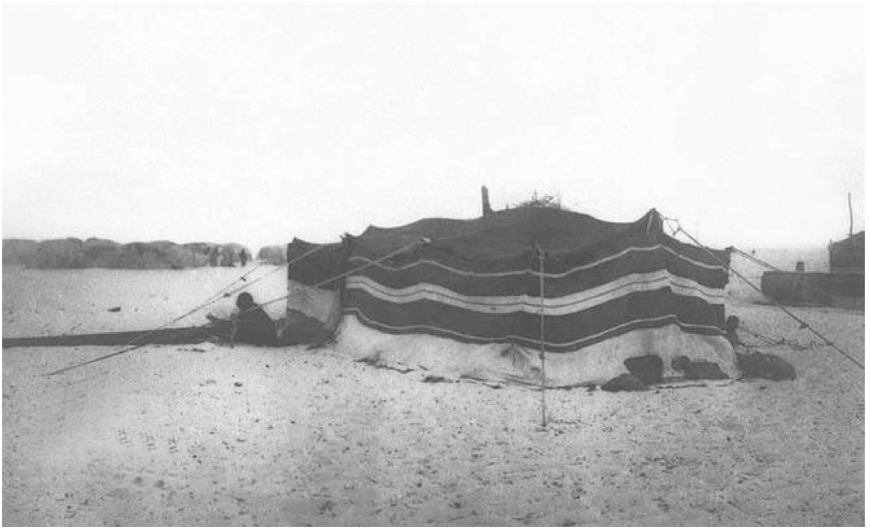

Fig. 4.2 Bedouin tent in Qatar in 1904 (Annegret & Herbstreuth, 2006)

tribes are based on common patrilineal descent and kinship units, such as families and ashiras, that is, clans; they are significant to understanding the power structures and group identities of the Hadhars and Bedouins in the Gulf states (al Mughni, 2001, p. 24). To identify a person's tribal affiliation, three prominent given names must be used; the name of the person's qabila or tribe, the highest level of group organisation wherein people share the same lineage, kinship and culture; the name of the person's fakhd or clan, the middle level of group organisation; and the name of the person's awael or family, the lowest level of group organisation. Thus, the naming protocol commonly used in the Arabian Peninsula is the first name, followed by the father's and grandfather's name, then the family name followed by the clan and finally the tribe (Shahdad, personal interview, 9 December 2018).

In Kuwait, although Bedouins are urbanised city dwellers, they are distinct from Hadhar by the fact that they insist on using their tribal names (al-Nakib, 2014). In contrast, the Hadhar differentiate themselves by adopting family names rather than tribal names; for example, most Hadhar families in Kuwait have the names al-Nisf, al-Saqr, al-Marzooq, al-Hamad and so on. They recognise each other as original families to maintain social status and access to social and economic benefits (Crystal, 1989). Many of these identities are revived and sometimes invented, and it is not uncommon for individuals and families to associate themselves with certain tribes or to even invent tribal affiliations to avoid exclusion. For example, in Kuwait, the family names al-Kandari which is derived from the old function of carrying water, and al-Najjar which literally means carpenter, were not affiliated with any tribes, but over the years, the members of these families invented their own tribal affiliations and developed the same sense of 'asabiyya and cohesion manifested in any other old tribe, and the purpose of this was to seek power and influence in society and with the

state by exercising cohesion and behaving as tribes (al-Najjar, personal interview, 21 October 2017).

In addition, names are connected to the division of electoral districts in Kuwait, which is instrumental in providing tribes with power in elections. As Longva (2006) noted, the politics of names has drawn Bedouin attention to the importance of sub-identities, including Islamic identities, in a context that is radically new; names underlie the politics of belonging, political demands and popular support. For example, according to al-'Utaibi (personal interview, 22 October 2017), during National Union of Kuwait Students (NUKS) elections, around 90% of students used their tribal names to vote rather than their family names (personal interview, 22 October 2017). Similarly, in Qatar, as Kamrava (2017) argued, tribal and clan names are markers of business and political connections and relationships.

In addition to the divisions between Bedouins and Hadhar, further distinctions also exist within the tribes themselves. For example, as one member of al-Hajeri tribe (personal interview, 24 December 2017) in Qatar explained, some tribal groups use their names to indicate their family or clan rather than their major tribe. She stated, I am member of the al-Hajeri tribe; we live in Bani Hajer district located in al-Rayyan City, wherein the majority of the population is composed of Bedouin tribes, such as the al-Qahtani, al-Murra and al-Dawasir. We have some relatives who live in al-Khor City north of Qatar, but they don't identify themselves as al-Hajeri. They… use the clan name al-Shawani instead of their tribal name, and they always express a sense of superiority [to] us. Why do they do… this? Aren't we the sons of al-Hamail (sons of the tribe)? Do they think they are more privileged and prestigious than us?' (personal interview, 24 December 2017). This woman is lamenting the fact that al-Shawani are treating their Hajeri kin with contempt and promoting themselves as a separate tribe. Al-Shawani, on the other hand, are probably distancing themselves from the rest of the tribe because they prefer to distinguish themselves based on the wealth, status, prestige and location which they acquired for themselves through their close affinity with the ruling family and the state.

It must be noted, however, that the use of tribal names is a deliberate policy by the Qatari state which further fuels tribal sentiments and divisions. According to the tribal sheikh (personal interview, 11 December 2017), "the Qatari government encourages citizens to include their clan with their full name on their passport, and policy has been in place since 2005, when the government stripped citizenship from 500 members of the al-Ghafran clan" (personal interview, 11 December 2017).

In short, the question of Hadhar and Bedouins in Kuwait and Qatar has very little if anything to do with distinguishing the urban from the nomadic. It is merely an invented construct which has resulted in political, economic and social implications, and it is mostly the result of state policies in both countries. This dichotomy is particularly prominent in Kuwait where the Hadhar/Bedouin nexus remains a source of political and social tensions, and less so in Qatar where most tribes have been taking pride in their Bedouin identity since the 1990s, and where tensions and divisions happen along tribal lines.

4.5 The Revival of Anti-Bedouin Sentiments in Kuwait in the Post-Gulf War

As previously discussed, the state policies which restricted citizenship and naturalising immigrants also created distinct classes of citizens and fuelled tribal fervour and divisions. Between the 1950s and the late 1980s, the Kuwaiti state pitted the Bedouin tribes and families against the merchant class and the nationalist opposition which was predominantly Hadhar. This likely fuelled bitterness towards the Bedouin tribes who were perceived as opportunistic for siding with the Emir to defeat the political will of the Hadhar who perceived themselves as the original citizens. In 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait, resulting in a short period during which Kuwaitis of all backgrounds expressed strong national unity against the foreign invader (Tetreault, 1995). However, the invasion also left Kuwait's society in a state of shock with effects lasting for many years after liberation.

To start with, a feeling of insecurity and helplessness prevailed in Kuwait during the invasion, especially at a time when it seemed that Kuwait as a country was permanently gone. This resulted in a widespread sense of insecurity that forced many Kuwaitis to seek security and comfort in familiar, enduring structures and systems (Crystal, 1990, p. 182). At a time when the state suddenly ceased to exist, many Kuwaitis may have felt that the tribe was a reliable alternative. Thousands of Kuwaitis fled the country to take shelter among their kin and extended tribes in neighbouring countries, especially Saudi Arabia. (al-Kandari, personal interview, 18 October 2017). In fact, it is estimated that approximately 100,000 Kuwaitis fled to Saudi Arabia alone during the invasion (Crystal, 1990, p. 156).

In the minds of many Kuwaitis, it became evident that the survival of their state was not guaranteed in a chaotic and unstable world, and that they had to find alternatives in the face of future risks. For many, dual citizenship was a potential solution (al-'Ajami, personal interview, 22 October 2017). By 2014, more than 430,000 Kuwaitis had reportedly acquired dual Saudi–Kuwaiti citizenship (Toumi & Chief, 2014). As a Kuwaiti citizenship of Saudi descent explains: "fear and insecurity make people stick to their groups as the only ways to protect themselves; because of my relatives in Saudi Arabia, I was able to protect my children and my family during the invasion: (personal interview, 4 August 2019). He continues:

> I kept my dual Saudi–Kuwait citizenship for a long time until the Kuwaiti government banned dual identities and asked to me keep only one nationality after […] changing security dynamics in 2013 and 2014. However, citizenship does not determine your belonging. […] There are extreme cases where citizenship has been withheld from people, specifically the Bidouns, who dedicated their lives to this country (Anonymous, personal interview, 4 August 2019).

However, the invasion also highlighted local narratives revealing imbalances in power between tribes. For example, tribes "inside and outside the sur, a wall that surrounded the capital area (Kuwait), from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries, referred to discursive constructions of Hadhar identity as expressions of collective identity and cultural rejections of the Bedouin" (Longva, 2006, p. 176). In other

words, following the invasion and liberation of the country, many among the Hadhar began to question the loyalty of the Bedouin and believed that if they held a second passport, it was traitorous to the country (Anonymous personal interview, 4 August 2019). The Hadhar also claimed that the Bedouin were not real Kuwaitis because they often took advantage of having two citizenships and therefore accessed more than one state's benefits, such as free education, expensive land and interest-free loans (Anonymous, personal interview, 4 August 2019). Such narratives were especially used to refer to historical events, specifically Kuwaiti elections in the 1980s; at the time, Saudi Arabia interfered by exploiting tribal grievances and encouraging the process of tribal primaries by providing financial aid to tribes with kinship ties to Saudi Arabia in an effort to undermine Kuwait's parliamentary power (al-'Ajami, personal interview, 22 October 2017).

Although 70–80% of the Kuwaiti armed forces constituted of Bedouins since most Hadhar were not willing to join the military and police forces, the state did not take their loyalty for granted and held suspicions that Bedouins had dual loyalties (al-Najjar, personal interview, 21 October 2017). Such negative attitudes towards Bedouins, in turn, motivated them to cling more tightly to their tribal identities (Beaugrand, 2018, p. 4).

As discussed earlier, while the largest Bedouin tribes including the Mutair, 'Awazim, 'Ajman and Rashaida, explicitly expressed their loyalty to the Emir in the 1970s and 1980s, these tribal forces gradually shifted to the opposition by the 1990s. Despite their successful integration in society, these tribes also realised that they were marginalised; urban populations had remained distant and had regarded them as strays or lifū, a derogatory term which implies that the Bedouins had come from nowhere or everywhere to become naturalised citizens. To illustrate, this pejorative term was used by Sheikha Fariha al-Ahmad al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Emir's sister, to describe thousands of Bedouins who protested against the electoral law reform that resulted in reducing the number of candidates that a voter could vote for in each district from four to one ("Firīḥatu al-'Aḥmad," 2013).

These social and economic grievances reveal that state strategies for integration were not effective (al-Nakib, 2014). There was no equity in terms of treatment and access to resources among tribal communities, and new generations were no longer satisfied with the basic welfare services to which they had been granted access. According to al-Hajeri (19 October 2017), the majority of Bedouins had to live in housing projects known as buyut sha'abiyya, located in the Jahra periphery and isolated from ahl al mudon, or city dwellers (personal interview, 19 October 2017). According to Beaugrand (2018, p. 141), the housing projects were constructed in the 1970s and were usually linked to Bedouin employment in the armed forces. In contrast, the Hadhar were granted substantial capital support and subsidisation through the purchase of land at extremely overvalued prices and partnerships with the state in significant economic sectors, such oil and petrochemicals, banking, insurance and trade (Hanieh, 2018, p. 70). This bolstered the economic fortunes of the Hadhar, especially the major merchant families such as al-Sagar, al-Kharafi and al-Ghanim (Hanieh, 2018, p. 70).

These transformations resulted in shifts and generational changes, leading to Bedouin discontentment with state policies, demands for more rights and attempts to access more societal resources (al-Nakib, 2014, p. 7). In 1994, the government changed its policies towards tribes and began responding and adapting to the demands of younger generations. The state response to these demands included granting more political equality and approving tribal primaries, allowing tribes to elect their representatives who could qualify to run in the national elections (al-Kandari, personal interview 18 October 2017).

However, the state continued to interfere with and exploit tribal identities and tensions between the Bedouin and Hadhar, often favouring one side over the other at times of political tensions. For example, Mohammed al-Juwaihel, the MP of an urban Hadhar district and a staunch ally of the government, insulted Bedouin candidate ‘Ubaid al-Wasmi and his tribe Mutair. The following night, Mutair tribe members burned al-Juwaihel’s campaign tent. More than 60,000 Bedouins from various tribes gathered to express solidarity with the Mutair and to voice their discontent and anger towards the government for condoning the perpetrator (Alsharekh, 2017, pp. 175–176).

The exclusion of Bedouin tribes and denial of their rights as second-class citizens are echoed in MP Musallam al-Barrak’s statement that “there was a coalition between the government and some wealthy merchants to oppress the rest of Kuwait” (Alsharekh, 2017, p. 128). Political and economic bribes were allegedly given to MPs by Sheikh Nasser al-Mohammed as a reward for their support; this revelation triggered protest movements in 2011. As a result, the government revoked the citizenships of some Bedouin opposition members. As Human Rights Watch (2014) noted, 33 citizens had their citizenship revoked in 2014, including Ahmad al-Shammari, the owner of the media outlet al-Youm, and Sa‘ad bin Tefla al-‘Ajami, the former Information Minister and parliament speaker. A few weeks later, negotiations between the emir and MPs with tribal sheikhs, the government agreed to reinstate the citizenships of those affiliated with Shammar and ‘Ajman tribes, as well as several other Kuwaiti opposition figures (Ibrahim, 2020).

During this period, the government cracked down on dual citizenship. According to a former tribal MP, the state used citizenship revocation as an instrument to intimidate the opposition and to discriminate against Bedouin citizens who also carried the citizenship of other GCC countries, especially Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, the state ignored and overlooked other citizens who held foreign citizenships, such as US and European citizenships, because they were from the merchant class (personal interview, 4 August 2019).

In addition to all this, cultural projects organised or sponsored by the state were also a major source of Hadhar/Bedouin tensions. Lukitz (1995) noted that identity-building depended heavily on several components, such as the invention of common historic processes. These processes are centred on not only cultural and economic integration but also on identity politics, which established foundations for the common national identities of states. Some Hadhar blamed the state for reviving the Bedouin identity as an “erroneous” or fictional national identity, while the Bedouin accused the state of trying to exclude their culture and embrace only the

identities of the Hadhar population. For example, Kuwait National Day celebrations were set for 25 February; a date that did not carry any tribal significance or symbolic value, unlike Qatar National Day. As Khalaf (2008) noted, "the past was so recent in the Gulf that it had a real and… living effect on the present" (p. 43). This could be seen in state institutions, cultural festivals and contests that were encouraged and financed by the government.

While Kuwait reinvented traditions and cultures to address the divisions between the two cohorts, aspects of Hadhar culture, such as maritime activities, diving, pearling and fishing, received substantial attention and became national symbols. Thus, as part of a cultural resurrection project, Kuwait City was reinvented as a small fishing village that had evolved over 17 centuries, and this newly reinvented history was quickly integrated within cultural projects and at museums and festivals. Festivals such as Youm al-Bahar al-Kuwaiti, Kuwaiti Seaman's Day, became an illustration of this reinvented image which highlighted Hadhar cultural values and ways of life as the cornerstone of Kuwait's national identity, while ignoring and neglecting the Bedouin element. Indeed, according to Khalaf (2008), the annual Pearl Diving Festival and the Kuwaiti Seaman's Day were the cultural components of the imagined political communities within the modern state's national identity. These components were what Anderson (2006) refers to as "imagined communities," as applied in the Kuwaiti context, where each of the imagined communities that played a pivotal role in the history of Kuwait happened to be Hadhar rather than Bedouin. This effectively marginalised the Bedouins, especially as the state promoted this reinvented history through massive national media coverage (Khalaf, 2008).

In response to cultural marginalisation, Bedouin tribes resorted to organising and promoting their own cultural events which highlighted their tribal histories and identities. Most prominent among these was the camel festival organised by 'Awazim tribe, "mazāyin al-'ibil li qabilati 'Awāzim," (personal interview, 22 October 2017). These events which started in 2011 and attracted thousands of spectators from all over the Arab Peninsula were also sponsored by senior members of the ruling family who were particularly interested in strengthening their political ties with the 'Awazim tribal leaders (al-'Ajami, personal interview, 22 October 2017). However, this also drew wide criticism from the Hadhar who expressed their concern about the intense tribal sensations fuelled during these events (al-Hajri, personal interview, 19 October 2017).

Overall, while the state expressed its full support for cultural projects that augment the Hadhar lifestyle and cultural elements, its support for Bedouin cultural projects was limited to specific events, and often from an angle of political opportunism which aimed at favouring certain tribes over others, or at appeasing certain tribes to guarantee their loyalty during the elections. However, the Bedouin component remained marginalised as far as its representation in the reinvented history and identity of Kuwait is concerned.

4.6 The Aftermath of the 1995 Qatar Coup: The Rise of Najdi Identity

In the period following independence, Saudi Arabia was able to exercise significant influence within Qatar, an influence that was attributed to several factors. To start with, Al Thani and Al Saud had bonded over social and political relations, especially when, as discussed previously, Sheikh Khalifa Al Thani enjoyed the support of Saudi Arabia in his dispute with his cousin Ahmad (Crystal, 1990, p. 165). Moreover, the majority of the tribes in Qatar shared common ancestry through marriage and could even trace their family lineages to tribes that resided in Saudi Arabia (al-Shawi, 1994). These aspects placed Saudi Arabia in a unique position to influence Qatar by agitating and instigating certain tribes through the manipulation of tribal loyalties and financial payoffs. This was the case with the al-Ghafran clan of al-Murra tribe in the 1990s and on a number of other occasions (al-Kuwari, 2019).

After forcing his father to abdicate in 1995, the new emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani thwarted a coup in which al-Murra officers played a vital role with the support of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. To maintain the stability of Qatari leadership, the new emir quickly consolidated his power with an inner circle of trusted family members and local tribes. Senior tribal sheikhs and other members of tribes gave bay'a (oath of loyalty) to the new emir (Fig. 4.3), including 13 members of the Al Thani family (Kamrava, 2013, p. 117). Moreover, Sheikh Hamad Al Thani became closely involved in the daily affairs of government, allowing little real power in the hands of his son, the crown prince Sheikh Jassem bin Hamad, to ensure that the crown prince would not accumulate enough power to challenge or overthrow him in the future (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2003, p. 7).

Similarly, many members al-Ghafran tribe and Al Thani family who were loyal to the former emir were also removed from senior and sensitive political and economic posts. In addition to this, many members of al-Ghafran clan were also stripped of their nationality and denied any social or economic rights associated with citizenship (Kamrava, 2013, p. 113). In 2005, the state cracked down on dual citizenships as it feared the threat of conflicting tribal loyalties as a potential risk to national security (Parolin, 2009).

However, Qatar's strategy towards the tribes and tribalism has been fraught with contradictions. For example, despite the evident involvement of Saudi Arabia with local tribes to overturn the government, the state pursued a policy of appeasement towards tribes. On the one hand, after 1995, many powerful members of Al Thani were removed from sensitive posts in the state and were replaced by loyalists from other tribes, especially those who held significant economic and social clout, including tribes that were once marginalised in the 1970s and 1980s, such as the 'Ajam and Hawla tribes (Kamrava, 2013). On the other hand, rather than focusing on building a distinct national identity to weaken Saudi influence on the tribes, the emir promoted several cultural projects that enhanced and celebrated tribal ties and links to Najd, the region in Saudi Arabia from which most Qatari tribes including the ruling family originate (Kamrava, 2017).

Fig. 4.3 Articles in the Al Raya Qatar national newspaper discussing the tribes and families, such as **a** al-Jaida, **b** al-'Emadi and **c** al-Misnad, that pledged allegiance to the new emir after the failed coup in 1995 (Al Raya Qatar, 28 June 1995)

To illustrate, camel racing became a national symbol and a form of cultural resurrection. Although it was an entirely invented tradition, it was successfully turned into a cultural and symbolic event that bolstered and reinforced the perceived commitment of the ruling family to culture and traditions. Furthermore, in 2010, the government established al-Rayyan, the national Qatari channel, to produce local and traditional content that highlighted and amplified Bedouin identities. For example, the al-qalayel, a falconry championship that used the traditional methods of turathu al-'ajdād (ancestral heritage), a sport supposedly performed by Qatari ancestors, became a prominent show. Indeed, falconry, camel riding, horse riding and dog shows were the core subjects of the channel as symbols of Bedouin traditions and identity. Another programme produced by the channel was "sagar," a show about falconry hunters; with this, falconry quickly became a favourite sport among Qatari men (al-Dosari, 2016). As a Qatari citizen (personal interview 16 December 2018) from the al-Bu Kuwari tribe said, "I am big fan of falcons; I grew up in the falconry community and I am teaching my six-year-old son to practice this traditional sport […] He already has a young falcon" (personal interview, 16 December 2018). He adds:

> This hobby is dominated by a powerful social group with specific family and tribal names, but is not necessarily Bedouin […] It is hard to compete with the social group as there are harsh rules applied to […] ordinary citizens that we should follow, but not them (personal interview, 16 December 2018).

However, Hassen al-'Ajami, the CEO of Qatar National Day Celebrations Committee (personal interview, 4 January 2018) noted:

> Qatari people were the people of land and sea. Therefore, the government takes their identity very seriously. While there are several events reflecting the Bedouin identity and culture, there are also events for the Hadhar. For example, the Qatar Marine Festival is held annually at Katara Cultural Village to promote the Hadhar marine heritage and cultural identity (personal interview, 4 January 2018).

In forming a national identity, the state also encouraged tribes to participate in the so-called ʻariḍa, a traditional Najdi dance, during National Day celebrations, and in which tribes compete to display their clout, unique characteristics and identities (al-Shawi & Gardner, 2013). However, while these National Day celebrations were intended to commemorate the unification of the country and to ensure national unity, they also became a source of identity-based tensions and a means of undermining the creation of a national identity. Such cultural events focused on tribal identities, especially those with Najdi links, but at the same time, they also fuelled tensions between the competing tribes. Indeed, the ʻariḍa dance seems to be an expression of social differentiation and prestige ranking between the tribes. As a member of al-Hajeri tribe stated (personal interview, 24 December 2017):

> Every year, I tend to avoid participating in the ʿariḍa during the Qatar National Day celebration simply because this type of traditional dance does not belong to the Bani Hajer culture. We have a different type of Bedouin dance called the al-firīsinī; the ʿariḍa does not represent us (personal interview, 24 December 2017).

Another component to promote Najdi identity is revelling the Wahhabi legacy. In the 1970s, Wahhabism gained social and cultural weight in Qatar (Freer, 2016). Wahhabism was an effort to reconstruct Qatar's identity around the rise of the Al Thani clan, which had historically followed Wahhabism. For example, in 2009, Qatar began the construction on a new national mosque, which was finished in 2011 and was named after the founder of the Wahhabi movement, Mohammed ibn ʻAbd al-Wahhab (Kamrava, 2017, p. 134). It must be noted that since the 1960s, the rulers of Qatar, had welcomed and recruited Muslim Brotherhood sympathisers within the Ministry of Education, including ʻAbd al-Badi'Saqr, Kamal al-Naji, ʻAli Shehata and Yusuf al-Qaradawi. Several of them, especially the latter, became fixtures in the Qatari media, charity, educational reforms and in regional politics, and they offered financial and material support to numerous Islamist movements across the Arab world.

Ironically, despite this long history of affiliation and the presence of Islamist movements in Qatar, Wahhabism today is a means of reasserting cultural and national identities and does not hold political weight (Roberts, 2017, pp. 2–3). This can be attributed to several factors. Despite promises from the consecutive emirs for political reforms over the years, there had been an absence of real political participation, that is, until 2021 when the first Shura Council elections were finally held after decades of delay (Abdallah, 2021). Moreover, Qatar has limited institutional opportunities for religious scholars to exert influence domestically. For example, in 1998, ʻAbd al-Rahman al-Naʻimi, a Qatari Bedouin, religious figure and member of the Muslim Brotherhood was arrested following his involvement in a 1998 petition criticising the emir's reforms (Freer, 2015, p. 152). Even during Shaikh Tamim's reign, who

is perceived to be more sympathetic with conservative thinkers in comparison to his father, the Ministry of Awqaf (Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs) suspended Dr. Ibrahim al-Ansari, the cleric sheikh of the Hawla tribe and the Dean of the College of Sharia and Islamic Studies at Qatar University, from delivering Friday prayer sermons following a Friday Prayer ceremony in 2019 in which he preached against any normalisation with Israel (al-Murri, 2020). Moreover, the lack of political influence by the Muslim Brotherhood or any other Islamist stream in Qatar may be attributed to the government's success in depriving the merchants and tribes of any opportunity to exploit Islamist ideologies to mobilise political support or gain legitimacy in the same manner that merchants and tribes had once done with Arab nationalism in the 1950s and 1960s. Hence, the continued reliance on non-nationals to deliver religious guidance services has allowed the state to reinforce its legitimacy while at the same time shielding itself from any political threats resulting from religious ideology or influences (freer, 2015, p. 204).

Flirtation with tribal identities and Najdi links, however, soon came to an abrupt end in 2017 at the onset of the Gulf crisis between Qatar on the one hand, and Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain on the other. Once again, these three neighbours attempted to interfere in Qatar to topple the government by exploiting members of al-Murra and Hawajer tribes, as well as disgruntled members of the ruling family. The attempt failed and the Qatari government retaliated by revoking the citizenship of 55 members of al-Murra tribes as well as of Shafi al-Hajeri, a tribal chief of al-Hajeri tribe (Freer, 2017). Another victim claimed by the failed coup was the National Day celebrations whose tribal editions and competitions were cancelled permanently, seemingly because the state realised that fuelling tribal sentiments was not a safe policy at a time when the entire nation was under foreign attack. Indeed, when tribal ceremonies were cancelled by the state, the Qatari tribes celebrated the 2017 and 2018 National Day in a completely different manner, where all Qatari tribes gathered in one unified ʻariḍa as manifestation of one tribe under celebrated statement qabīlatunā Qaṭar (our tribe is Qatar).

Moreover, the 2017 and 2018 editions of National Day celebrations featured large military parades that glorified the nation and the ruler, but made no reference to tribal identities. Additionally, children and adolescents dressed in military uniforms (Fig. 4.4) and attended the military parades and state-sponsored concerts at schools, in streets and in malls, in an attempt to highlight national identity as an ideology in the minds of the youth (Ardemagni, 2019). At the same time, the emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani acknowledged the importance of involving women in building national identity. For example, in 2017, the state granted citizenship to several children of Qatari women, also known as ʾabnāʾu al-qaṭarīat, provided them with travel documents ("HRW," 2017), and in an unprecedented move, appointed four women to the Shura Council. ("Qatar Appoints Four Women to Shura Council," 2017).

Hence, Qatar's project for building national identity has changed course dramatically over the years, probably because national identity was perceived as a means through which the state could consolidate and bolster its political power rather than as a consistent strategic long-term process for the future. In the 1970s and 1980s,

Fig. 4.4 **a** Two kids wearing armed forces dress during 2017 Qatar National Day celebration at school. **b** Three kids wearing Tamim al-Majd (Tamim the Glorious) T-shirts, which has become an emblem during the blockade (images taken by the researcher, 18 December 2017)

the national identity project was impeded by Qatar's commitment to building the Khaleeji identity, in which Qatari citizens were encouraged to see themselves as members of a bigger community in the Gulf, with tribal links and affiliations that extended into other Gulf states. After 1995, these tribal links and affiliations were further encouraged despite the fact that they were exploited by other Gulf states in an attempt to overthrow the Qatari government. Such a policy made little sense since it only fuelled tribal tensions and divisions and further exposed the tribes to potential foreign political influences which actually materialised in the early days of the Gulf crisis in 2017. It is only after the crisis that Qatar finally shifted its attention to a national identity project that focused on the centrality of the state and ended all major political manifestations of tribal identities and distinctions.

4.7 Conclusion

The terms Bedouin and Hadhar refer to constructs that play an important role in the lives of citizens in Gulf states, especially in Kuwait, and to a lesser extent in Qatar. The relevance of these constructs has little to do with historic or ethnic realities, as they are the result of political and legal actions of the states, actions whose real purposes were to consolidate power and to undermine any opposition through a divide-and-conquer strategy. Such actions and policies, however, paid off in the short term, but in the long term, their outcomes were damaging and serious. In Kuwait, these policies resulted in a divided society, a paralysed political system, and endless tensions between state and society on the one hand, and between social groups on the other. Moreover, this revival of tribalism as a result of state actions and policies has only contributed to weakening the state and its relevance to society. Instead, social

and political components perceive the state not as a central and unifying authority, but rather, a source of economic, political, social and other benefits over which they compete at any expense. In Qatar, the Bedouin-Hadhar nexus is much less tense since the state did not attempt to exploit these two constructs in the same way that the Kuwaiti state did. However, the Qatari government still used divisive tactics and policies by relying on and favouring certain tribes while alienating others, depending on loyalties and needs at different times and periods. Moreover, although the Qatari state did not face the same political challenges faced by its Kuwaiti counterpart, especially in the form of an organised parliamentary opposition, it still ended up appeasing tribes and encouraging tribalism, even when there was a risk that tribalism could be exploited by neighbouring countries such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain. It is only after the divisive dangers and risks of tribalism became too evident at the onset of the 2017 crisis that the state in Qatar finally decided to pursue a project of national identity and unity and to sever the ties of Qatari tribes to their kin in Najd and other regions in Arabia to end the exposure of these tribes to any foreign political influence.

Chapter 5
The Rise of Tribal Politics and Political Tribes

5.1 Introduction

Although the GCC states remain governed by executive monarchies that maintain an absolute control over power, all six states in the region have had some form of parliamentary experience. On the one end of the spectrum are the least democratic and representative experiences, as in the case of Saudi Arabia, where all members of the Consultative Assembly are appointed by the King. Likewise, 20 members of the Federal National Council of the UAE are elected through a process of general elections, while the remaining 20 are appointed by the rulers of the seven emirates. In Qatar, the Advisory Council used to be entirely appointed by the Emir which changed in 2021 when shura elections were held for the first time, resulting in a new Shura Council with 33 elected members and 15 appointed by the Emir. The role of Qatar's Shura Council, like its counterparts in Saudi Arabia and the UAE, is merely advisory and entirely focused on social, economic and developmental issues. In Oman and Bahrain, parliaments are bicameral: the upper house is entirely appointed by the ruler, while members of the lower house win their seats through national elections. At the other end of the spectrum is the Kuwaiti parliamentary experience, where 35 out of 50 members of the unicameral chamber are elected by the public and are actively involved in holding the executive accountable for policymaking (Herb, 2002, pp. 42–44).

As this chapter will show, despite the fact that parliamentary life and practices have followed very different paths in Qatar and Kuwait, in both cases, tribes and tribalism appear to have played a central role, particularly in response to the changing relationship between the state and the tribe. In fact, irrespective of the substantial difference between the two experiences, the governments in both Kuwait and Qatar seem to have used elections and electoral laws as a means to control their relationship with society, particularly by encouraging or discouraging tribalism, depending on the prevailing political and social environment.

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5.2 Tribes and Parliamentary Life in Kuwait: From Loyalism to Political Opposition

Unlike any other representative assembly or council in the GCC, Kuwait's National Assembly was the outcome of decades of power struggles between the rulers and other major social components in society, specifically the merchant class. Prior to independence, Kuwait had witnessed power-sharing agreements through some form of elected bodies, as a result of the economic dependence of rulers on and their uneasy alliance with the merchant class in the pre-oil era, perhaps best illustrated in the council, or Majlis, of 1938 (al-Najjar, 2000, p. 244). In addition to internal and external threats, the need for the ruling family to attain both domestic and international legitimacy was central in the development of the 1962 Constitution and in the formation of the National Assembly (Brown, 2002, p. 55). The Constitution did not only guarantee the right of representation, but it also recognised the power of the National Assembly to impose a wide array of checks and balances on the cabinet appointed by the ruler, including the right to question ministers and even to pass a vote of no-cooperation, which would require the ruler to dissolve either the cabinet or the National Assembly and call for new elections in accordance with Article 102 of the Constitution. The only significant power that the National Assembly does not enjoy under this constitutional agreement is the right to appoint a prime minister, as this remains the prerogative of the emir. Additionally, the power of the National Assembly is curtailed by the fact that political parties remain banned in Kuwait, effectively making any formal political organisation during the elections and subsequently inside the National Assembly illegal (al-Nakib, 2015, pp. 99–100).

The ban on the formation of political parties, however, has not prevented the emergence of political blocs inside the National Assembly over the years, particularly those organised along tribal, religious and sectarian lines. With the decline of Arab nationalism in the 1970s, puritan Salafism and the Muslim Brotherhood, both Sunni movements, became increasingly popular in Kuwait, both within the economic elite and among the Bedouins. By the end of the 1970s, the state became increasingly concerned about the growing power of the Islamic Brotherhood which did not favour a monarchic rule (Pall, 2014). As a result, the state began to support the puritan Salafists since they did not oppose the monarchic system, and also because they were at odds with the Muslim Brotherhood which were increasingly antagonistic towards the ruling family (Wells, 2015, p. 49). Other blocs have also been formed over different periods of time, mainly through the cooperation of like-minded National Assembly members, such as Arab Nationalists and liberals (al-Nakib, 2015, p. 99). Since independence, these blocs have gained and lost power in society and vis-à-vis the ruler, not only as a result of the changing political environment in Kuwait but also as a consequence of new electoral laws (Ansari, 1993, pp. 883–884).

In this respect, understanding the evolution of parliamentary life in Kuwait and of the development of the tribal question in representation and parliamentary politics requires examining two distinct periods of the history of parliamentary life in Kuwait; first, the period extending from independence up to the Iraqi invasion in 1990; and

second, the period following the liberation of Kuwait in 1991. This distinction is justified by substantial changes along two salient dimensions, namely the nature of the relationship between the emir and the National Assembly as a constitutional institution, and the significant shift of Bedouins from loyalism towards the ruling family to open political opposition.

5.2.1 Playing the Tribal Card: 1961–1990

Whereas the monarchs of other GCC countries enjoyed absolute power at independence, Kuwait's political system did not enjoy such a luxury, and a power-sharing agreement through the constitutional formation of the National Assembly was indispensable. This was evident from the outcomes of the Constitutional Assembly elections of 1961, in which 20 seats were secured by oppositional components: merchants commanded half of them while five seats were won by liberals and Arab nationalists (al-Najjar, 1984, p. 47). Two seats went to Shi'a candidates, whereas the Bedouins claimed only three seats (al-Mdaires, 1999, p. 19). The Al-Sabah, however, controlled the cabinet which consisted of 15 ministers. The main purpose of the short-lived Constitutional Assembly was to write up the country's Constitution, a process that involved negotiations with the ruler, minimising any serious divisions between the merchants and the ruling family, and laying the groundwork for constitutional life and future elections. In addition to the high voter turnout, which reflected the enthusiasm of Kuwaitis for political participation, the composition of the Constitutional Assembly also reflected the nature of the political landscape, one which posed serious challenges to the ability of the emir to rule as an absolute monarch (Katzman, 2001, pp. 118–119; Koch, 2004, pp. 156–157).

5.2.2 Power Games and Suspending the Constitution

The significant gains by the opposition in the Constitutional Assembly must have sent a warning to the emir and the ruling family about the potential outcomes of future elections. It is not surprising, therefore, that following independence, and even when subsequent elections resulted in unfavourable outcomes, the rulers of Kuwait still hoped to undo the Constitution and terminate the National Assembly and elections altogether. Indeed, in a scenario that repeated the 1939 experience with the Majlis, the ruler successfully dissolved the National Assembly and suspended the Constitution for prolonged periods of time, first from 1976 until 1981, and then again from 1986 until 1992.

In both cases, the dissolution of the National Assembly and the suspension of the Constitution passed under the guise "of maintaining order and harmony, preventing chaos or preserving national unity" (Katzman, 2001, pp. 117–118). In both occasions, the decrees were passed by the emir following intense confrontations when opposition

members subjected cabinet members to harsh questioning on issues such as public spending, transparency and corruption. However, instead of dissolving the assembly and calling for new elections as the Constitution stipulates, the ruler simply suspended the Constitution, effectively ending political participation for several years (Katzman, 2001, pp. 117–118).

It is also important to highlight the fact that both in 1976 and 1986, the official discourse of the state vigorously attempted to bestow legitimacy onto the suspension of the Constitution, mainly by justifying it as a necessary step to thwart threats to national security. For example, following the suspension of the Constitution in 1976, the official discourse highlighted the civil war in Lebanon and amplified the fear that similar strife would follow in Kuwait given its divisions along sectarian, tribal and ideological lines (al-Awadi, 2017, p. 601). This discourse also prevailed in other GCC states, which were displeased with the prospects of democratisation (Baaklini, 1982, pp. 361–362), elections and representation at their doorsteps, especially in Saudi Arabia, which often pressured the ruler of Kuwait to adopt more authoritarian forms of government (al-Awadi, 2017, pp. 600–601; Kinninmont, 2012, p. 6). In fact, other GCC monarchies have on several occasions expressed their discomfort and concern with Kuwait's democratic experience, especially after Bahrain's short-lived parliamentary experience in 1973, when local populations expected the same level of parliamentary independence and oversight as in Kuwait (Kinninmont, 2012, p. 5).

By 1981, two major events had left the region in political disarray, namely Iran's Islamic Revolution in 1979 and the subsequent eruption of the Iraq-Iran war. Both events had serious implications for the GCC as a whole, but particularly for Kuwait, whose ruler feared the spill-over of revolutionary discourse into the Shi'a community—not to mention the risk that the war itself could engulf the entire region. Reinstating the Constitution and holding elections at this critical turning point, therefore, was a pragmatic step by the state to defuse political tensions and to ensure that political divisions would remain confined within the parliament (Baaklini, 1982). Not surprisingly, as soon as these fears and concerns settled, the emir once again resorted to dissolving the National Assembly and suspending the Constitution indefinitely at the first opportunity in 1986.

In 1986, the dissolution of the National Assembly and the suspension of the Constitution were officially justified by the intensity of confrontations between the opposition and the cabinet, as well as by serious concerns over national security following the devastating collapse of Kuwait's al-Manakh financial market, which left Kuwait's economy in crisis (Crystal, 1995, p. 105). In addition, the official discourse also amplified the fears of growing sectarianism and the Sunni–Shi'a divide amidst the war between Iraq and Iran (al-Awadi, 2017, p. 597). The 1985 attempt on the emir's life by Iraqi Shi'a dissidents and the failed attempt to blow up Kuwait's main oil pipeline were also highlighted as evidence of growing threats to national security (Kifner, 1986). Regardless of the immediate causes and justifications, the emir's growing intolerance of the vocal National Assembly, which he saw as a liability, was no secret at the time, especially as National Assembly members engaged in

the unprecedented behaviour of publicly criticising the emir himself (Crystal, 1995, p. 105).

On the other hand, reinstating the Constitution and calling for new elections after years of suspension was a matter of political necessity rather than the result of commitment to democratic principles or parliamentary life from the incumbent emir. Just as former rulers had to accept the Majlis in 1938–1939 and then the Constitutional Convention in 1961 at times when they struggled to cement their legitimacy by sharing power and accepting political compromise, the same imbalances in power seem to have resulted in reinstating parliamentary life in 1981 and then again in 1992 (Katzman, 2001, p. 117).

Indeed, the reinstatement of the Constitution and the decision to call for elections followed the liberation of Kuwait at the beginning of the 1990s, when the state realised the importance of tribe and tribalism in promoting popular support for the ruling family (al-Kandari, personal interview, 18 October 2017). Such a step was too difficult to avoid, for several reasons. To start with, the country had been devastated by the invasion and its existence nearly annihilated, making the quest for national and political unity an absolute priority immediately following liberation. Secondly, such a step was indispensable to cementing the legitimacy of the entire system and the ruling family, especially since members of the ruling family had fled the country during the invasion, whereas the majority of Kuwaitis were left to fend for themselves in the face of uncertainty (al-Kandari, personal interview, 18 October 2017). Thirdly, the emir was unable to avoid Western demands and pressures for democratisation, especially given the central role that Western allies had played in liberating Kuwait, especially given the claims by the United States and President Bush that involvement in the war had been aimed at defending democracy (Herb, 2016, p. 17). It is worth noting that shortly before the invasion in early 1990, the emir had decreed the formation of Majlis al-Watani, the National Council, as a replacement for the National Assembly but with virtually no power to question or impose any checks and balances on the government. However, to secure the support of the opposition and international powers, the emir was forced in 1992 to accept the reinstatement of the 1962 Constitution and to promise National Assembly elections under the 1962 rules (Herb, 2016, pp. 17–18).

Overall, during the period from 1961 to 1992, it seems that dissolving the National Assembly and suspending the Constitution, then reinstating the latter and holding elections, were among the political tools that the ruler exploited to maximise political power, minimise political threats and maintain the stability of the political system. At times of political stability and strength, and whenever the opportunity presented itself, the National Assembly was dissolved and the Constitution was suspended. According to Kuwait University history scholar ʻAli al-Sanad (personal interview, 3 September 2017), "Dissolving the National Assembly and suspending the Constitution were apparently an option for the emir in 1976–1981 and then again in 1986–1992, but this option was only available when certain regional and domestic political opportunities were available, and only temporarily." On the other hand, whenever pressures and threats mounted domestically, the Constitution was reinstated and elections were consequently held. It is worth mentioning, however, that although the emir has continued to exercise his constitutional right to dissolve the National Assembly

since 1992, the Constitution has never been suspended since 1992, and elections have been held during the six periods the National Assembly was dissolved between 1999 and 2016. This implies that suspending the Constitution and parliamentary life indefinitely may no longer be among the available political options and tools that the emir can exercise to assert his power.

5.2.3 Tribal Demographics and Electoral Constituencies

Domestic, regional and international factors and pressures were instrumental in forcing the emir to eventually reinstate the Constitution and call for new elections. Accordingly, it seems that an alternative option for the ruler was to ensure favourable electoral outcomes and guarantee that the National Assembly remained under control. These strategies included the redesign of electoral laws and re-districting, in addition to actively invoking tribalism and engaging tribes in the electoral process to bolster the representation of loyalists and to minimise the number of opposition seats in the National Assembly (al-Najjar, 2008).

In the 1963, 1967, 1971 and 1975 elections, the electoral map was composed of ten constituencies. The number of representatives was increased from two to five for each district, leading to an expansion of the National Assembly from 20 to 50 members. In all four elections, the emir was successful in maintaining a pro-government majority, whereas the opposition forces gradually lost seats. Sunni loyalists commanded 19, 20, 20 and 21 seats in those elections, respectively. The Shi'a, who between 1963 and 1975 openly sided with the ruling family, also commanded six, eight, six and ten seats, respectively. In addition to this, Salafi Sunni representatives, who also supported the ruling family, were able to increase their representation from only one seat in 1963 and 1967 to seven, and then, six seats in 1971 and 1975, respectively (Koch, 2004).

On the other hand, opposition candidates such as the Arab Nationalists and other secular groups saw their representation falling from eight seats in 1963 to only four in 1967 and 1971, before regaining some power with seven seats in 1975. It must be noted, however, that most opposition candidates had boycotted the 1971 elections following widespread claims of electoral fraud in the previous elections of 1967 (al-Bugheili, 2012, p. 120). Other groups, such as independents, liberals and merchants, fluctuated between loyalism and the opposition and were able to win 16 seats in 1963 and 17 seats in 1967 before their representation dwindled to 13 seats in 1971 and only six seats in 1975 (Koch, 2004).

Apart from the 1967 elections, whose results were arguably falsified by the government, resulting in the resignation of several prominent opposition (al-Najjar, 2008), two major groups suffered rapid decline during the 1963–1975 period, namely the merchants and the Arab nationalists. The merchants had already suffered significant loss of power as the state rapidly increased its control over the economy and public services with the help of oil flows (Herb, 2016, p. 18). Additionally, merchants had little incentive to undermine their interests by opposing the affluent state after

independence. In fact, after the 1971 elections, merchants no longer represented a real political power, as they increasingly adopted a conservative, puritan Islamist discourse that expressed loyalty to the government (Freer, 2015, p. 6). Likewise, nationalists also suffered a rapid decline in power as the Pan-Arab discourse died out following the 1967 Arab–Israeli war, which left Nasser's influence in the region weakened and challenged.

Apart from these political changes, al-Zubi (1999) argues that the significant shift of power in the National Assembly after independence was mostly attributed to the massive demographic change in Kuwait's population within a very short period of time, resulting from the policy of massive naturalisation of Bedouin tribes. Despite being urbanised for decades while serving the royal family, especially in the police and military, these tribes were still referred to as Bedouins by the Hadhar population of the inner city (al-Badawi, 2008, p. 41). According to Kuwait University history Professor ʻAbd al-Hadi al-ʻAjami (personal interview, 22 October, 2017), "the main strategy of the government in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s was to empower the [Bedouin] tribes and to encourage their participation in elections as they constituted a reliable loyalist base to the ruling family." This policy made political sense since the Bedouins had already fought on the side of the ruling family long before independence. As a result, it led to the emergence of what al-ʻAjami calls "Ford Sheikhs," a term that refers to the Bedouin tribal chiefs who were granted brand new Ford cars by the government in addition to other services in return for their allegiance to the emir (personal interview, 22 October, 2017).

Other factors, however, also played a salient role in encouraging the Bedouins to participate and remain loyalist during elections. According to political science scholar Shafeeq al-Ghabra (personal interview, 3 July 2017), the rentier economy of Kuwait encouraged the concept of nuwābu al-khidmāt (service MPs). This meant that in addition to offering the Bedouins political representation and a voice in the system, they were also granted further access by service MPs to economic and other services controlled by the state. At the same time, the state also alleviated the sense of uncertainty among Bedouins given their fear of discrimination and exclusion by the Hadhar. According to al-Bugheili (2012, p. 52), such anxieties were probably cultivated by the state to divide the various social and political components. For example, the Hadhar had originally opposed the naturalisation of Bedouins and even attempted to exclude them and the Shiʻa from running for elections altogether on the eve of independence, which likely explains why both groups remained strongly loyal to the ruling family for years. The state, according to al-Bugheili (2008, p. 53), relied on such grievances to inflate the anxieties of Bedouin tribes and other disenfranchised groups while at the same time inflating the fears of Sunni Hadhar about the growing power of the Bedouins.

In addition to pitting the Bedouins and Hadhar against each other, the state also exploited urban planning to build housing projects for Bedouin tribes and then designed electoral districts along the geographic lines of these housing projects (al-ʻAjami, personal interview, 22 October, 2017). As a result, Bedouins were segregated to constitute demographic and voting majorities in their designated districts

(al-Harbi, 2007, p. 81). One purpose of such urban and housing schemes was to aggregate Bedouin votes in different constituencies, allowing the state to predict or control outcomes during elections (al-Harbi, 2007, pp. 82–83; al-Badawi, 2008, pp. 41–42). According to Professor ʻAbd Allah al-Hajeri the head of the History Department at Kuwait University (personal interview, 19 October 2017), urban planning was part of the state's political strategy to divide constituencies along tribal identities and ensure control over the voting process. As a result, many districts outside the old city of Kuwait are dominated by a single Bedouin tribe, such as ʻAwazim (in Subahiyya), Hawajer (in al-Fahihil), Shammar (in Jahra) and Mutair (in Sabah al-Nasser).

When the National Assembly was dissolved in 1976, the Bedouins had already proven to be reliable and consistent allies for the emir both inside and outside the National Assembly (al-Ghabra, 2014, p. 3). Moreover, the demands of Bedouin representatives were generally service-centred, hence politically and economically affordable for the state. Job creation in the police, military and bureaucracy contributed to an improved quality of life. Affordable housing, health and education were benefits that were generally perceived as satisfactory by Bedouin communities (al-Ghabra, 2014, pp. 3–4). In addition, even with the active encouragement of the state for the Bedouin tribes to be more politically involved as loyalists, modest education and political awareness levels often meant that their involvement in domestic politics was limited. Al-ʻUtaibi (2010, p. 108), for example, pointed out that many Bedouin representatives in the National Assembly during the 1960s and 1970s were unqualified and quite a few of them barely had any education, but they were nonetheless elected because of their loyalty to the royal family.

5.2.4 Fragmentation and the Rise of Tribal Politics

The return of parliamentary life in 1981 involved several major changes as depicted in the 1981 and 1985 chambers. First, elections were held on the basis of the new 25-constituency electoral law that was passed by decree while the National Assembly was suspended, allocating two representatives for each constituency. Secondly, candidates running on tribal platforms achieved more significant presence (Karam, 1993, pp. 383–384). Thirdly, Bedouin tribal candidates running as Islamists achieved significant presence in both the 1981 and 1985 chambers. In fact, Islamists mainly Muslim Brotherhood candidates had historically gained followers from among the Bedouin tribes. According to Freer (2015) membership in the Islah Organisation, the Brotherhood-sponsored social activities and charities, expanded mostly in Bedouin areas such as al-Jahra, island of Failaka and Omariya, "as these places had never before received attention from nongovernmental organisations, and so became fertile ground for recruiting new members." (2015, p. 111). More importantly, this period also witnessed the election of representatives whose relatives were also cabinet members, an unprecedented development which represented a boost for tribal identities and politics—for example, one individual known to be intimately connected to the Al-Sabah family, ʻAbd al-Rahman al-ʻAtiqi, and three individuals from leading

merchant families, Sulaiman Hamoud al-Khalid, ʻAbd al-Latif al-Hamad, and Jassim al-Khorafi. Apart from this, candidates elected on tribal platforms remained loyal to the government (Assiri & al-Monoufi, 1988, pp. 49–50).

Under the 10-constituency design, the government had previously succeeded in securing the majority with the help of tribal members in the National Assembly. However, the 25-constituency design was intended to further consolidate the pro-government majority in Parliament. To start with, this design resulted in the fragmentation of tribal and non-tribal votes alike. As a result, Bedouin candidates who had previously run as independents or with the opposition outside their tribal platforms were generally weakened, as most Bedouins were forced to vote for their tribal representatives to guarantee representation. More significantly, the new design increased the rivalry between Bedouins in mixed districts and constituencies, resulting in the rise of intense tribalism and competition along identity lines, and even between loyalist tribes. According to ʻAbd Allah al-Hajeri (personal interview, 19 October 2017), "such intense rivalry witnessed in the fifth district contributed to awakening century-old enmities among some tribes such as the ʻAwazim and ʻAjman, in addition to pitting tribes such as Mutair and Rashaida in bitter competition against each other."

The 1981 elections also witnessed the illegal phenomenon of tribal primaries—that is, informal elections that were held by each tribe separately as a means of aggregating votes behind their most likely winners (Salih, 2011, pp. 141–142). Ironically, although this illegal practice has been associated with tribal elections since 1981, the reality is that it was first practised by the Hadhar in the 1975 elections as a means to secure victory for their candidates (al Najjar, 1984, p. 67). Another irony is that while tribal primaries were illegal, they were ignored if not encouraged by the government both in 1981 and in 1985 (al-Saleh, 2009, pp. 64–65). On several occasions, candidates were able to bring cases of tribal primaries to prosecution but the government simply refused to prosecute, which generally confirmed the fact that the state was deliberately encouraging tribal primaries (Jassem, 2002, p. 14).

Apparently, the state had an interest in encouraging Bedouins to be more involved in the political process, at least as far as elections were concerned, a position that was justified by several motives. First, by encouraging the Bedouin to actively seek tribal representation, the state undermined the existing opposition and undermined any efforts by opposition factions to run on a united platform or as a united bloc. By dividing voters into 25 constituencies along tribal lines and by encouraging tribes to conduct primaries, the state was generally successful in fragmenting the National Assembly and preventing the emergence of an organised or united opposition (Salih, 2011, pp. 143–144).

Secondly, the electoral system and the tribal primaries also restricted any serious opposition from forming within the National Assembly. Under this system, National Assembly members could secure their future re-election in two ways: either by seeking favours and services for their constituencies and maintaining good relations with the government, the bureaucracy and members of the ruling family, or by raising their voices and expressing their opposition loudly until they were granted access to the services they demanded (al-Saleh, 2009, p. 64). This meant that most of the

opposition was focused on gaining favours and access to resources and services rather than actually making demands for political reforms or expressing a real political opposition to the system. In this sense, the state was successful in setting the boundaries of the political game and keeping the focus of National Assembly politics on access to services and away from demands for political change or reform. As such, the majority of demands were for better roads, utilities and, quite commonly, subsidies for citizens to seek expensive healthcare services overseas.

Despite these efforts, the National Assembly proved to be difficult to control, even when, once again, a significant pro-government majority was achieved in the 1985 elections. This short-lived assembly was characterised by a number of significant developments that eventually led to its dissolution by the emir and to the suspension of the Constitution less than a year later. To start with, Kuwait was still struggling with the economic and social aftermath of the 1982 collapse of the al-Manakh stock market, especially as virtually no one was held accountable for the catastrophe, which led to the loss of billions of dollars, and this in turn created a general sense of distrust in the government and of its incompetence (al-Sultan, 1989, p. 15). Additionally, tribal communities were no longer satisfied with the basic services offered to them and were demanding better standards of living in their neighbourhoods, which suffered from poor roads, utilities and other services. Moreover, many of the Bedouin tribal chiefs who had been consistently loyal to the government had been replaced in the National Assembly by new representatives who were held more accountable to their communities. Islamists, moreover, had also gained a strong base with the tribes, and several Islamist members were elected based on their simultaneous affiliation with a united Islamic bloc and tribal representation (Brown, 2007, p. 4; Crystal, 1995, p. 179).

Thus, while in theory the government enjoyed a significant backing in the 1985 assembly, exceeding 60% of seats immediately after the elections, within a few months the government found itself under fire from all sides and with very few allies left inside the National Assembly. Given the government's weak stances on issues of corruption, reform and services, many Bedouin representatives soon found themselves forced to shift to the opposition in alignment with the demands of their constituencies. This resulted in a series of very harsh interpellations in which several cabinet members were interrogated by opposition and tribal representatives, leaving the cabinet at the mercy of a vote of no confidence (Brown, 2007, p. 4). Without a pro-government majority, a vote of no confidence was perceived as a threat not only to the cabinet but also to the emir and the ruling family since the Prime Minister was by tradition the Crown Prince, and a vote of no confidence would therefore represent a symbolic attack on the legitimacy of the ruling family itself. To avoid this symbolic defeat, the emir finally dissolved both the National Assembly and suspended the Constitution (al-Hajeri, 2010, pp. 36–37).

Dissolving the National Assembly resulted in public uproar that manifested in the mushrooming of diwaniyyas all over the country in subsequent years. By 1989, Monday's diwaniyya had not only become popular and regular, but was also characterised by political intensity and loud demands for new elections and the return of constitutional life (al-Hajeri, 2010, p. 38). As part of his efforts to weather the storm,

the emir attempted early on in 1990 to replace the National Assembly with a National Council, a symbolic parliament with virtually no power to question the government or embarrass the royal family. It was amidst this constitutional chaos and declining popularity of the ruling family that the Iraqi invasion took place in August of that year (Herb, 2016, p. 17).

5.2.5 The Rise of Tribal Opposition

Between independence until the mid-1980s, the tribes had to a great extent consistently expressed their loyalty to the state both inside and outside the National Assembly. Even in the 1985–1986 Assembly, Bedouin representatives limited their being in the opposition to specific major issues in order to maintain their legitimacy in the eyes of their constituencies but without antagonising the state or the emir. After the invasion and liberation, however, Kuwait was not the same for most tribal communities.

To start with, the experience of most tribal communities during the invasion was that of an awakening shock. Those Kuwaiti Bedouins who escaped the country faced extremely difficult circumstances. In part, most of them were in either the military or the police, and many others were not highly educated. As a result, it was almost impossible for them to find employment or financial support, even when they found some comfort with tribal relatives, especially in Saudi Arabia. This contrasted sharply with the experiences of the royal family and the Hadhar families who had fled the country with far more significant resources. At the same time, members of Bedouin communities had also fought side by side with their Hadhar countrymen during the invasion. Hence, by the time the ordeal ended with the liberation of Kuwait, the self-perception of Bedouin tribes had already been rapidly evolving. They could no longer be appeased with basic services, nor were they willing to accept their status as second-class citizens; rather, from then on, their focus shifted to pursuing higher education and demanding more political, economic and social rights. Moreover, representation in tribal constituencies became increasingly divided between tribal and Islamist candidates, in addition to independent voices that attempted to steer the election away from tribal politics.

In 1992, although the emir was politically forced to reinstate constitutional and parliamentary life, there was generally a sense of national unity expressed at the popular level behind the ruling family. Indeed, the 1992–1996 Assembly, which was elected on the basis of the 25-constituency electoral law, witnessed very few tensions between the government and the opposition. Interestingly, one exception was the grilling of the Minister of Education by a Bedouin representative, but the interpellation was unsuccessful in securing a vote of no confidence (Tetreault, 2011).

By 1996, however, Bedouin representation had shifted its political direction, and for the first time, the Bedouin tribes were more likely to be on the opposition than on the loyalist side. In addition, the Muslim Brotherhood had extended into Bedouin areas which further complicated the nature of political action and representation in

these areas (Alkandari, 2014, p. 218). According to Alkandari (2014), "In tribal areas, for example, the Muslim Brotherhood was influenced by tribal structures as evident from the fact that several Muslim Brotherhood members contested parliamentary seats on tribal platforms during the 1990s, a move which in principle contradicts with the tenets of their membership" (2014, p. 218). In fact, even independent representatives from Bedouin backgrounds who had not previously run as tribal representatives were also emerging and at times spearheading the opposition (Timmerman, 1996, pp. 54–55). Tensions and the repeated grilling of ministers eventually led the emir to dissolve the Assembly and to call for new elections in 1999. However, this did nothing to alleviate the bitter tensions between the cabinet and the assembly, especially as Bedouin representatives took centre stage within the opposition. Thus, in the elections of 1999, only 14 out of 50 representatives were elected as openly loyalist, in addition to a few Shi'a and Islamist supporters of the cabinet, but it was evident that the 1999 Assembly was in its majority hostile to the government (Das, 2017, pp. 193–194). Little changed in the 2003 Assembly and, once again, the emir dissolved the Assembly in 2006 amidst severe political divisions and tensions over designing a new electoral law.

In the decade from 1996 to 2006, tribal votes were still divided as a result of the 25-constituency law, but once inside the National Assembly, most elected members found it more rewarding to join the opposition. On one level, the government could no longer rely on the Bedouins for political support, especially as most opposition groups and the most vocal opposition figures came from tribal backgrounds or represented tribal constituencies. Additionally, the Bedouin neighbourhoods and districts that had previously been loyalist strongholds had increasingly been raising their demands for better services, quality of life and access to resources, but with the growing population, Kuwait's rentier economy and inefficient state were unable to deliver (Ulrichsen, 2017, pp. 210–211).

More importantly, the shift of tribes to the opposition in the National Assembly by the mid-1990s was likely dictated by the nature of the constitutional relationship between the National Assembly and the government. Since the Prime Minister represented the ruling family, and as the ministers were appointed by the emir, the National Assembly had a bigger tendency to represent the opposing voices. The government repeatedly attempted to appease representatives to secure their loyalty, but for most MPs, supporting the government was less politically rewarding unless the state provided them with a wide array of services and favours for their constituencies, something that was becoming increasingly difficult with population growth and declining oil prices since the 1980s. This can be illustrated by the 2016 elections, when many assembly members on the loyalist and opposition sides lost their re-election bids as they were punished by their constituencies for supporting the government's austerity measures and increases in gasoline prices, which was aimed at bringing the massive budget deficit under control (Izzak, 2016). Although other factors were also responsible for this electoral outcome, including a new electoral law that aimed at deflating the representation of opposition candidates, voters widely expressed their anger and intention to punish assembly members who had supported austerity measures, which also explains why only 20 members of the

previous assembly succeeded in defending their seats in 2016 (Aboudi & Hagagy, 2016; Izzak, 2016).

5.2.6 Gerrymandering, Re-districting and the Tribal Vote

The fact that the Bedouin tribes had shifted to the opposition by the end of the 1990s implied that it was much easier for the opposition to hold a majority in the assembly, especially given the political popularity of interpellations and the grilling of ministers in the media. Still, even if the opposition held a majority, it possessed no means to achieve a transfer of power, and the most that an opposition majority could do was to embarrass the ruling family by subjecting the Prime Minister to a vote of no confidence. Even in such a case, the emir could simply dissolve the assembly and call for new elections while re-appointing the same Prime Minister all over again.

A pro-government majority in the assembly was useful for the ruling family, as it contributed to reinforcing its constitutional and legitimate status. In addition, a pro-government majority would have also made it difficult for any opposition bloc to lobby for political reforms and other structural demands for ruling family to give up or to share power. At the same time, however, the opposition was often divided on most issues, mainly as a result of the fragmented political scene and the nature of the electoral law. This fragmentation made it practically difficult for the opposition to pursue a political strategy or a long-term agenda in the face of the government or the ruling family. The need for the emir and the ruling family to keep the assembly under control had become particularly pressing after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, as it had become clear that Bedouin loyalty could no longer be taken for granted. Consequently, once again, the state resorted to old techniques and tricks, specifically gerrymandering. In 1996, for example, the borders of several of the 25 electoral districts were re-drawn, particularly in Bedouin neighbourhoods where the state had once enjoyed strong tribal support.

Gerrymandering and re-districting, however, became extremely sensitive issues on the Kuwaiti political scene in almost every round of elections after 1999, particularly as independent, tribal and Islamist actors developed political savviness and shrewd knowledge of these electoral tactics. For its part, the state preferred as many constituencies as possible to prevent the formation of any influential political blocs. On the other hand, organised Islamists, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, preferred turning Kuwait into a single district where voters could select all their representatives at once (Brown, 2007, p. 14). The ruling family emphatically rejected this proposition since it would result in the development of well-organised groups inside the assembly. The more popular demand, however, was for a five-constituency system (Freer, 2015, p. 11), especially among the youth—including the Bedouin youth. It eventually became the primary demand of the so-called Orange Campaign with its "We Want It Five" (Nabiha Khamsa) slogan, as well as the cause of the political disturbances that proliferated across Kuwait, eventually forcing the emir to accept the five-constituency system for the 2008 elections (Salem, 2012, p. 2).

The five-constituency law allowed every voter to cast four votes in every constituency, and each constituency was represented by ten representatives. The reasons for this design remain unclear, but it is likely that the state believed that it could still rely on pro-government actors within each district, especially Bedouin tribes, which had proven to be far more efficient and better organised in the past, even under the 25-constituency law (Dekemejian, 2001, p. 306). The state may have also hoped to allow for some aggregation of tribal votes to avoid the chaos of over-fragmentation and to make shifting loyalty to the opposition less appealing. Regardless of what the intended design may have been, the outcomes were disappointing for the government.

To start with, this system rewarded the larger Bedouin tribes that dominated in one constituency and had significant presence in another, allowing them to have up to seven or eight representatives elected at the same time. For example, the fourth constituency is dominated by al-Mutair and Rashaida tribes, where ten representatives won the 2008 parliamentary elections ("Al-Natāʾju al-Kāmilatu Liintikhābāt ʾAʿḍāʾ Majlis al-ʾUmah," 2008). Likewise, this allowed the Islamist opposition to expand their representation across constituency borders and work even more closely with liberals as well as conservative tribal constituencies to make electoral gains. The end result of this system was catastrophic for the government because it boosted the organisational capabilities of various opposition groups to unify their efforts behind common causes and demands. As a result, clashes between opposition members and cabinet ministers became more tense and sensational than ever before. Moreover, the loyalist tribal representation that the government had hoped for did not materialise as Bedouin representatives spearheaded the most intense interpellations of ministers. In fact, tensions were so high and divisive in the Assembly that a working relationship between the cabinet and the assembly could no longer be sustained, leading the emir to dissolve the latter and call for new elections in 2009 (Freer, 2015, p. 11).

Ironically, the electoral law that was intended to boost the pro-government Bedouin representation in the National Assembly had ultimately become a nightmare for the ruling family. At the same time, it was impossible to return to the 25-constituency law since the current one was perceived as a popular gain for the tribes, the Islamists, the youth and even many independents. Amidst all this, political turmoil peaked in 2011 at a time when the Arab Spring was engulfing the Middle East. In November 2011, thousands of Kuwaiti demonstrators attacked the National Assembly building following the resignation of the cabinet and the nomination of a new Prime Minister by the emir without holding general elections (Nosova, 2015, p. 185).

Images of the attack on the National Assembly were similar in many ways to images of the Arab Spring in other capitals in the region. The emir, however, had no choice but to hold elections in February 2012, in which, once again, tribal, Islamist and independent opposition representatives controlled the National Assembly (Okruhlik, 2012). In June of that year, the emir invoked a constitutional right to suspend assembly sessions for a month in an attempt to defuse political tensions between the two sides. In a shrewd move, the Constitutional Court suddenly ruled that dissolving the assembly in 2011 was unconstitutional, thus cancelling the

outcomes of the 2012 elections altogether. The fact that the opposition controlled at least 34 of the 50 seats in the assembly was probably another factor leading to this controversial decision (Freer, 2015, p. 12).

As a result, elections were held in December 2012 under a new law that was passed by the emir, by virtue of which the same five constituencies were retained, albeit on the basis of one vote per person instead of the four-vote system. Leading Bedouin tribes and Islamist opposition figures boycotted the elections and contested the electoral law at the Constitutional Court, demanding a return to the four-vote system (Freer, 2015, p. 12). However, in June 2013, the Constitutional Court ruled in favour of dissolving the National Assembly but at the same time reinstating the one-vote system. For the government, this was a massive political victory since it effectively allowed it to fragment the opposition and prevent any opposition forces from forming large blocs in the Assembly (Freer, 2015, p. 12).

The implications of the one-vote law on tribe and tribalism, however, were far more significant. To start with, although the tribes could still select their most likely winners through the primaries, it was impossible for them to guarantee winners during the general elections, and as a result, votes went to the most likely winner rather than to a group of winners. Large tribes could no longer secure seven or eight seats, as their representation fell to three or four at best. At the same time, the one-vote system favoured smaller social groups, which were finally able to compete for representation as larger tribes could no longer allocate votes to a bloc (al-Sanad, personal interview, 3 December 2017). Other opposition groups, including the Islamists, also faced a similar challenge, as they now had to compete against each other within the opposition-led districts. Likewise, loyalists also had to compete against each other within their districts (Izzak, 2016).

The one-vote law can be perceived as a political victory for the Kuwaiti government, as it has evidently resulted in the fragmentation of the opposition and in the prevention of the development of strong and organised political blocs within the National Assembly. In fact, as Professor Badr al-Dehani from Kuwait University (Personal interview, 25 October 2017) argues, one of the most important consequences of the one-vote law is that it has made any form of political organisation almost impossible and, at the same time, it has made voting along tribal lines indispensable. Moreover, this law not only divides the tribes against each other, but it also encourages them to adopt loyalist positions within the assembly since candidates are now forced to run on the basis of identity politics and service promises rather than on the basis of ideological or national political agendas (Brown, 2007, p. 4). In other words, in its outcomes, this law is very much similar to the 25-constituency system with the exception that it instigates more fractures within a single tribe, more tensions between different tribes sharing the same districts and narrowly focused politics in all constituencies. Moreover, this new law has made cooperation and alliances among like-minded candidates in the same constituency very difficult since they must now compete for the same votes to guarantee their election (Tavana, 2018, pp. 2–3).

In the light of these implications, the one-vote law has been criticised as far more divisive and capable of inciting tribal tensions and divisions than any other

electoral law in the history of Kuwait, especially since it deliberately aims at fragmenting identities and intensifying identity divisions (al-Dehani, personal interview, 25 October 2017). In addition, this law not only divides voters along tribal lines, but it also encourages animosity between tribes, particularly in highly contested districts, which could in turn threaten to rupture the social fabric in some districts. The liberal political activist and former Minister of Social Affairs Ghadir 'Assiri (personal interview, 25 October 2017) argues that for years, the state had played the tribal card to its advantage until eventually tribalism got out of control, and the new electoral law is simply an attempt by the state to regain this lost control. However, although this law may have solved a major political problem for the state by temporarily reigning in the tribes, it is likely to remain a temporary solution. One reason for this is that the same strategy had failed in the past when it became too expensive for the rentier state in the 1980s to continue financing services promised by candidates to a rapidly growing population (Moore, 2002, pp. 35–36).

The electoral law based on the one-vote, five-constituency system may have successfully resulted in fragmenting the opposition and preventing the emergence or formation of large and coherent opposition blocs in the National Assembly. Moreover, as women's rights political activist and researcher Alanoud Alsharekh (personal interview, 17 December 2019) observes, this electoral system has significantly shifted the dynamic of parliamentary politics from ideology-based and reform-oriented opposition to identity and service politics. Although identity politics based on tribalism has been a central component of the system since the 1960s, the one-vote system has magnified the critical importance of appealing to tribal affiliations as well as the need for tribal tensions and divisions. Under the previous four-vote system, tribes and tribal alliances could easily secure basic tribal representation by one or two candidates in alliance with additional candidates who could press for national demands, such as reform, transparency, fighting corruption and challenging the government on major issues (Tavana, 2018, p. 2). According to Kuwait University scholar Hissa al-'Ajami (personal interview, 24 October 2017), under the four-vote system, the results in tribal constituencies were almost always known in advance, especially when primaries were organised. Former opposition Assembly Member Musallam al-Barrak (personal interview, 21 October 2017), on the other hand, warns that the one-vote system has pitted the tribes and tribal groups against each other, as they must struggle to secure representation. The scope of representation was also reduced, since the one-vote system meant that each representative merely represented voters who voted for him/her within the district, rather than the entire district. Accordingly, this also shifted the dynamic away from broader national politics to narrower service-oriented and benefit-based politics in which voters become clients and the representative acts as a patron or a facilitator with the state (Tavana, 2018, pp. 2–3).

5.2.7 New Times, Old Games

Recent political developments in Kuwait seem to suggest that the ruler will continue to perceive the relationship between the state and society as an instrument of political power that is primarily aimed at managing society and avoiding any serious political reforms. In December 2023, Emir Shiekh Nawaf al-Ahmad passed away and was replaced by 84-year-old Emir Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah who had spent a considerable period of his life working in security and intelligence, a background that became relevant as he announced the dissolution of parliament and the suspension of the Constitution for the next four years in 2024 (Nereim, 2024). Ironically, he justified these dramatic decisions that echo similar decisions in the 1970s and 1980s by claiming, "I will not permit for democracy to be exploited to destroy the state." It was also ironic that these actions followed immediately after the last round of elections but before a new National Assembly session had initiated, and was justified by critical statements made by opposition parliament members. While these developments may be shocking to many Kuwaitis and other observers today, the fact is that dissolving the National Assembly and suspending the Constitution is nothing but an old method that has been used repeatedly in the past whenever the ruling family found itself in a tight corner, specifically as the ruler is unable to impose his political will or his control over the representatives of the Hadhar or the Bedouin tribes, and especially when the state hits a dead end with respect to its ability to respond to the demands of loyal and opposition groups and tribes.

5.3 Tribalism in Qatar's Elections

Unlike Kuwait, which has enjoyed a long and dynamic parliamentary experience before and after independence, Qatar's experience was far less extensive. A variety of historic, political, social and circumstantial factors explain this sharp contrast. To start with, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the ruling family in Qatar never had to face any legitimate challenge to its rising authority from other tribes or groups, specifically with the disintegration of the merchant class and the massive departure of tribes and large families when the pearling industry collapsed (al-Dabbagh, 1961). Secondly, unlike the Al-Sabah in Kuwait, whose rise to power was from the beginning associated with power sharing with other tribes and families, the Al Thani had always been the largest, most powerful and wealthiest family in the Peninsula and were unrivalled at least since the end of the nineteenth century (Fromherz, 2012, p. 62). Additionally, like Kuwait, whose geographic position in the middle of three powers—namely Iraq, Iran and Saudi Arabia—exposed it to several foreign threats at the time of independence, Qatar too faced external threats from neighbours such as Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, a factor that enabled the Al Thani to consolidate their power and legitimacy domestically as reliable leaders protecting the land and the local communities (Crystal, 1989, pp. 428–429).

After Yemen, Saudi Arabia is home to the largest tribal groups in the region, extending to Syria and Iraq. It also possesses the financial and other resources needed to influence, manipulate, mobilise and exploit these tribes, and it has repeatedly shown its willingness and ability to do so. All these facts may place Saudi Arabia in a unique position to influence its neighbours through tribal agitation and instigation, as well as through the manipulation of tribal identities and loyalties. In a way, this implies that tribes in Qatar and Kuwait with ties to external powers such as Saudi Arabia may indeed constitute a threat that can be exploited to undermine the stability of the state.

Apart from the labour movement, which temporarily contributed to unifying many Qataris under the umbrella of labour and other demands in the 1960s, the state quickly exploited tribal identity and established the foundations of a rentier state which enjoyed significant stability as it served a very small population. Moreover, despite the importance of the tribe in society, state policies successfully limited the political influence of tribes and prevented them from becoming political parties or aspiring to play a political role vis-à-vis the state (Gray, 2013, p. 2).

5.3.1 Advisory and Municipal Councils 1999–2023

Although Qatar never had an experience similar to Kuwait's National Assembly, its first attempt at representation and participation was in 1964 when Sheikh Ahmad Al Thani (r. 1960–1972), following British advice, announced his intention to form an Advisory Council (al-Othman, 2002, p. 24). This Advisory Council was supposed to be headed by the Crown Prince and to be composed of 30 appointed members, namely fifteen tribal representatives with each candidate representing the district in which his tribe resided, and fifteen members of the Al Thani. The mandate of the council, however, was merely advisory, with no legislative function and no accountability. Eventually, the council, which was supposed to reflect tribal representation and some form of democratic progress in a manner similar to Kuwait and the rest of the region, never materialised (al-Othman, 2002, p. 24).

The announcement of 1964 was motivated by a number of factors. First, it was most likely an attempt to appease various social and political actors, especially in the light of the powerful labour movement and Arab nationalist activism at the time. Nevertheless, since both the labour movement and the nationalists lacked the clout to maintain political momentum, the Advisory Council project was soon shelved without any challenge or negative consequences for the emir. Academic and democracy activist 'Ali al-Kuwari (personal interview, 25 December 2017) believes that the paralysis in the political development can be attributed to the independence period stating, "the weakness of the tribes and the flow of oil revenues, which killed both the power of tribe and any form of organised opposition." He also refers to other structural factors, "The weakness of domestic social and political forces, the absence of tribal alliances to challenge the ruler, the small merchant class, and the fact that Qatar's intelligentsia barely existed, were probably significant factors that made the

ruler realise that forming an Advisory Council and opening the door for political representation were unnecessary and avoidable" (personal interview, 25 December 2017). More importantly, unlike in Kuwait, the Al Thani were not yet independent from the British. The ruler did not take the political demands and reforms seriously, mainly because the relationship between the ruler and the British was not strained and the two sides had a common interest in maintaining the stability of the emerging political system. Second, the ruler and the ruling family in Qatar were not under any real regional or international pressure to consider political representation, which, in contrast to Kuwait, meant that the emir in Qatar had much more freedom in promising to set up an Advisory Council but without necessarily having to actually act on his promise any time soon.

In the early decades after independence, the ruling family further consolidated its political, economic and social roles in Qatar at the expense of an already small and politically insignificant merchant class. Although the state-building process was probably slower and less significant than it was in other neighbouring countries, especially given Qatar's relatively limited resources at the time, it was probably much easier to build rentier system in a country with such a tiny population. The state became the central player in almost every respect, not only as a job creator and economic provider but also as the caretaker of the entire population. In the words of a tribal chief who preferred to stay anonymous, the state took away any power of the tribe and tribal chiefs and eventually became ūm al-qabāʾil (the mother of all tribe). This centralisation weakened any meaningful role that tribal ties and connections could have played in politics. The role and relevance of tribal chiefs were also weakened significantly, as they were replaced by the state and its administration as citizens enjoyed direct access to economic and vital services through the state without having to go through an intermediary (personal interview, 11 December 2017).

Given the lack of any meaningful political opposition, it is perhaps not surprising that the ruler did not feel any pressure or need to address the issue of political participation or representation for decades. In the 1990s, however, rivalry within the ruling family and a failed coup revived the question of representation and elections. In 1995, Crown Prince Hamad bin Khalifa successfully deposed his father, Sheikh Khalifa. To boost his legitimacy, the new ruler promised various measures of liberalisation following a failed attempt to depose him in 1996. The failed coup was orchestrated by several conservative circles in the Al Thani family who were still allied with the former ruler and with the blessing of neighbouring countries, specifically Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (Davidson, 2019, p. 88). Given these developments, and possibly as an attempt to secure international support and legitimacy, Prince Hamad announced his intention to support the freedom of the press and to organise municipal elections in 1999. In the same year, women were also allowed to vote in the municipal elections, a step that was probably perceived very favourably by the United States and European powers (Rathmell & Schulze, 2000, pp. 48–50).

In 1999, municipal elections were indeed held with 247 candidates running, including six women only (al-Othman, 2002, p. 37). However, the Municipal Council did not enjoy any meaningful power; its function was merely advisory and, at best,

it could only propose suggestions, opinions and recommendations, none of which were binding for municipal executives. Despite the lack of an executive function, Fatima al-Kubasi (personal interview, 14 December 2017), sociology scholar and acting Dean, College of Arts and Sciences at Qatar University, points out that the Municipal Council immediately became the only venue for some form of political representation and, more specifically, for tribal representation.

One interesting aspect of the Municipal Council elections is the manner in which tribes and families mobilise their resources and engage in running their campaigns, first on the basis of tribal or familial lines, and secondly on the basis of electoral programmes and promises. Promises made by candidates were quite unrealistic, as they included commitments to make executive measures and actions, whereas in reality, the Municipal Council had no power to implement such promises, and hence, elected Municipal Council members could not be held accountable for failing to honour those promises in the first place. To illustrate, campaign promises included substantial improvements for the relevant districts, economic and social initiatives, and various other measures, but their actual execution is virtually impossible given the advisory nature of the council. According to Qatar University modern history scholar Ibrahim Shahdad (personal interview, 9 December 2018), the fact that campaign promises cannot be fulfilled and that candidates cannot realistically be held accountable for failing to honour such promises is clearly and widely understood, by both candidates and voters, especially after several rounds of Municipal Council elections have been held over the years. Accordingly, it is likely that enthusiasm for these elections is maintained merely because they feed into tribal rivalry and the strong drive among tribes and prominent families to be visibly represented in the system. Such representation is merely honorary, as it reflects prestige and status for both the candidate and the tribe or family represented (Shahdad, personal interview, 9 December 2018).

This arrangement has resulted in the emergence of a new phenomenon during elections, known as al-wājihatu al-ghīru rasmīa (informal façade), as a tool for preserving the ruler's power and authority. A Qatari voter who participated in the 2019 municipal elections noted that this "al-wājihatu al-ghīru rasmīa" plays a major role in the crystallisation of the concept of today's chief of the tribe, as the concept has evolved from being leader of the tribe to being a member in the informal façade of the ruler. They [tribal chiefs] also have a notable role at the time of the Municipal Council elections, especially in determining who shall run in elections" (personal interview, April 2019).

One factor that has likely contributed to the intensity of tribal rivalry during Municipal Council elections is the fact that the government encourages tribal loyalties, tribal traditions and values, and in doing so electoral districts have been drawn along the geographic borders of the districts where major tribes reside, resulting in seven municipalities that are divided according to tribal strongholds: Doha, al-Khor, al-Wakra, al-Rayyan, Madinat al-Shamal and Umm Salal. These municipalities have largely been divided according to old tribal districts, which give residents no other option except to vote according to tribal lineage (Freer, 2019). This has been confirmed by 'Abd Allah bin Nasser Al Thani, who formerly served as Prime

Minister and Minister of State for Internal Affairs, when he said: "There is no doubt that the concept of tribe or family came in order to give all Qatari segments the right to participate in elections" (al-Murri, 2018, p44). As Judge Hassan al-Sayed (personal interview, 19 December 2017) explains, the fact that most electoral districts are divided along tribal lines, known as masqaṭu r'si al-qabīla, the birthplace or place of origin of the tribe, has reinforced tribal sentiment, making tribalism among the most powerful factors influencing voter choices. The deliberate division of constituencies and districts along tribal lines also implies that it is the policy of the state to organise Municipal Council elections on the basis of tribalism, especially since political parties are not permitted.

Likewise, Yousef ʿUbaidān (personal interview, 24 October 2017), a former Advisory Council member, argues that this division indicates that, by default, the elections would generally favour candidates running on tribal platforms and representing tribal identities. This is also evidenced by the fact that many voters tend to engage in the illegal act of shifting their votes from their districts in which they reside to districts in which their tribal representative is running. Although illegal, this action is almost never punished nor even discouraged by authorities. Enthusiasm for Municipal Council elections, however, has substantially weakened over the years, mainly because of the council's lack of any executive power. For example, 'Isa al-Kuwari, who served two terms as vice-president of the council, acknowledges losing interest in running for elections, as it is largely seen as irrelevant (Nassar, 2008).

Moreover, Municipality Council elections have been widely criticised for promoting tribal divisions and fuelling intra-tribal feuds. Even where tribalism and tribal tensions were uncommon, the division of constituencies along tribal lines made tribalism an inevitable component during the electoral process, especially since approximately over 70% of the seats were decided by tribal votes in 1999 (Nassar, 2008). Fromherz (2012, p. 136) suggested that the vast majority of the seats in the first elections in 1999 were contested along tribal lines. The intensity of tribal rivalry during Municipal Council elections, on the other hand, was far less felt in the Hadhar districts of Doha, where a female member was elected in 1999, which would have likely been impossible in the more conservative tribal districts (al-Najjar, 2008, p. 68).

By 2019, Qatar had already witnessed its sixth Municipal Council elections, but the purely consultative nature of the council seems to have taken a serious toll on public interest, among both voters and candidates. For example, in the 2015 elections, three seats were uncontested simply because the incumbents ran unrivalled. In addition, turnout also dropped by 43% in comparison to 2011 (Opemam, 2011). Hence, interest in municipal elections has declined since the onset of the Arab Spring in 2011. According to Qatar University's Social and Economic Survey Research Institute—SESRI (Gengler, 2011):

> The proportion of survey respondents who report being "interested" or "very interested" in politics decreased by almost 20 percent [between December 2010 and June 2011], while the proportion of Qataris who say that living in a democratic country is "very important" to them dropped from 74 percent to 65 percent, a relative decrease of 12 percent.

The significance of 2019 Municipal Council elections further declined following the ongoing GCC crisis which erupted in 2017. According to Majed al-Ansari, former Assistant of Political Sociology at Qatar University and manager of the Policy Department at SESRI and currently appointed as an advisor to the Deputy Prime Minister of Foreign Affairs, the number of voters declined by "9% compared to the last elections in 2015," which means that roughly one in 13 Qatari adults only voted in the 2019 municipal elections (Al Ansari & Gengler, 2019).

Advisory Council elections were promised again in 2003, 2013 and 2019 under the permanent Constitution. Two-thirds of members are supposed to be elected by popular vote, while the remaining third would be appointed by the emir, but the council would act merely as a consultative body without any executive power. Advisory Council elections, however, have been repeatedly postponed. Instead, all members have been appointed by the emir, who announced in November 2020 that the first elections would finally be organised in October 2021. Indeed, Qatari rulers kept promising to hold Advisory Council elections whenever a regional or national crisis occurred, starting with a failed coup in 1995, followed by the Arab Spring in 2011 and the GCC crisis in 2017.

Despite these ongoing promises, however, the majority of Qatari interviewees from various tribes have shown great interest in and enthusiasm towards the Advisory Council elections. As one male Qatari citizen explains, "I am not interested in Municipal Council elections anymore, but not the elections in general" (personal interview, 12 April 2019). In the words of a former municipal candidate who preferred to stay anonymous, "Qataris lost complete confidence and hope in the Municipal Council because of its limited role and inability to make any real changes for the past years, which pushes many citizens to avoid voting and sometimes to boycott the elections. The real power is in the hands of the Advisory Council on many levels and most importantly its control over the state budget" (personal interview, 12 April 2019). In addition, Qatari writer 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Khater stated: "It is important to have an elected Shura Council, which will play a significant role in reflecting the voice of Qatari public sphere" (personal interview, 2 July 2017).

In 2021, Qatar held its first Shura elections to elect 30 Shura Council members. These elections represented a real opportunity for Qataris to choose their representatives over real political issues that go beyond symbolic representation (Al-Thani et al., 2022). Interestingly, tribal and family affiliations were the two most important and influential factors in determining the candidates that citizens voted for (Al-Thani et al., 2022). In 2023, the seventh round of municipal elections was held. Enthusiasm for municipal elections was expected to be lower since these elections are perceived as less important than municipal elections. However, the number of candidates was very low in contrast to previous elections, standing at only 110 certified candidates, and even the number of female candidates was a meagre four, none of which were elected in any of the 29 constituencies across eight municipalities (Akkas, 2023). It is also worth mentioning that the district lines in these elections were re-drawn to reflect population movements along tribal lines, which enhanced the power and influence of the tribe in these elections (Akkas, 2023).

In all cases, the Shura Council elections of 2021 and the municipality elections in 2023 do not reveal any major changes in the state perceptions of elections or the relationship between the state and the tribe. To the contrary, it seems that the state has decided to continue appeasing tribes and to ensure that they played a critical role in representing social groups, specifically by passing electoral laws and practices that make it extremely difficult for independent candidates or women to run for elections and win, especially as each tribe has the opportunity to name its candidates and carry them to win.

5.3.2 Tribalism and the Electoral Experience

The limited electoral experience in Qatar's Municipal Council elections reveals very strong tendencies of voters to vote along tribal lines. As Qatar University political science scholar Majid al-Ansari (personal interview, 24 December 2017) points out, this also coincided with what may be considered a conscious state policy to revive tribalism and encourage the re-emergence and rise of tribal identities. This policy seems to date back to the early 1990s, when similar policies were adopted in other GCC countries (personal interview, 24 December 2017), especially in Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. In the absence of an official explanation or announcement of this policy, the most likely explanation is that these states perceived tribalism as a means of strengthening domestic loyalty to—and the legitimacy of—the existing political system in the aftermath of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, which represented a major challenge to the monarchical system in the GCC (al-Ansari, personal interview, 24 December 2017).

It may also be possible that reviving and encouraging tribalism may be perceived as necessary to reinforce loyalty and legitimacy in Qatar, especially given the growing rivalries within the ruling family. Perhaps this explains why elections continue to be organised along tribal lines. Eventually, however, this policy has been facing increased criticism and questioning, both at the public and official levels, particularly as the policy became the source of growing tribal divisions and tensions. As mentioned previously, Qatar's ruling family did not face any of the domestic legitimacy challenges experienced by its Kuwaiti counterpart. It is true that the domestic political scene suffered uncertainty in the 1990s, but this was mainly the result of internal divisions within the Al Thani family, but the legitimacy of the Al Thani itself has not been questioned. Moreover, while Bedouins were involved, especially the al-Murra tribe in the failed coup in 1995, it must be noted that al-Murra tribesmen in the military acted as loyalists to one faction within the royal family against another, not as a tribe attempting to grab power for itself. Secondly, the tribe in Qatar had generally lost much of its political relevance during the 1970s and 1980s, but it has been witnessing a significant revival on the social and cultural level. This is attributed to the combination of not only a rentier economy, but also to the state's policies and a bureaucracy-centred approach to state-building that revived the need for tribal chiefs or tribal affiliations and which established a direct relationship between citizens and

the state. Consequently, the policy of organising elections along tribal lines does not make much political sense, especially since rewarding or appeasing the tribes was unnecessary in the first place (Yousef ʿUbaidān, personal interview, 24 October 2017). On the other hand, acknowledging the importance of the tribal element in the elections was in line with the tradition of allocating certain honorary and executive positions in corporate boards of directors and other prominent economic posts based on the allegiance and proximity of those tribes and families to the ruling family (al-Naqeeb, 1996).

Regardless of the logic behind organising Municipal Council elections on a tribal basis, by the time the GCC crisis occurred in 2017, it seemed that the revival of tribalism was perceived with anxiety and concern within the state and the ruling family. This, however, raises questions concerning how constituencies will be divided in future Municipal Council and Advisory Council elections, as well as whether the districting configurations will be oriented towards tribal representation or merit-based representation.

5.4 Tribes and Elections: Comparing the Kuwaiti and Qatari Experiences

The electoral experiences in Kuwait and Qatar are substantially different, specifically given Qatar's extremely limited record in contrast to Kuwait's decades-long experience. However, several observations and assessments can be made.

To start with, while geopolitical factors ultimately forced the ruling family in Kuwait to accept the existence of political participation, the rulers of both countries seem to have perceived the idea of the revival of tribalism as a strategy to divide and conquer the opposition. In Kuwait, the emir had no choice but to accept the National Assembly under domestic and international pressures, although this did not stop him from not only dissolving the National Assembly and suspending the Constitution in several occasions, but also exploiting tribes and tribalism whenever an opportunity became available. In the case of Qatar, and in the face of domestic challenges, the emir was forced to promise elections and the formation of a legislative body, but shortly thereafter this commitment was repeatedly avoided for decades. However, the question of political representation was raised after the 1996 failed coup, to which the state responded by introducing the Municipal Council as form of democratic institution, and the Shura Council elections were not held until 2021. Even though the Municipal Council and the Shura Council have limited powers, the state has encouraged tribalism and organised the electoral process entirely along tribal lines.

In Kuwait, rulers perceived tribalism in the 1970s and 1980s as a critical component to building pro-government majorities or undermining anti-government majorities in the legislative chamber. A variety of strategies and techniques, such as gerrymandering and changing electoral laws, were employed to achieve these goals and

to exploit tribalism in the process. As the tribes shifted from loyalism to the opposition, however, Kuwait's rulers have had to rely on more radical measures to manage tribalism as a force in elections and in the legislature. Such radical measures have included the dissolution of the National Assembly by a Constitutional Court ruling and changing electoral laws to pit the tribes against each other. While the manipulation of tribalism within the electoral system may have yielded favourable results for Kuwait's ruling family in the 1970s and 1980s, this has no longer been the case since the 1990s, as the tribes have become the major source of opposition in the National Assembly. Despite the success achieved in dividing the tribes and the opposition in the 2016 and the 2023 elections, Kuwait's ruling family may eventually find itself running out of options in its attempts to control election outcomes.

In Qatar, the state was successful in undermining the political power of the tribes after independence through the process of building a centralised rentier state. The revival of tribes and the introduction of tribalism into the limited political process, however, came at a late stage, in 1999, when the first Municipal Council elections were held. Like its counterpart in Kuwait, the Qatari government preferred not to hold elections or to share power with a legislature; and unlike the Kuwaiti government, it enjoyed significant success in doing so for decades until 2021, partly because of the dominant political and economic power of the ruling family, and partly because of the absence of any real opposition in a super-rentier economy that serves a very small population.

Differences between the two electoral and political systems aside, one conclusion seems to be that tribalism thrives whenever the state has a need for it. As Manaf al-Hajeri, Former Minister of Finance of Kuwait, explains, the revival of tribalism has occurred not because the state is on the decline nor because this form of tribalism is only thriving among tribal groups—as it is flourishing even among other social groups, including Hadhar and Shi'a—but because it is encouraged by the state (personal interview, 18 October 2017). In Qatar, however, the outcome of reviving tribalism and integrating it into the electoral process may be reaching its limit, at a time when the government is beginning to perceive it as a source of divisiveness that undermines the state itself. Two years after the 2017 GCC crisis, at the fourth session of the fully appointed Advisory Council, the emir ordered that a committee be established to organise the country's first-ever elections. He expressed his intentions by saying (Government Communication Office, 5 November 2019):

> The government is currently preparing for the Advisory Council elections, including drafting legislative measures necessary to ensure that these elections are conducted perfectly well, so as to avoid the need for further amendment in each stage. There are legal shortcomings and legal issues that must be addressed beforehand, in order to have fair Advisory Council elections. These measures will be submitted to your esteemed Council during the coming year.

However, the Shura Council elections were still organised along tribal lines in the same manner as the Municipal Council elections, and once again, tribalism came into play, not only in terms of filtering candidates as tribal representatives or mobilising voters to vote for their tribal representatives, but also as a source of grievance for the

tribes that were unable to participate in the process by virtue of their being naturalised rather than original citizens (Al-Hajeri, 2021).

According to Gulf scholar and researcher Tareq Alrabei, the main purpose of reviving or reinforcing tribalism is "to divide and conquer," especially within the context of a rentier economy and a limited democracy (Alrabei, personal interview, 18 December 2018). However, even within such a context, there are no guarantees that the state will be able to control the outcomes of fuelling tribalism at all times, a lesson that Kuwait has learned since the 1980s and 1980s as it saw the tribes shift their position from loyalism to the opposition, whereas Qatar's first real brush with the unpredictable outcomes of tribalism did not become apparent until the protests of 2021 over the Shura Council electoral law which were also the first of their kind since the 1960s.

Chapter 6
The Tribe, Modern Society and Women

6.1 Introduction

The revival of the power and relevance of tribes did not only reflect a return to conservative tribal values and traditions in the political domain and national identity building context, but it was also manifested at the social level. There is a strong emphasis on social norms, tribal and family-based ties across the GCC countries as forming "the essence of social power and the basis of mechanism for ruling elites' control over society" (al Naqeeb, 1996, p. 11). In fact, there is a clear recognition that these sociocultural norms frequently govern the way "things are supposed to be" (Thompson, 2019, p. 196). This is in line with the more recent literature on the state which highlights the relationship between state and society, such as the view that the state is not a freestanding entity that is separate from social institutions and actors (Mitchell, 2018, p. 95), and Midgal's (2001, p. 250) argument that the authority of the state is often torn and fractured by the nature of its encounters with different cultural and social forces in society. One of the most powerful social forces in this respect is the patriarchy, which in the Arab context is manifested as "the prioritising of the rights of males and elders (including elder women) and the justification of those rights within kinship values which are usually supported by religion" (Joseph, 1996, p. 14). Hence, the power of the patriarchal system both on society and the state is reinforced by the fact that it is entrenched in social, religious and tribal values and traditions, and it is mostly articulated in the form of protecting the family and its values. This priority is even expressed in the constitutions of countries such as Kuwait and Qatar.

According to the constitutions of Kuwait (article 9) and Qatar (article 21), "family" is the most fundamental institution and always has been "the corner stone of society," and the priority of the state and its laws is to preserve, strengthen and protect family ties and integrity. Hence, tribe and tribalism represent today an alternative element that produce cohesion within the social fabric, by providing an orientation for creating support networks or deploying specific tribal values for legitimacy and protection, which is sometimes associated with corruption or old allegiances and perhaps can be a source of social divisions.

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Therefore, understanding social structures such as the tribe and the nuclear or extended family can provide valuable insights into the manner in which tribal revival functions in the society, specifically in relation to the issues of marriage and women's social and political representation. This chapter argues that women are subject to the social pressures of tribal values and traditions that often cost them more in practical terms than it cost men. It also discusses the impact of tribal structures and influences, and the critical role they play in explaining today's marriage behaviours and their implications on women in Qatar and Kuwait. Moreover, tribal values and traditions play an important role in determining the image and representation of women, specifically how they impact the way society views women and how women view themselves, and how they interact with others and challenge the status quo.

6.2 Perceptions of Marriage in Qatar and Kuwait

Shortly after independence, GCC countries experienced varying degrees of modernisation. In the 1980s, for example, several studies discussed issues of how the process of modernisation affected marriage and the role of family and social structure in the GCC. According to Ghoneim (1983, p. 374), extended families were quickly replaced by nuclear or semi-nuclear family units as a result socioeconomic changes, increased wealth and incomes, and the adoption of modern lifestyles. Moreover, in the 1970s and 1980s, marriage outside the tribe or family became increasingly common in Kuwait and Qatar. A Bedouin man told Longva that "back in the 1970s, it was good for a Hadhar to come home from studies abroad with an American PhD in his pocket. If he had also a blond, blue-eyed American or European wife, it was even better" (Longva, 2006). Similarly, mixed marriage was common among Qatari men, especially in the 1980s when many Qataris studied overseas and preferred to marry a foreigner from the host country (Alharahsheh & Almeer, 2016).

However, this change was not radical and this rapid evolution did not alter the social stratification of the traditional community. It did, however, deepen the social restrictions and divisions, and it triggered feelings of insecurity about the growing expatriate population and the economic and political instability in the region (Longva, 2006, p. 180). These fears in turn reinforced the centrality of the traditional marriages within and between affiliated families and tribes, perhaps as a means to bolster their sense of security and stability through the consolidation of social, economic and political ties between families and tribes, and in turn between these social units and the state (al-Mughni, 2001, p. 42). Accordingly, tribal affiliations and social-cultural norms became more relevant than ever, particularly in areas such as marriage, which in turn has brought the issue of asl, honour and faza'a into the spotlight.

6.3 The Concepts of Asl and Faza‘a

The term asl, both in Qatar and Kuwait, means origin. As discussed earlier in Chap. 4, the notion of asl plays an important role in determining eligibility of marriage within tribal groups, especially that it is a determinant of social ranking. However, it is also relevant to citizenship, especially that countries such as Kuwait and Qatar set stringent standards shortly before and after independence on defining eligibility to citizenship on the basis of tribal kinship and affiliation.

Within the social context, tribes refer to an individual as asil, that is, original or authentic, in recognition of his known tribal origin. The meaning of the term itself varies according to context. For example, the term is used to indicate the purity of horse breeds, and likewise, it is used to indicate that a person’s tribal lineage and origin are known. However, the meaning among certain tribal groups in Kuwait may be more specific, suggesting that a person’s origin is known and can be directly traced back to the tribes that originated in Arabia (al-Mughni, 2001, p. 21). Likewise, in Qatar, the term ’ibnu al-balad (which literally means “the son of the country”) is used informally to indicate asl, thus classifying a person as a descendant of a tribe that originated from Najd in present day Saudi Arabia (personal interview, 11 December 2017).

The Kuwaiti ruling family itself originally came from Najd and still abide by certain social standards when selecting spouses for their sons and daughters. For instance, members of Al Sabah have married members from noble business families, including al-Ghanim, al-Marzooq and al-Wazzan (Nosova, 2016, p. 82). These intermarriages were among the primary strategies through which families built and reinforced political and economic coalitions and alliances with the ruling family and the merchants. This type of intermarriage has recently regained popularity, as illustrated by the union in 2014 of the emir’s grandson and the granddaughter of Jassem al-Khorafi, a tycoon and the former speaker of the Kuwaiti National Assembly and (“Afrah al Sabah wa al Khrafy,” 2015).

While there were matrimonial alliances between ruling family members and merchants, there were also many intermarriages between ruling family members and Bedouin tribes. For example, Shaikh Jabir al-‘Ali al-Salim al-Sabah’s mother belonged to the ‘Ajman tribe (Alebrahim, 2019, p. 125). In addition, many members of Al Sabah married into Bedouin tribes that were naturalised in 1980. According to Alanoud Alsharekh (2017), because of the traditional alliances with tribal groups, emir Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah married more than ten women from the Mutair tribe, including the sister of the most famous tribal MP, Musallam al-Barrak. Additionally, other major Bedouin tribes, such as Shammar, ‘Ajman and ‘Otaiba, intermarried with the late emir (Alsharekh, 2017, p. 174).

This interdependence of interests between ruling families and business elites was also common in the history of Qatar. For example, the al-Attiya and al-Misnad families are affiliated with Al Thani through marriage (Peterson, 1977). Likewise, Sheikh Tamim followed similar path to this Kuwaiti counterpart by marrying into the most powerful Bedouin tribes. He married his second cousin

Sheikha Jawaher bint Suhaim Al Thani in 2005; Sheikha al-Anoud bint Mann'a al-Hajeri in 2009; and Sheikha Noora bint Hathal al-Dosari in 2014. The first wife is a member of the royal family which also happens to be the most powerful business family in Qatar, whereas the second and third wives belong to al-Hajeri and al-Dosari Bedouin tribes, both of noble ranking and social prominence. Thus, although the issues of social and tribal origin, and tribal affiliation, suffered some decline in the 1970s and 1980s, they have become more vital and relevant since the 1990s and became even more reinforced by the rulers and other members of the social and political elite.

It must be noted that the relevance and influence of asl is not only witnessed at times of marriage, but also at times of faza'a. Faza'a is the collective expression of support by members of a family or a tribe, which may be financial, as the case is often when tribe members raise funds to pay blood money to buy the freedom of one of their own who may have accidentally murdered someone else. Likewise, if two individuals from different tribes get into a dispute, relatives and affiliates from both sides will mobilise support for their own, even if this may involve a physical or violent confrontation between the two sides. At the same time, the practice is also benevolent as it is often a means by which members of a tribe engage in raising funds to pay off the debts of a relative or assist a member of the clan suffering economic hardship. However, this is not a clear-cut rule, since it also depends on a variety of other factors, such as the status and prestige of the individuals in question, the relevance of the insult and its impact on the honour of the tribe, and the nature of the causes that led to the crisis in the first place.

Moreover, collective tribal support is not necessarily about fending off a threat or an insult, but it often applies to other social and economic areas of life. According to several academics, such as Dr. al-'Ajami, Dean of Academic Affairs at Kuwait University, and Dr. al-Kandari, Professor of Sociology at Kuwait University (personal interviews, 22 October 2017 and 19 December 2018), tribes act benevolently in ways that do not seem to pose a direct threat to the state and its authority. For example, Fig. 6.1 shows how tribes have led to the formation of foundations whose main purpose is to support exclusive educational and

Fig. 6.1 Advertisements used by Kuwait University Students from the Mutair and Shammer tribes to recruit high school graduates on the basis of tribalism. *Source* Ajyal Electronic Newspaper [@ ajialq8]. (4 June 2018). Twitter account https://twitter.com/ajialq8/status/1003708887072198656?s=20

professional advancement to their members. The two images show tribal student committees affiliated with the tribes of Mutair and Shammar, which have been formed at state universities to offer guidance, assistance and help to tribe members. This practice has become common despite the outrage of university officials, such as the Dean of Social Sciences at the University of Kuwait, Hamud al-Qasha'an, who described this phenomenon as a failure of the concept of citizenship in Kuwait (Abdul-Ghaffar, 2018).

As in Kuwait, faza'a is also common in Qatar, where the majority of the neighbourhoods were built along tribal lines. As Munira al-Kuwari, a member of a prominent tribe in Qatar, pointed out, "there are many benefits of living with your tribe in a neighbourhood." To illustrate, "you can always find others to help you, solve your problems and if you need any help anytime during the day or night, someone will definitely be there to help you" (Assami, 2017).

On the other hand, when asl is invoked, it causes serious implications for the system as a whole. According to Qatari academic and author A. al-Khater (personal interview, 2 July 2017), the fact that neighbourhoods are drawn along tribal lines strengthens the local power of tribes. Entire tribes were able to settle in modern housing facilities within walking or driving distance of their cousins and kinsmen. This enhances the ability of tribes to act as separate agents from the society, which sometimes has serious implications for social and political life and divisions in Qatar. For example, it could ignite tensions between tribes or alienate tribe members from the state. In fact, al-Khater said: "I remember one incident happened few years ago, a Qatari man, who lives in district (A), was severely beaten up by members of one of a Qatari tribe for driving around aimlessly in their frij [neighbourhood] in district (B)" (personal interview, 2 July 2017).

Therefore, the tribes do not limit themselves to a narrow mandate or set of objectives. Rather, they seem to be interested in a wide array of civil activities, including fundraising, providing financial and legal support to members in distress, guidance to students and professionals, and assistance to tribe members who are studying or working overseas (G. al-Najjar, personal interview, 21 October 2017). The only condition that is set for potential recipients of such services is tribal membership and affiliation through kinship. Hence, to qualify as a beneficiary, an individual needs to be born into a tribe or at least be closely associated to it through lineage.

6.4 Tribal Marriage Behaviour and Its Implications for Women

With the noticeable revival of tribal traditions, marriage has become increasingly and strictly guided by tribal norms and structure. The main norm is that the choice of a marriage partner is usually a family affair and requires compliance with idea of asl. Although the exact meaning of the concept of asl may vary from one social setting to another, the basic idea is the same. In certain Bedouin circles, it strictly

means that the proposing beau comes from a family whose tribal ancestry can be established and verified. For others, asl means that the person's ancestry can be traced back to "one of the respectable tribes of Arabia" (Personal interview, 4 August 2019).

In all cases, according to Sheikha al-Misnad, women take the responsibility for the observance and enforcement of the family honour (al-Misnad, 1984, p. 38). Therefore, the man must be of higher standing than the woman, since the woman represents the honour of the family and "no Bedouin family of high standing can be honoured if her daughters are wed off to a man whose ancestry is not known, whose family is not of a prestigious tribal origin, or who is not even a Bedouin" (Personal interview, 4 August 2019).

In an interview with a Kuwaiti female from a Bedouin tribe, the interviewee articulates the issue of sham as "anxiety and a constant pressure to conform to tribal honour, which forces young people, and particularly women, to be viewed and to view themselves not as individuals, but as part of a more important body" (Alsharekh, 2018).

Although Hadhar families have long given up many of their Bedouin ways and traditions since moving into the city, their tribal ancestries have never been forgotten, particularly among families who were associated with the upper merchant class and were known for their proximity to the ruling family. For example, Haya al-Mughni (2001) pointed out how women from the merchant class are controlled by arranged marriages in Kuwait, because those women epitomise honour, "those of the elite and the merchant class have been the most eager to preserve the kin relations from which they gain prestige and access to many privileges. Their loyalty to their own class has often superseded their loyalty to members of their own sex" (al-Mughni, 2001, p. 17). Such difficulties and restrictions are explained by a Hadhar Kuwaiti female from a prominent merchant family, "I noticed there is a retreat behind tribalism in Kuwait, even in marriage where there are some social standards and strict rules." When prompted to explain the standards she was referring to, she added, "He [the beau] must be asil and, by the way, not all tribes are asilin. For example, 'Awazim and Rashaida, are tribes, but not noble and we are not allowed to marry from them" (Personal interview, 6 August 2019).

Interestingly, however, the concept of asl also applies in a similar manner to Hadhar families known as the 'Ajam. Among these families are the Hadhar Shi'a families, which have, for many years, settled within the city and intermarried with other Sunni Hadhar families. Several Shi'a families were also among the prominent merchant class families, especially in Kuwait, where they have maintained their presence and influence until the present. A female member of the al-Ma'rafi Shi'a family said: "asl is a key to the social status of a person. Therefore, my family is very concerned about the origin of my future husband." For her family, asl means "a person who descended from the area of Najd in Saudi Arabia" (al-Ma'rafi, personal interview, 1 August 2019).

The concepts of asl and honour still remain highly valued in Qatar's society, even more so than Kuwait. One reason is that the notions of asl and honour, both

of which are critical components of tribal culture and values, are overwhelmingly associated with women. Indeed, it seems that tribal factors still have a significant impact on the opinions of younger generations as far as the marriage of women is concerned. According to a female member of a Bedouin tribe in Qatar "Two days ago, a close friend told me that her husband refused to allow his own sister to marry someone from outside their family in the name of honour and 'aib (shame and dishonour). In addition to this, he did not even ask for her personal opinion at all" (Personal interview, 24 December 2018).

Another Qatari female member from a Hadhar family complained about how marriage is getting difficult and very problematic, especially with the restrictions on women and their choices as far marriage is concerned. It is customary for a bride and groom to not have had a relationship or even seen each other before the official marriage. In this regard, she recalls:

> When I decided to marry a person I know, we agreed to follow the traditional way of marriage, which means through and by our families. I was lucky enough because my husband's family is socially liberal, but asil. In practice, his mother called my mother by phone to propose [to] me. After this, my mother told my father. Accordingly, my father did his own research using his own social networks […] He asked about his [the beau's] full name, family, clan and tribe originality […], if he prayed and fasted, and where he worked, and then he asked me about how they came to know about me, especially [since] our families are not related and we were from different tribes. Of course, I lied and told him that his mother saw me at the wedding […] I know the system in my family, everything should be hsb al-'asul, according to the proper ways, following the traditional and tribal norms. That's why I couldn't tell him the truth and if he finds out that we were in relationship, it will be a tragedy affecting my family honour and maybe then he will be extremely angry and forbid the marriage (personal interview, 26 December 2018).

In her opinion, traditional marriage is widely practised among families and blood relatives and it is not based on affection or romance, but rather on being a traditional tribal norm. For her family, "love comes after marriage" (Personal interview, 26 December 2018).

Family marriages, that is, marriages between relatives, are common both in Kuwait and Qatar. A study conducted between 1983 and 1996 in Kuwait shows that the percentage of family marriage increased after 1990 from 34 to 38.4% and that first-cousin marriages were the most frequent type. It also presented that the place of residence has an effect on consanguinity in Kuwait. For example, the percentage of family marriages in al-Jahra district, where most Bedouin tribes live, is 42.2%, twice the percentage in Kuwait City (Doha International Family Institute, 2019). As in Kuwait, and despite the awareness campaigns about the risks of family marriage, there is widespread acceptance of this practice in Qatar. According to a survey on practising polygamy and intermarriage between relatives in Qatar, in 1989, 41% of the women surveyed were related to their husbands by blood, primarily being married to their first cousins. This percentage decreased to 32% in 1994. However, it increased again to 38% in 2005. In addition, this survey showed that the first choice is a paternal cousin, whereas maternal cousins ranked second as a choice of marriage (SESRI, 2013).

Money seems to be an important factor in family marriages, which is not unusual from a tribal perspective. As Thompson (2019, p. 214) notes, marriage between relatives is considered important for maintaining wealth within the family. Additionally, the wedding requires a mahr (dowry), paid by the groom to the bride. According to a young Qatari man, the cost of mahr is extremely high, generally being ranging between 100,000 and 200,000 Qatari riyals, equivalent to $27,464.98 and $54,929.96. Thus, for example, when someone decides to get married, members of his family and tribe will exercise faza'a and mobilise all possible and financial support for him, even if the groom already has the sufficient financial means and resources (personal interview, 12 April 2019). However, this also depends on a variety of other factors, such as the status and prestige of the individual (Thompson, 2019, p. 23).

Although Qatar and Kuwait are experiencing rapid social changes, the power of the patriarchal system still dominates marriage. Mahanna Rajakumar (2014) conducted interviews as part of a research on educational level and marriage age of Qatari women. One of the participants indicated the male figure in the family, be it the father, brother or uncle, is the head of the family and the only one with authority to make final decisions in relation to critical matters. According to a female student from Qatar University:

> Some girls they uhh, they cannot say no, to their father because of … because uhh they don't want to marry their cousin, okay? They cannot say no. Sometimes the girl, okay, she ... she wants to continue her higher education, higher degrees, okay, in her field or another field. She wants to study abroad, for example, but uhh, sometimes they only marry, ya'ni (for example), and they got long time to continue (Rajakumar, 2017).

Therefore, it is not surprising that many families in Qatar practice hypogamy, where an educated woman marries a less educated man, simply because men have higher social status than women (al-Ghanim, 2010). For example, a report represents the "marriage and fertility patterns" modules of Qatar Women Survey (QWS), which was conducted in May 2011. The report provides data on husband-wife educational difference at first marriage. The study showed that 32% of women had higher levels of education than their husbands between 1985 and 1994, which then increased consistently to 35% in the period between 1995 and 2004 (SESRI, 2013, p. 13). Although having higher levels of education indicated higher accomplishment, the social status of the male was a more relevant indicator of status as far as marriage was concerned. Moreover, in 2011, 72% of women with university degrees had their marriages initiated by their families (SESRI, 2013, p. 16). This suggests that although women achieved higher levels of education, they were still unable to exercise free choices in marriage, and instead, they had to accept the traditional marriage traditions and procedures which are subject to patriarchal tribal values and norms.

Mothers also often assume the role of guardians of values and traditions in the patriarchal system, raising their daughters in according to the values of this system. For example, in Kuwait, a 20-year-old girl from al-Dosari, a Bedouin tribe (A. A, personal interview, 2019), described her mother as a "mother who does

not work, and her main duty is to look after us." Her mother always reminded her not to mix or build any relationships with men. In this traditional context, enforcing gender segregation is an important means by which tribal and family honour is preserved (Thomson, 2020, p. 200). According to the mother (M. A, personal interview, 2019),

> Neither my father nor my brothers accept the idea that women should work in a mixed environment, and I personally agree with them. We are living in a very small society and people are extremely judgemental, and letting my daughter work in a mixed environment will affect her sum'aa (reputation) and then reduce the marriage chances … So, I don't feel comfortable with it [working in a mixed environment] (personal interview, 4 August 2019).

Indeed, this points out that women generally play an influential role in redeploying tribal and traditional norms among the new generation. This is also evident in Qatari society. A 33-year-old Qatari female (Personal interview, 24 December 2018), complained:

> My mother raised us, the new generation, with the idea that the boy is much better than the girl. I am the only girl in my family and I have three brothers, and they were treated differently, like princes. For example, whenever I got [into a] fight with them, she always stood with them and supported them... like you know just because I'm a woman, that doesn't make me less than them. I think that's how my mom is like … She always told us that she loves the girl and the boy the same way and there's no difference between them, but in reality, and when we look to small details, it's completely the opposite.

As mentioned in Chap. 5, citizenship in Kuwait and Qatar is difficult to obtain and is designed to be an exclusive construct through which national identity is protected. Citizenship gives access to the state resources and citizenship controls by the state. Therefore, the state controls its population by regulating marriage choices for individuals. For example, in Kuwait, through financial benefits, the government encourages them to marry Kuwaiti women. The government grants a loan of KD 6000, equivalent to $19,625, to grooms upon marriage ("Kuwait Hikes Marriage Loan to KD 6000," 2012) and KD 70,000, equivalent to $252,350, in soft loans to help him finance a new home (Oxford Business Group, 2012). A state perception of identity threats that emanates from the huge population of foreign expatriates is giving rise to the revival of tribalism and traditions among citizens who are aiming to retain a sense of collective identity. Therefore, family structure, marriage and kinship standards and criteria have prevented or significantly discouraged marriage to foreigners, especially for women. For example, when it comes to Kuwaiti women, the government instructs them on what not to do and discourages them from marrying non-Kuwaitis. Here, the law grants citizenship based on the father's—not mother's—nationality (Zahra, 2014). However, almost 19,000 Kuwaiti women are registered as married to foreigners and are unable to pass their citizenship to their children (Alsharekh, 2018). More importantly, a hierarchy of restrictions denies women, but not men, and their children, access to certain rights and privileges. Therefore, Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaiti GCC nationals tend to gain access to a few rights since their children are also GCC citizens. However, the children of Kuwaiti women married to non-GCC

citizens or the Bidoun are almost completely denied access to welfare services and other state-subsidised resources, such as housing, education and healthcare (Alsharekh, 2018).

In the same scenario, who marries whom is of interest not only to family affairs, but also to the state of Qatar. Upon getting married, Qatari men receive 600 m^2 of free land and an interest loan of QR100,000, equivalent to $27,464.98 from the government ("Ziyādatu Sulfati al-Zawāji 'Ilā 100 'Alfa Riyāl," 2017). However, this rule excludes naturalised Qataris and Qatari women, including those women who are married to non-Qatari men. As such, young Qatari individuals are not only pushed by their families to get married by a certain age to a certain family or tribe, but their decision is also significantly influenced by the state. In this respect, the state plays an influential role that legitimises social restrictions by heavily censoring the marriage of citizens to foreigners. For instance, a Doha News article titled "I'm Qatari and I Want to Be Able to Decide for Myself Who I Marry" tells the story of Yousef, a 28-year-old Qatari who fell in love with a foreign woman, and the two decided to get married. Despite the fact that his family approved of their marriage, the government refused to endorse the partnership and they ended up divorced. Yousef explains: "Qatari authorities are worried, apparently, that Qatari women won't be able to find enough Qatari men to marry," due to the influx of expatriates ("I'm Qatari, and I Want To Be Able To Decide For Myself Who I Marry," 2016).

As in Kuwait, Qatari women, unlike men, cannot pass their citizenship on to their children if they marry foreigners. According to Qatar's Fourth National Human Development Report, the number of Qatari women married to foreigners between 2000 and 2013 grew significantly from 116 to 267. Despite the fact that in 2009, Qatar joined the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which grants women equal rights to men in respect to passing nationality to her children, Qatari nationality law denies such marriage benefits since the citizenship is based on the father's kinship rather than the mother's. As a result, the number of divorces by Qatari women who had married foreign husbands also doubled during this period (Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, 2015). In fact, Amal al-Malki, the Dean of Hamad bin Khalifa University, who is married to a non-Qatari herself, argues that marriage to a non-Qatari is severely frowned upon and is considered highly unconventional and even shameful (Personal interview, 9 January 2017).

6.5 Women's Visibility, Position and Representation

The functions of tribal values, traditions and norms come into play mostly with respect to the question of marriage, but they can also move when the women's issues evolve. As oil revenues raised living standards, the adoption of modern lifestyles and various other social changes accompanied the rapid socioeconomic transformation of Qatar and Kuwait. However, the extent to which women enjoyed

their rights and freedoms was not the same in these two countries. In Kuwait history, a few women were able to enjoy certain rights such as the freedom of expression and political participation, but these were rights limited to the elite. Mary Ann Tetreault explains that upper class women were the first among Kuwaiti women to be educated abroad, specifically in Egypt, and they established the Women's Cultural and Social Society as the first women's organisation in 1963 (Tetreault, 2001). However, women from modest backgrounds and lower socioeconomic classes began to work as mutawa'as, religious instructors, and to use their household as schools (al-Mughni, 2001, p. 46).

In Qatar history, on the other hand, the process was much slower, and not a single female student was recorded during the 1960s at a time when only 89 males were enrolled in universities abroad (al-Muftah, 2017). Women's education began at Amna's Mahmoud al-Jaidah household, the first leading female educator in Qatar in 1938, where boys and girls were taught to read and write the Qur'an (al-Muftah, 2017). However, many families were hesitant to send their daughters to al Jaidah's school. Yousef ʿUbaidān (personal interview, 24 October 2017) provides an explanation for the limited opportunities for women's education during this period:

> Women's education in the past gives a good example of the mixture between religion and traditions in Qatari society […] Back in the 1950s and 1960s, some Qatari families and tribes were hesitant to send their daughters to school in the name of religion. This was ultimately overcome when Sheikh Mohammed 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Mana', a Wahhabi cleric and the only judge in Qatar at that time, visited Sheikh Khalifa's majlis in 1957, where most of the Qatari tribal sheikhs and senior members were attending, and he issued a fatwa clarifying the importance of educating women according to Islam.

This initiative was largely achieved with the support of the government, which began to expand schools and offer scholarships for female students to study abroad, "as long as their families raised no objection" (al-Muftah, 2017).

Evidently, mass education and growing economic means had helped bring awareness, produced critical knowledge and increased the integration of women into the political and economic field (Alsharekh, 2017, p. 166). Moreover, radical changes emerged with the schooling and education of women, which eventually led to large numbers of women joining the workforce. In some countries, such as the UAE, Qatar and Kuwait, the number of women enrolled in school and higher education outnumbers that of men (The World Bank, 2015).

Figure 6.2 shows that the primary, secondary and tertiary school enrolment rate of females is greater than that of males in GCC countries. According to the World Bank (2015), 93% of females are enrolled in primary school, almost the same as the rate for males. In secondary school, the rate of female enrolment (90%) is higher than that of male enrolment (88%). At the higher education level, the female enrolment rate is 40%, which is almost the double of the male's rate (23%).

In addition to this, the GCC states have contributed billions of dollars for educational reforms and incentives, including co-curricular programmes with Western universities. However, these developments cannot be taken at face value. The development in women's rights has been slow and limited, even compared to other

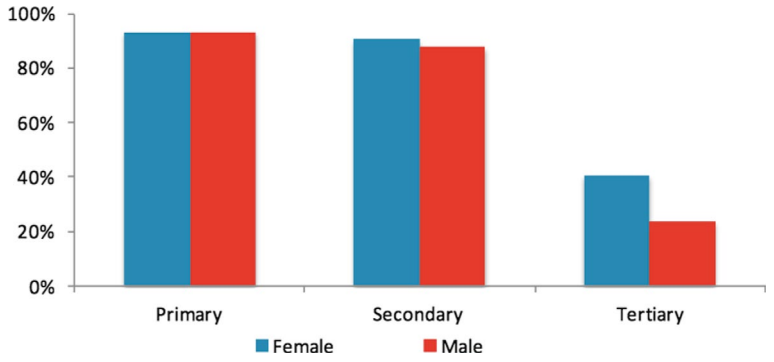

Fig. 6.2 School enrolment rate of women compared with men among GCC countries in 2015. *Source* World Bank Data. Al Masah Capital Research

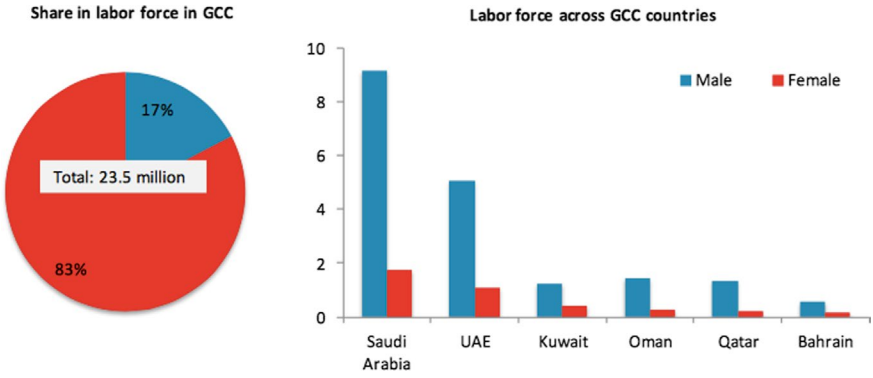

Fig. 6.3 Female labour participation rate in the GCC countries. The World Bank, Al Masah Capital Research (http://www.almasahcapital.com/images/reports/report_131.pdf)

Arab countries outside the GCC region, and this is the case even in Kuwait, which stands out among other GCC states for having the most open political system (al-Ansari, 2020). In other words, education remains central to the state's narrative about its modernisation efforts, but it does not necessarily imply a significant improvement in women's participation at the economic and political levels.

According to Madawi al Rasheed, the new generation of educated women in GCC states have realised that education is no guarantee of greater inclusion (al-Rasheed, 2013, p. 39). Figure 6.3, for example, reveals that there is a gap between the enrolment of females in education and their participation in the workforce. According to the World Bank (2015), only 17% of the 23.5 million individuals in the labour force of GCC countries are female. In 2013, women's participation in the labour force in Qatar (29%) and Kuwait (44%) was low compared to that of men. According to the World Bank (2015), this can be attributed to

several reasons, such as gender roles in marriage, a lack of job opportunities and discrimination in the workplace.

Additionally, women follow strict social conventions that are akin to unspoken rules. In an interview with a female member of al-Naʿīmī tribe, she recalled:

> I remember the first job I was offered in 2013. The manager was from the al-Naʿīmī tribe, and he was close to my father and brothers. My brothers refused to allow me to work in his office and they said: How come you work with him and what will people say about us? At that time, I couldn't work and I had to reject this job offer (Personal interview, April 1, 2019).

Understanding women's behaviour in the workplace shows how tribe and tribalism can have a powerful voice in shaping the conditions within which women live today. She continued:

> Today in my current job, there are two male employees who are working with me in the same office. One is from al-Naʿīmī tribe and the second is from the al-Sulīṭī. However, I feel more comfortable and confident in dealing with the latter. When you ask me about the reason, honestly, I don't know the answer! Maybe because I always think that al-Naʿīmī may know my father and brothers (personal interview, April 1, 2019).

While this practice, shown in the previous example, concerns the interaction between men and women who are blood relatives, gender segregation is actively applied in the educational system by the state to regulate the relationship between men and women in the public sphere (El-Sanabary, 1994), which is considered the most important aspect of life in Kuwait, and even more extensively so in Qatar. This gender segregation is actively enforced in national rather than private universities. This has to do with two reasons; first private universities are limited to people from privileged backgrounds, and do not represent the majority of citizens from different backgrounds. Secondly, national universities have been established for many years; Kuwait University was established in 1966 (Meleis, El-Sanbary, & Beeson, 1979) and Qatar University in 1977 (al-Muftah, 2017), and the majority of students and faculty at both have traditionally been from tribal backgrounds. Additionally, women constitute the majority of students at both universities which apply gender segregation.

According to Hind al-Ansari, national educational institutions are attuned to a social order produced by the socialisation process (al-Ansari, 2020). Thus, tribalism affects the behaviours of students and faculty members, as well as their gender relations and dress codes. For example, Qatar and Kuwait universities do not receive mixed-gender students. However, through my exploratory investigation, which was fuelled by my own experience as a Qatari woman, first studying and then teaching at Qatar University between 2012 and 2019, as well as my own observation during my visits to Kuwait University between 2017 and 2019 and my personal interviews with the students, some important considerations must be made. To start with, Qatar University is more conservative than its Kuwaiti counterpart in terms of social restrictions. Women in general, the majority wear a black or a colourful 'abaya, a shyala to cover their hair, and a few wear the niqab to cover their faces, while the majority of male students wear the traditional thawb.

However, the way people dress is not the main concern of this research. The idea is that Qatar University system continues to function as a conservative force that regulates the image of women and reproduce gender segregation. In Autumn 2012, Qatar University issued a new dress code policy that prohibited students and faculty members from dressing inappropriately on campus. As a faculty member, I received an Arabic email sent by the Dean of Art and Science Office restricting tight clothing, and casual wear. The email also included new sections dealing with tattoos, make-up, perfume and colourful hair. However, male students and faculty did not receive similar instructions and guidelines for dress, which many female students considered as "unfair restrictions" (personal interview, 24 December 2018).

Secondly, in terms of gender segregation, university buildings and facilities are separate because conservative families do not approve of mixed-gender learning (Tok et al., 2016). In fact, it is worth noting that at the time of its establishment in 1974, classrooms were generally mixed and gender segregation was not introduced until 1986 as a result of growing pressure from conservative circles in society (Al-Kbeisy, 1997). Since then, gender segregation has not only been an official practice, but it is strictly imposed and sanctioned. For example, the university employs security guards at every main gate to make sure men do not enter the female campus without permission. University events and activities are also segregated, and when they are mixed, men and women are seated in different areas.

In comparison to Qatar, the environment at Kuwait University is less conservative, but veiling remains a requirement. In Kuwait, the veil is often perceived as both a religious and cultural symbol (Bornstein, Abdullah-Khan and other 2014, p. 60), while the 'abaya, according to Haya al-Mughni, remains tied to the idea of chastity and honour (al-Mughni, 2001, p. 52). However, Hadhar women seem to stereotype Bedouin women who wear 'abaya and niqab, considering this form of dress a sign of rajiya or backwardness. According to a female Hadhar student, the black 'abaya and niqab "are not for us." They represent a foreign culture that has only recently come to Kuwait and it is worn by some women from Bedouin tribes (personal interview, 24 October 2017).

Additionally, during the interviews with Hadhar women and families, I noticed they were anxious at first when they saw me wearing the 'abaya. By contrast, Bedouin women who wear the 'abaya at all times in public, were more relaxed and were much easier to interact with. Coming from a country where both 'abaya and thawb are becoming symbols of national identity and traditions, I thought that wearing 'abaya in other GCC countries would be seen as something normal or as an integral part of national development and identity. However, this was not the case and I was not aware that the 'abaya, specifically in Kuwait, was in fact a distinctive feature that distinguished Bedouin women from Hadhar. Also, unlike American University of Kuwait (AUK) and University for Science and Technology (GUST), I noticed that in Kuwait University, more male students and faculty wore the traditional dishdāsha, which is considered a symbol of national identity. Moreover, classes are segregated, but a few remained open to both genders at Kuwait University, especially if the number of students registered in the

class is low, forcing the university to merge students in one class (personal interview, 24 October 2017). In 2023, however, Kuwait University finally imposed full gender segregation, a decision that has triggered heated debate and raised concerns over liberties and rights across the country (Hatoum, 2023).

Despite the differences in the level of gender and social restrictions at Qatar University and Kuwait University, educated women still face patriarchal norms directly related to the reputations of their family and tribe, which can be intimidating due to the punitive and negative implications that they can have on women's lives in the short and long terms. This can be seen in everyday practice. For example, declaring women's personal names in some tribal customs is considered a taboo, as they should never be mentioned in front of men. In the Bedouin historical context, men never use the names of their female relatives in front of other men; instead, they usually refer to them as 'um al-'iyāl or rā'īatu al-bait only, that is, the mother of children or the house wife (Dickson, 1996, p. 123).

Today, there are a variety of conservative Bedouin groups that maintain their tribal values and traditions in their social practices, in addition to less conservative groups, such as Bedouins who have become Hadhar or who frequently mix with the Hadhar, live in their quarters, marry their women, and even adopt some of their values. In Kuwait, for instance, some male students who are members of Bedouin tribes have vehemently opposed women's suffrage because of their names associated with the tribal names, which is seen as a source of shame to the tribe's honour. For example, as A. al-'Utaibi, chairman of the National Union of Kuwait Students (NUKS) at Kuwait University (personal interview, 22 October 2017) put it: "I have experienced more than once during election time, that some male students do not wish to see female students who have similar tribal names running for university elections." Elaborating on this issue, A. al-'Utaibi added:

> Male members of the tribe first exert pressure on the female candidate, either by directly communicating with her or by trying to shame male relatives in her family, until she withdraws. If this pressure is fruitless, they then demand that she run for office without using her tribal name so that her tribe is not identified and shamed in accordance with the ʿaib tradition.

As a result of this practice, women prefer to avoid direct confrontation with tribal forces, largely because they wish to avoid the shaming issue, which can be distracting and wasteful of their time and energy. According to a female student at Kuwait University and a member of the 'Awazim tribe, who was formerly involved in elections (M al-'Azmi, personal interview, 24 October 2017), a member of the tribe moved to immediately focus on and attack the woman's honour and express vicious sexism. This is not limited to the 'Awazim tribe; it is common among almost all tribes whenever a woman runs for office. A 30-year-old Qatari woman (personal interview, 24 December 2018) who is a university graduate from a Hadhar family her personal experience with the issue of mentioning women's names:

> In 2012, I was an undergraduate student at Qatar University and I remember the day when the driver was sick and he couldn't work. Instead, my brother decided to drive me to the university in his own car. The security guard did not allow him to pass because his car number was not registered in the system. The policemen asked my brother: Where are you going? My brother replied: I am going to drop radhy'ti at the university and then I'll leave ...

The word "raḍi'atī" literally means the female who was breastfed by my mother, which for Bedouins is an appropriate way of referring to one's sister without mentioning her name or even designating her as a sister. It must be noted that men and women who are breastfed by the same woman are considered as brother and sister in Islam, and are prohibited from marrying each other.

The woman was extremely surprised, not because her brother did not use her real name, which is culturally acceptable, but because he used a Bedouin word instead of 'ukhtī which means "my sister" in Arabic. It must be pointed out that men's practice of avoiding using a woman's personal name, substituting Bedouin vocabulary instead, is a multifaceted strategy, in particular, connecting to the honour, shame and confirmation of Bedouin tradition and identity.

In practical terms, conservative tribes fear that when a woman becomes visible in public, she will be the target of all kinds of ridicule, sexist and sexual remarks, and verbal assaults, all of which according to the tradition of are dishonourable to the family and tribe with which the targeted female is affiliated, according to 'aib. Fatima al-Kuwari, who decided to run for municipal elections for the first time in 2011, did not have to seek her father's permission, but rather, that of her brother, whom she revered and feared. Since running for elections involves visiting homes and neighbourhoods, women must be visible in the field, interacting with strangers and asking for support. On this experience, Fatima al-Kuwari (personal interview, 26 April 2019) reflected saying:

> In Qatari traditions, this is potentially shameful because it exposes a woman to all kinds of insults or offences, starting with rejection and possibly humiliation. When a woman is humiliated in public, the humiliation affects not only her but also her entire family and the tribe with which the family is affiliated.

Additionally, the idea of a woman going on tours to solicit votes and gain support from the public is perceived as a violation of social norms in a patriarchal society, as she is assuming a role that is typically associated with men, in the tribal context is perceived as offensive to her family and tribe. Given the sensitivity of the notion of shame, it is unsurprising that very few women have even entertained the possibility of running for office. Yet, the experience of Fatima al-Kuwari shows that even the strictest traditions can be overcome when women are assertive enough. In her case, the ultra-conservative brother, whom she feared, expressed his approval because as she put it, "he admitted that I am stubborn and I was going to do things my way whether he said yes or no, especially as I am highly educated and an accomplished career woman" (personal interview, 26 April 2019).

Similarly, many Kuwaiti women such as Nuria Salih al-Sa'dani, Lulu'a al-Qatami and Fawzia al-'Awadi, have been active in politics, challenging the patriarchal system, demanding equal rights for women and trying to make changes through politics, either through direct involvement or association with elites. Although they were successful at first, the revival of tribal opposition caused by the spread of conservative Islamists and tribal movements since the 1990s may have significantly slowed down, and even impeded, the progress of women in GCC countries, whether directly or indirectly. For example, the opposition to women's

suffrage came from parliament, where Islamist and tribal members repeatedly blocked attempts to allow women to vote or run for office (al-Sa'dani, 1980, p. 339). Kuwaiti women did not have the right to vote and run for office until 2005. A month after gaining suffrage, Kuwait saw the first woman sworn in as a cabinet member. However, it must be mentioned that these transformations were only possible because of massive and continuous pressure imposed on several National Assembly members by mass demonstrations on the streets in support of women's political rights (Nordenson, 2017, p. 12). The recognition of women's suffrage rights in Kuwait means that women's votes now count, and they equal or outnumber those of men. Perhaps it is for this reason that tribes have vehemently opposed women's suffrage, as it could undermine the overwhelming power of the patriarchal system over women.

Today, there are a few conservative tribal and Islamist parliament members who rely on the ability of women to vote during the electoral campaigns, which seems to be a source of power at a time when women outnumber men in the Kuwaiti workforce. According to al-Kandari (personal interview, Oct 18, 2017), tribes have proven their ability to achieve significant parliamentary representation and to actively engage political participants. As a female member of the al-'Anzi tribe stated, "I will always vote for someone who is from my tribe, even if this person has committed a crime […] Yes, electing someone from my tribe is a symbol of power and pride" (T. A personal interview, 22 October 2017).

Ironically, women sometimes use their family and tribal connections to participate in the political arena, especially through elections. For example, Dhikra al-Rashidi, the former Minister of Social Affairs and Labour, was elected in 2012, becoming the fourth woman in parliament from a tribal district. In her interview with Alrai Media (2008), she confidently reported: "I am the daughter of the tribe and I will get the full support from them" ("Dhikrā al-Rashīdī: 'Anā 'Ibnat al-Qabīlatū Walā 'Atawaqa' Hamlatun Sharisah," 2008).

The idea that fathers, brothers and husbands have the ability to force women to vote is being gradually challenged in Kuwait, specifically among the younger females. The fact that voting is conducted through a secret ballot also enables Kuwaiti women to have the final say on who they vote for, with or without the knowledge of their fathers or husbands. A Kuwaiti academic from the al-'Utaibi tribe admitted (personal interview, 24 October 2017) that she had disobeyed her father and secretly voted for a parliament candidate from another tribe. She confessed that she could not admit this fact to her family because they would be very offended and potentially feel dishonoured, since the candidate for whom she voted was from a rival tribe who had a far more progressive political platform that appealed to her. In addition, she stated that she knew of many other women who have been disobeying the orders of their fathers and husbands by voting for the candidates of their choice rather than the candidate representing their tribe. Another Kuwaiti academic, R. al-Khaldi (personal interview, 24 October 2017), reported that in her family, voting was a matter of personal choice, but she admitted that there are many cases in which women are pressured or forced to vote according to the will of their fathers or husbands. As the case of Fatima al-Kuwari

in Qatar (personal interview, 26 April 2019) shows, the power of conservative tribes is significant and might be a challenging source for many women in Qatar. However, this pressure has not always yielded the desired outcomes, because many women are educated and perceive themselves as emancipated. More importantly, the secret ballot system for elections makes it impossible to fully control women's behaviour on election's day.

The growing popularity of the Internet and social media have also had implications for women in Gulf societies in general. The use of the Internet can be seen as double-edge sword; on the one hand, it can help the younger generation to get access to valuable and limitless information alongside the ability to establish a platform for public opinion. Alanoud Alsharekh argues that groups, including women and youth, "have embraced social media tools that encourage self-expression and promote a culture of individualism" (Alsharekh, 2017, p. 166). In contrast, Mark Thompson argues that social media can spread division, hatred and aggressive criticism among people and he notes that there have been attempts to jeopardise the reform process (Thompson, 2019, p. 125). Hence, women still face many challenges and restrictions regarding the use of social media to engage in social or political activism, run for office or even just use in everyday practices. These challenges differ from one case to another, but in general, tribal factors seem to play a critical role in determining the image of women and how women use social media in contrast to men. For example, men in the GCC states are free to use their own personal pictures online in Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and Facebook. In contrast, women do not feel comfortable sharing their personal information and images on a social media profile.

In Kuwait, a clear and recent example shows how media and social media cause several problems relating to women's honour, affecting in turn women's families and tribe reputation, and sometimes leading to political crisis. In 2019, the ʻAwazim tribe in Kuwait raised $33 million to free Khalid al-ʻAzmi, a former police officer who was sentenced to life in prison in 2000 after assassinating a female journalist who had described the girls of his tribe as "dancers" in a newspaper article. Describing women as "dancers" is shameful and morally corrupt according to Bedouin traditions and values (BBC Arabic, 2019). During the campaign period, Falah bin Jam'a, the sheikh of the ʻAwazim tribe, delivered a speech that went viral on social media, in which he stated that there were no women dancers in Kuwait and that the dancers were coming from Basra. Dozens of residents in the Iraqi province of Basra called for a demonstration to express their anger, describing al-ʻAzmi's speech as "offensive". A demonstration in front of the Kuwait embassy in Basra forced the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs to intervene to calm matters down ("Qiṣatu ʻAshīratu al-ʻAwāzim al-Kūaytiīati Alatī jamaʻat Dyatan Qadruhā 33 Milyun Dūlār Khilāl Yawmayni li'Iṭlāq Sarāḥ Qātil," 2019).

In Qatar's cyberspace, which is far more socially conservative than Kuwait's, it is important to note that posting personal images of Qatari women carries a huge risk and more weight than posting a text on social media. Indeed, there are contradictions with respect to the exposure of women to the media and their

ability to use it, particularly in relation to traditional and social media. On the one hand, certain female figures, such as Sheikha Moza, have been able to develop a revered public and international persona (Kamrava, 2013, p. 120); Moza's persona was supported by the official endorsement of her husband, the former emir, and her ability to champion popular projects focusing, in particular, on education, healthcare, culture and heritage and then ensuring that they are successfully implemented (Kamrava, 2013, p. 119). On the other hand, other forms of media exposure for female personalities are frequently rejected and shamed, especially for women who come from tribal backgrounds. This contradiction is probably attributed to the fact that a figure such as Sheikha Moza symbolically fits within the expectations of a conservative patriarchal system, as she serves as the revered and respected mother of the nation, the mother of the current emir and a maternal caring figure who represents the face of the state.

This symbolic value can apply to specific women in a conservative patriarchal system, but not to the average middle-class woman who may come from a tribal or non-tribal background. With her dream being to serve her country with knowledge and skills, Mariam al-Subaie was the first Qatari female entrepreneur to appear on international television, without a hijab for ten years. She was a guest on France 24 Arabic on a TV programme called Hadīthu al-Yūm (Today Talk) speaking about how the Qatari woman views herself. Al-Subaie spoke eloquently and with praise about the achievements of Qatari women in various fields despite the confines of "a global patriarchy: (al-Subaie, 2016). Being a woman in the public eye, however, al-Subaie was strongly attacked on Twitter in Qatar, receiving criticisms about her appearance, especially that she did not wear a hijab, clearly indicating that the main focus of the public gaze was only on her looks and clothing ("A Qatari entrepreneur appeared on television, and all we noticed was her hair," 2016). Therefore, unlike the emir's mother, Mariam al-Subaie, as an average Qatari woman, represented a challenge to the norms and expectations of the traditional patriarchy and its values and traditions.

As a result, Qatari women use nicknames or fake profile pictures or by keep their accounts private on social media. In discussing having her personal picture on social media, a young Qatari female said that most Qatari females will use pictures of objects such as flowers, the Qatari flag and sometimes pictures of celebrities, but not their real faces. She added, "somebody may steal my pictures, and he might modify it, and this will create a problem … And the boys in the family will be very embarrassed and they will create a big issue for the girl' (Abokhodair et al., 2016).

While women attempt to explore new spaces to express their freedom, especially on social media, they must face the fact that tribes and other conservative forces in society are doing the same thing in an attempt to control the public sphere and impose the same restrictions on it. Indeed, a sociologist at Qatar University, Dr F. al-Kubaisi (personal interview, 14 December 2017) explained that just when women started to consider the potentials of social media as a means of free expression and social and political engagement, the tribes did the same. All tribes have built a presence on social media platforms, especially on Twitter,

Instagram, YouTube and WhatsApp, in an attempt to create closed communities in which tribal values, symbols and rituals represent the main content.

This can be seen in Kuwait in particular, where tribes utilise websites as a platform to organise gatherings, invite guests to attend celebrations such as, mobilise voters during elections and share information related to the history of the tribe. For example, Mutair tribe used to have a website (www.mutirkw.com) that was used to raise funds to assist members in distress, offer academic and professional help to clansmen, and involve tribe members in social gatherings, celebrations and other activities. However, this website was shut down by the Kuwaiti authorities when it was used to mobilise participants to demonstrate on 27 December 2010 (Nordenson, 2017, p. 152). In another example, the 'Utaiba website hosted a forum (http://www.otabhq8.com/vb/) that was launched in September 2012 in addition to a YouTube channel (https://www.youtube.com/user/otabhq8/videos) and an electronic magazine, al-Hila (Otabhq8, 2020).

In Qatar, it must be noted that Instagram and Twitter have been widely used in tribal circles. In May 2020, a flow request notification appeared to me in my Instagram account and the name was "@al.kuwari.tribe." The request probably came because I was using my tribal name on my Instagram profile account, which is the only condition that tribes set for potential recipients of such followers, where membership and affiliation is through kinship. There were 824 followers from the al Bu-Kuwara tribe and most of the content consisted of pictures of prominent tribal members, digital archives of historical materials, videos, records and day-to-day news, such as news of marriages, obituaries and other social events. In addition to this, they had a Twitter account ('@albukuwara1'), mostly focusing on social news and activities.

Another interesting observation is related to the blockade by Saudi Arabia, UAE and Bahrain on Qatar in 2017, and the impact it had on the relationship between the emir and the tribes. During the blockade, the Qatari tribes showed their solidarity and garnered a popular hashtag #Qatar_is_my_tribe (#قبيلتي_قطر); Hawajer and al-Murra tribes also responded to this blockade by blocking tweets from hostile accounts, issuing support statements and pledging loyalty to the emir.

A few similarities between tribal social media accounts in Kuwait and Qatar can be identified. In both countries, the groups never posted anything related to female members of the tribe, except for obituaries and condolences, yet never mentioning the names of women. Normally they would refer to the notion of "hurma" or "haram," followed by the name of the husband, brothers or sons. According to El-Guindi (1999, p. 85), hurma in Arabic means woman but it also implies sanctity, privacy and prohibition. Secondly, the social media platforms used by tribes in both countries tend are exclusive to tribe members, but content is visible to outsiders who can follow the content but without having the ability to participate.

However, a few differences also exist in the use of social media platforms by tribes in the two countries. Tribal groups in Kuwait use social media not only for communicating and providing social services such as raising funds to

assist members in distress, and offering professional help to clansmen, but also for addressing political issues, reforms, covering tribal primaries and political speeches. In Qatar, on the other hand, the tribes mostly use social media for social purposes, such as to involve tribe members in social gatherings, weddings, national day celebrations and similar events that are exclusive to members.

Despite the efforts by the states and tribes to control the public sphere and dialogue by dominating social media, the nature of social media has made this difficult, if not impossible, as individuals are still able to create their own platforms and spaces, even if they do not have the same access to financial and other resources. Radsch (2012) argues since 2011 uprising, Arab women are engaging in social media and thereby breaking down "gender barriers and cultural taboos by leading protests that were photographed or filmed" (Radsch, 2012, p. 40).

In Kuwait, young women are rejecting and challenging restrictions and the traditions associated with them, and female activists are using social media to address women's issues politically and socially. For example, in 2006, what become known as the "Orange Movement" used the Internet and social media to network to promote political change. Nordenson (2017, p. 12) argues that online activism has become an integral part of Kuwaiti politics and has been a driving force for young activists to achieve success with politics reforms. Nordenson (2017, p. 145) further noted that "political change requires a cultural change to convince Kuwaitis that protests are a right." As an example, the Sahat al-Saffat political blog started to discuss the issue of electronic districts and women's political participation (Nordenson, 2017, p. 145). As social media tools became more popular in Kuwait, young people, including women, gradually moved from blogging to Twitter, and they replaced their fake Twitter profiles with their full names and real photos (Alsharekh, 2017, p. 166). Moreover, a number of liberal Hadhar women led a successful electronic campaign for political reform, and women from tribal and Islamist backgrounds began to use online platforms and blogposts during the succession crisis. For example, tribal blogger Tariq al-Mutairi, a youth leader of the Civil Democratic Movement (CDM), established a blogpost (www.altariq.blogpost.com) in 2005, for the purpose of supporting national unity, mobilising demonstrations and exposing alleged corruption.

Additionally, in Tariq's personal diary, titled "ʾIrḥal" (Leave), he pointed out that women have participated in the movement side-by-side with men. Morvoer, Tariq refers to his wife Nora and other female participants, noting that they played a major role on social media in both organising mass demonstration and supporting the women's suffrage movement (al-Mutairi, 2016, pp. 96–97). Indeed, the Internet has empowered women in Kuwait and allowed them to become more aware of their civil rights. As was mentioned in Chap. 5, the result of reducing the number of electoral districts from 25 to 5 favoured women's chances of getting elected to parliament; four women, for the first time in Kuwait's political history, succeeded in winning parliamentary seats in the 2009 elections. The four candidates, Massouma al-Mubarak, Salwa al-Jassar, Aseel al-'Awadhi and Rola Dashti, had remarkable success in using e-campaigns to overcome local cultural norms that discounted the effectiveness of women as leaders (Costigan & Perry, 2012, p.

161). Furthermore, in 2011, 34% of Kuwaiti women used Facebook, which placed Kuwait among the top five Arab countries for Internet user penetration.

In the more conservative Qatar, the concept of ‘aib is far more powerful when it comes to the exposure of women in the public media, as was illustrated in the case of Fatima al-Kuwari’s experience in running for the municipal elections, “For Qatari women, being in the public eye is sometimes not a good idea. Because of patriarchal traditions, women searched for alternative methods to consider running for office and demand representation in senior posts and offices in government” (Personal interview, 26 April 2019). During the 2019 elections, only five women ran for office in comparison to 85 males. Sheikha al-Jafiri has represented the constituency since 2003, and Fatima al-Kuwari successfully retained the seat she had won in 2015 (“Mushārakatuhā Biltarashuh 3% Khilāl al-20 ‘Aman al-Māḍīa,” 2019).

In the 2021 Shura Council elections, not a single female candidate was able to win a seat (*BBC Arabic*, 2021), and this was attributed to several factors. To start with, the thirty electoral districts were drawn along tribal lines, which effectively meant that winners could only come from the tribe residing in a specific district. In a highly patriarchal context, and given the tense rivalry fuelling tribal sentiments, it would have been extremely difficult for tribes to accept the candidacy of women as their representatives. Secondly, voting was linked to the place of birth, which did not only favour tribes, but it also required candidates to travel extensively for campaigning, and this in itself created major obstacles to women who already found it difficult to be active in public spaces and to interact and debate with male strangers as this is traditionally unacceptable. Thirdly, the intense rivalry required significant financial and other resources and the involvement and mobilisation of tribes, clans and families to support their candidates at a time when women generally lack access to such substantial resources.

According to a Qatar University political scientist who preferred to remain anonymous, despite the ability of tribes to mobilise resources to gain a presence in the digital world, the state has been taking active measures to limit the rise of any form of social or political activism. In July 2019, for instance, a group of Qatari women were involved creating a controversial Twitter Account under the name Qatari Feminists (@QatarFem). The account published tweets advocating women’s rights, freedom and gender equality. The account was shut down by the authorities and the account owners were interrogated (The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 2019).

Three different narratives emerged after the Qatari Feminists account was shut down. Acording to Qatari women’s right activist who preferred to remain anonymous, that Qatari authorities shut down the account because the Qatari women’s rights activists criticised the state institutions, and any form of social and political activism is significantly prohibited in Qatar (personal interview, 1 June 2020). Others argued that such ideas were opposed by Qatari Twitter users, including tribal and Islamist members, namely ‘Abd Allah al-‘Athba, the editor chief of Al Arab Newspaper, who later took control of the account (“Qatar Accused of Silencing Women’s Rights Activists on Social Media,” 2020). Finally,

some argued that Qatari families were concerned about their daughters becoming influenced by feminist ideas, such as women's freedom and equality, which they believe represent a direct threat to their security, identity and family lives. This concern came after two Qatari activists, Ashia al-Qahtani and Noof al-Maadheed, escaped in the same year 2019 from their families, state restrictions and fled overseas to seek asylum ("Qatar Accused of Silencing Women's Rights Activists on Social Media," 2020).

Whatever the correct narrative, the authorities summoned the Qatari feminists involved in the Twitter account on the grounds of "provoking sedition," contacted their families and released them after they signed the written pledges ("Qatar Accused of Silencing Women's Rights Activists on Social Media," 2020). This demonstrates an emphasis on the need to control the image of women and to stress the protection of the integrity of the family, which is intrinsic to both the tribes and the actual state institutions.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the growing power and impact of tribal traditions and restrictions in Kuwait and Qatar. These restrictions, however, are challenged by the fact that women are gaining political and social rights, partly through education and partly through finding ways to express themselves and to seek more engagement and participation in society. Even when tribes have attempted to impose restrictions on women's political participation and social engagement, including on social media, women have been able to push back and assert their presence and rights. They partly do so by avoiding direct confrontation with the tribe and partly by using their tribal affiliation to build power or by taking advantage of the secret ballot during elections to vote for the candidates of their choice against the will of their father or husband.

However, when it comes to women's behaviour and appearance on social media, there are clear differences between the two countries. Women in Kuwait are more successful in asserting their presence, rights and voices in the political system in comparison with their Qatar counterparts. This may be attributed to the nature of Kuwaiti political system and the unstable relationship between the state and tribe following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, where political opposition has successfully expanded. Certainly, this has increased the opportunities of women in areas such as political participation, embracing social media for self-expression and provoking resistance to tribal and patriarchal norms. In Qatar, on the other hand, embracing tribalism intimately by the state since the mid-1990s has led to increased conservatism and restrictions through the prevalence of tribal traditions and values in society. As a result, women have faced increasing difficulties and challenges in asserting themselves both socially and politically.

Another difference between the two countries relates to Internet access and the use of social media. Kuwait is the top-ranking nation worldwide in Twitter users

per capita, and Twitter is used effectively by young and especially female political activists, to express political discontent and to question of societal norms. The situation is very different in Qatar, where social media functions within the limits allowed for public debate and restricted freedoms of speech; as a result, social media use is mostly social in nature and objectives. Therefore, the ability of women to gain exposure and engage freely with social media is restricted by the family, tribe and the state.

Chapter 7
Conclusion

7.1 Summary

The relationship between the state and the tribe in Arab Gulf countries has seen its share of ups and downs, especially in smaller countries such as Kuwait and Qatar. The aim of this book is to study the evolution of the tribe-state nexus and to identify the factors fuelling the sudden growth in the intensity of tribalism witnessed in the Arab Gulf region since the 1990s. The first part of the study, specifically Chaps. 2 and 3, discussed the central role of the tribe in the establishment of the state in Kuwait and Qatar, starting with the early stage of state formation, all the way up to independence, after the discovery of oil, which also witnessed a significant decline in the role and status of tribes. The second part, specifically Chaps. 4 and 5 discussed the reawakening of tribalism and the growing intensity of tribalism in Kuwait and Qatar since the 1990s, as well as the state policies and other factors that seem to have contributed to this change.

In the early stages of state formation, tribes played an important role in providing political support and legitimacy to the rulers, both in Kuwait and Qatar. In Kuwait, the Al Sabah were able to rise to prominence by forging tribal alliances through intermarriage, economic and business alliances, and political coalitions with other tribes. This enabled Al Sabah emirs to enjoy legitimacy and support from other tribes and to eventually accumulate political power. Tribalism, however, witnessed gradual decline as the tribal families within the city adopted a Hadhar way of life, transforming into what became the merchant class. The power of the rulers, however, remained in check, as a result of their financial dependence on the taxes levied from merchants. This became evident in the efforts of the merchants to expand their share of power and political participation in the form of a legislative council and municipal elections in the late 1930s. These efforts, however, were undermined following British involvement and the discovery of oil which ultimately emancipated the rulers from any dependence upon the merchant class.

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In Qatar, the rise of Al Thani rulers to power was similarly dependent on their ability to build coalitions and alliances with other local tribes and through intermarriage. The legitimacy and prestige of Al Thani rulers, furthermore, were reinforced as a result of their effective leadership during the period of insecurity and unrest, especially the period of wars in the region which often involved their Al Khalifa rivals in Bahrain and Al Saud rulers in Najd. Unlike their counterparts in Kuwait, however, the Al Thani were financially independent as they were deeply involved in trade and commerce. This is not to mention that they were also among the economically powerful tribes in the small peninsula. In addition to this, the merchant class in Qatar was severely fragmented, due to the devastating migrations that followed the collapse of pearling and the Great Depression in the 1930s. Hence, while the Al Thani were left in charge of a small economy surviving devastating economic conditions, this ultimately actually reinforced their political power and legitimacy in the pre-oil era.

The discovery of oil brought much needed economic relief and independence to the rulers of Kuwait and Qatar, but it also brought new unexpected challenges; the winds of Arab nationalism in particular undermined the monarchic model of government. In both countries, this period witnessed an emergence of political consciousness and a diminishing role of the tribe which was probably perceived at the time as an outdated form of social and political organisation. Nevertheless, this period also witnessed growing reliance by the rulers in both countries on migrating tribes from the wider region—for the purposes of security and political support. Many members of these tribes were naturalised and offered jobs in the budding public bureaucracies and in the security and army apparatuses. It must be noted that this period of political instability in the 1950s and 1960s also witnessed further erosion of tribalism among city dwellers and Hadhars, especially as tribalism was perceived as a characteristic of the supposedly less advanced Bedouins in the service of the ruling families. Thus, in Kuwait, the political landscape was divided into two major camps, one which included the merchant class and Bedouins who have adopted an urban lifestyle, and another which included the Bedouin tribes expressing political allegiance to the emir and the ruling family. In Qatar, political lines were far less distinct, especially given the weak merchant class, the limited urban population, and the prevalence of poverty. However, the rulers consistently considered the Bedouin tribes as their most trusted supporters.

Hence, tribalism, as a social and political force, was generally on the decline in Kuwait and Qatar between the 1920s and until the late 1960s, except among the Bedouin tribes that were encouraged to settle and were naturalised and offered jobs in the public sector and in the security and armed forces. Their role, therefore, was to safeguard the ruling families and to counter the growing political opposition among the merchant class and families.

The second section of the book discusses the reawakening of tribalism in Kuwait and Qatar after the 1970s and especially during the 1990s. In both countries, the welfare state had been successful in providing services and benefits that practically rendered the tribe almost irrelevant on the political and economic levels. In Qatar, this became particularly the case as citizens gained access to services and benefits

provided by the state immediately, without any intervention or involvement by tribal chiefs. By the 1970s and 1980s, tribalism had lost much of its appeal to many Qataris, even to the point that many even dropped their tribal names from their identity documents. It must be noted, however, that oil revenues played a substantial role in enabling the state to play such a role, but it also ultimately led to political stagnation as political diversity and opposition were almost non-existent.

In Kuwait, on the other hand, tribalism was reawakened as a result of political manipulation and intervention by the rulers to maintain control over elections and representation in the national legislature. In the 1960s, but more emphatically in the 1970s and 1980s, the state resorted to multiple strategies in its efforts to prevent the rise of a substantial opposition in parliament, whether by suspending the Constitution and the parliament, or by manipulating electoral laws to prevent members of the opposition from winning parliamentary seats. The state also attempted to tailor electoral laws to guarantee the representation of tribal candidates who supported the ruler and to punish others who opposed him. However, this eventually led to igniting the rise of tribal identities and rivalries whose outcomes were not always controllable by the state. In addition to this, as tribalism became an attractive mechanism to mobilise voters and supporters on the basis of infra-national identities, this encouraged a reawakening of the phenomenon, even among the Hadhar merchants who had once looked down at tribalism as outdated and primitive.

Despite the different political landscapes in Kuwait and Qatar at the end of the 1980s, both countries faced new and unprecedented challenges following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Although Qatar was not directly affected by the invasion, the ruling family suddenly came face to face with new political realities and fears about political uncertainty and the shifting tides of regional politics. This concern became even more entrenched following the failed coup attempt that Saudi Arabia was accused of orchestrating in 1995 with the help of Qatari tribes that had extended kinship in Saudi Arabia. This resulted in a shift from a nation-building strategy in which tribalism was discouraged and despised, to one in which tribes were elevated and glorified. Tribal identities were also encouraged and the celebration of tribal differences and rivalries gradually started to dominate both political and social activities and manifestations. Instead of rallying around unifying symbols and institutions, citizens started to rediscover and revive the symbols of their tribal identities, as illustrated by the insistence on registering their tribal names in their identity records. Even municipal elections became an opportunity to boast tribal identity, power, status and prestige.

Kuwait, on the other hand, was in a complete state of chaos following its liberation. While the liberation reinforced the status of the ruling family as a symbol of national unity, the political scene was completely fragmented as Kuwaitis were divided between Islamist and tribal entities, both which remained informal since political parties were not allowed. Additionally, the loyalty of the tribes to the emir was no longer guaranteed as these tribes started to pursue new interests such as representation and self-preservation in the system. This led the ruling family to manipulate electoral laws and to engage in gerrymandering, in an attempt to boost the opportunities of its supporters and undermine its opponents. This, however, resulted in fuelling

tribalism to the point that elections became more of a showdown between rivalrous tribes rather than an attempt to elect representatives who would engage in legislation and in representing the interests of their constituencies. Not surprisingly, this led to a dangerous rise in nepotism and favouritism as each parliament member and civil servant became a representative of his or her tribe rather than of the national interest. More importantly, this eventually led to a chronic state of political paralysis and high tensions between a parliament dominated by tribes and a government dominated by the ruling family and its allies.

In both Kuwait and Qatar, therefore, the renewed intensity of tribalism and the re-emergence of the tribe as a central component in identity politics were the result of state policies engineered by the ruling families. In part, this was a divide-and-conquer policy through which rulers assumed that they could rely on the loyalty and support of the tribes in the face of opposition forces. In Qatar, this was an unnecessary policy since the ruling family did not face any real threat to its legitimacy and power. To the contrary, by reigniting tribal identities and tribalism, these policies undermined national unity and encouraged tribes to pursue identity politics as a means to improve their status, influence and access in the system. In some cases, it may have also encouraged tribes with regional extensions and connections to be influenced by foreign and regional powers, as it was the case with members of al Gufran clan from al-Murra tribe whose presence extends both in Qatar and Saudi Arabia—first in 1995, and again in 2017.

In Kuwait, the policy of divide-and-conquer was intended to attain short-term gains such as winning elections or blocking the opposition from achieving an electoral victory, but it eventually resulted in undermining political stability. It also spilled over into the social arena where social divisions are increasingly seen along tribal lines. This is not to mention that tribalism may have become a major factor contributing to corruption and nepotism in the state, further complicating any efforts to introduce economic reforms and improved governance. Ironically, the state probably saw tribes as a much more benign and harmless alternative to political parties, but as it turns out, tribal politics and rivalries have proven to be far more divisive, toxic and detrimental on the political, economic and social levels.

In fact, the reawakened intensity of tribalism in Kuwait and Qatar has not only contributed to divisiveness and weakened national identities, but it has also exposed the two countries to external regional influences, specifically from Saudi Arabia. In part, this is attributed to the fact that many of the tribes in both countries have extended kinships within Saudi Arabia. Consequently, this gives the Saudi government significant leverage to interfere in the domestic affairs of its neighbours by influencing the demands and behaviours of tribal elements, thus weakening the political independence and the sovereignty of these states, and possibly threatening their stability.

On the economic and social levels, the reawakened intensity of tribalism may carry a set of threats and issues in Kuwait and Qatar. In both countries, for example, there has been a significant renewal of the tradition of tribal intermarriages whereby marriages are limited between tribe members or with members of other tribes for the purpose of social ascendance. While such a phenomenon is celebrated by many

as a revival of a benign tradition that was on the verge of extinction, it in fact represents a serious encroachment on individual liberties, particularly the liberties of women, especially as the practice grants men and tribe members a bigger say in the marriage choices of women. This is not to mention that, as this practice becomes more entrenched, it may contribute to social segregation and more serious divisions within society in the name of kinship.

On the socioeconomic level, the most visible outcome of intense tribalism is seen in the decline efficiency of the public sector and the diversion of resources on the basis of tribal affiliation, thus undermining the principles of equality of all citizens. In Qatar, this problem is still seen on a very limited scale, but it is likely to worsen as tribal affiliation becomes a bigger driver of the attitudes and behaviours of civil servants. In Kuwait, this problem has reached dangerous levels, as many bureaucrats have become akin to tribal representatives within the state, channelling resources and services in areas such as education, healthcare, and employment to members of their tribes or at the request of parliament members who represent their tribes. Ironically, such practices seem to have been encouraged by the state as a means to appease and reward the tribes to gain their loyalty, only to become a major burden for the state and its ability to function adequately.

In conclusion, the current reawakening of intense tribalism is the result of state policies and interventions that were aimed at maintaining political control, safeguarding ruling families against growing opposition, and probably avoiding any need to recognise political parties. While such a strategy may have worked for limited periods, it eventually backfired and created new sets of challenges to the legitimacy of the state and to its ability to function. In Qatar, new policies after the blockade of 2017 seem to aim at curbing the rise of tribalism and at focusing on national unity rather than tribal identities. For example, National Day celebrations are no longer an opportunity for tribes to boast their identities and express their distinction from one another, which implies that the state has started to reverse its course on the use of tribalism as a political strategy. However, this was not the case in 2021, where the government reawakening tribal distinction at Shura Council first election, nor was it seen in 2023 with the seventh municipal elections in which the district lines enabled the tribes to dictate their candidates and to control the outcomes of the elections. In Kuwait, however, the state seems to be unable to make such a step, especially as the tribes continue to see the current system as an opportunity for attaining more gains at the expense of each other. At the same time, the rulers of Kuwait probably fear that ending the role of tribes as political vehicles of representation would force the need to legitimise the formation of political parties, which in turn could lead to a more democratic system in which the ruling family could end up giving more political concessions.

Based on the experiences of Kuwait and Qatar, it can be said that tribes are not appropriate structures for political representation and participation. To the contrary, they promote identity politics which tend to be exclusionary rather than inclusionary and which also promote dangerous forms of unstable populism rather than reflecting real political representation. Tribes, however, cannot be blamed for the inflammatory role they have been playing in Arab Gulf countries. Rather, it is the states that have

imposed this role on tribes, whether by encouraging tribes to augment their presence and rivalries as Qatar did, or by transforming them into pseudo-political parties to represent the political identities of constituents. In either case, it was the state and its citizens that ended up suffering the consequences and paying for the losses.

7.2 Limitations and Challenges

Despite its ambitious objectives, this book suffers a number of limitations. Most notably, its main weakness is that it focuses solely on Qatar and Kuwait. While this approach generates useful insights, its outcomes cannot necessarily be generalised to other GCC states. Secondly, while this book has focused on the development of the political and sociological dimensions of state and society, it did not probe the political economic dimension which is a major factor in the understanding of the political systems in the GCC.

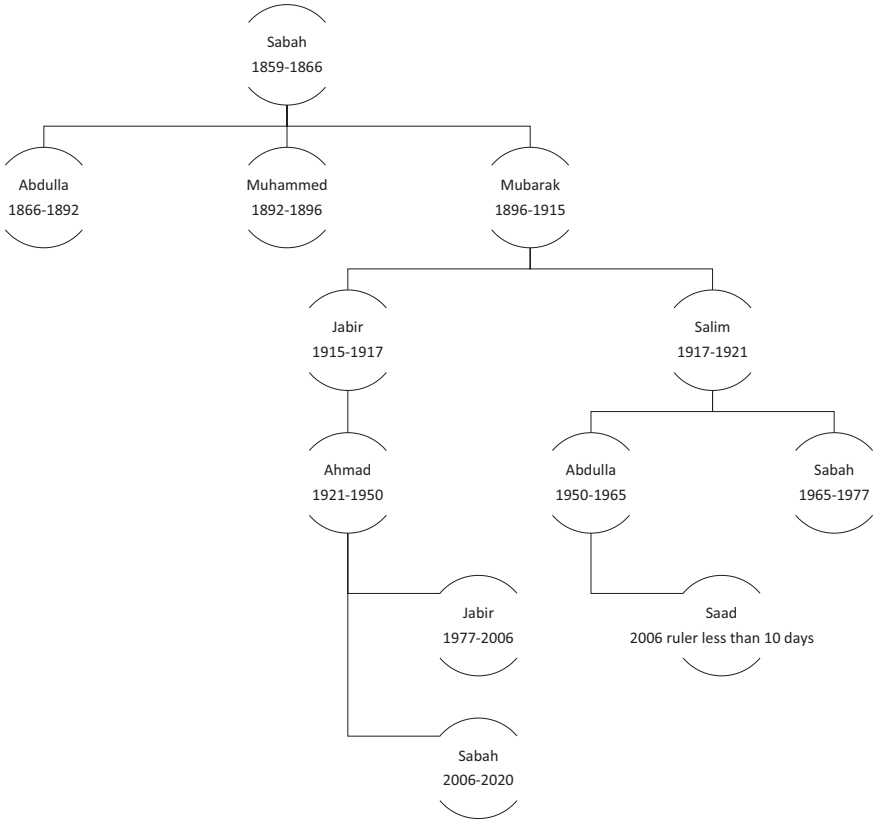
7.3 Contribution to the Literature

A substantial body of literature exists on the genesis of the state in the Arab Gulf, the role of the tribe in state formation and the relationship between the state and the tribe. Moreover, numerous studies have reflected on the decline of the tribe and tribalism as a result of nation and state-building processes in the Arab Gulf. This study, however, adds a number of important contributions to the comparative literature on the relationship between state and society in the tribal context of the GCC. First, it underscores the reawakening of tribalism and the relevance of the tribe as a social and political actor in Kuwait and Qatar since the 1990s. While the reawakening of tribalism and its increased intensity has been identified, this study is the first to trace the political and social roots of this reawaken, and more importantly, to shed light on the extent to which the state played a role in this reawaken.

In fact, the most important contribution of this study is to critically study the attempts by which the state has attempted to exploit and manipulate tribes and tribalism to achieve goals such as the consolidation of power, undermining any potential opposition, and maintaining the political stability of the system. The study, however, also shows that these manipulative policies eventually backfired. First, they backfired socially by reawakening and reinforcing the tribe as a powerful social actor and reference in society, contributing to deeper social and cultural divisions within Kuwait and Qatar. Secondly, these policies backfired by transforming the tribe into a potential political actor as the case was in Qatar, or into an actual and significant political actor as in Kuwait. The reawaken and transformation of the political role of the tribe, the study shows, may also be attributed to undermining national unity and the stability and legitimacy of the state and contributing to the intensity of social and political divisions.

Finally, I hope to extend this work to further discussion and research questions on how reawaken of tribalism deals with, and adapts to, the socioeconomic implications that Kuwait and Qatar face, such as emerging of corruption, growing nepotism, volatility of oil prices, youth bulge and the inability of the state to continue financing the needs of the rent system, particularly high salaried jobs for new generations when latent unemployment is already very high. These factors could weaken, or reinforce, the intensity of tribalism.

Appendix A: Kuwait Rulers' Tree from 1800s Until 2020



Source Crystal, J. (1990). *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar*. (p. xiii). Cambridge University Press.

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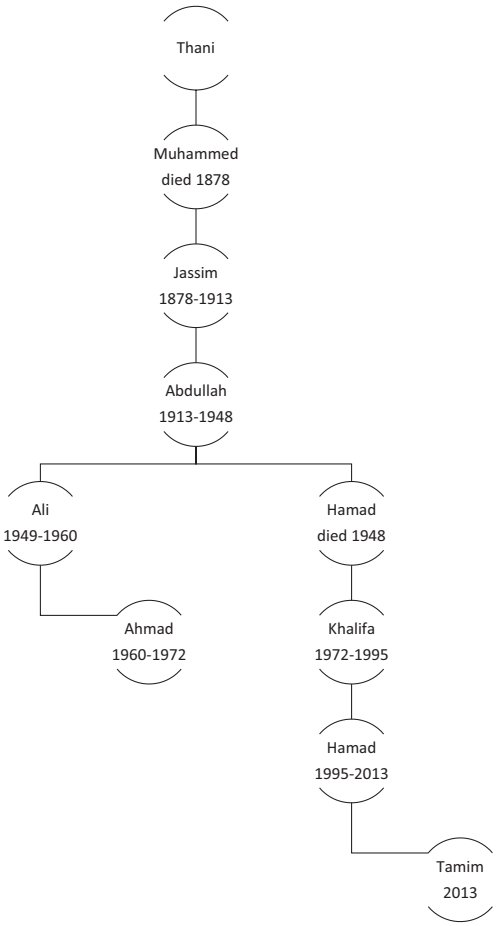
Appendix B: Qatar Rulers' Tree from 1800s Until 2013



Source Crystal, J. (1990). *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar*. (p. xiv). Cambridge University Press.

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Appendix C: Tribal Map of Arabia

East India Company, the Board of Control, the India Office, or other British Government Department. (1916). *Map 4. Tribal Map of Arabia (1/2)* [733]. Handbook of Arabia. Vol. I. 1917. Qatar Digital Library (IOR/L/PS/20/E84/1). Retrieved December 8, 2020, from https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100037114038.0x000095.

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Appendix D

List of members who participated in the National Union Front and the 1963 Demonstration.

Family/Tribal affiliation	Name of the member
Shammar	Ḥusīn Muḥamid al-‘Ujail
Al-Mālikī (al-Malki)	’Ibrāhīm Rāshid al-Mālikī
Al-Murīkhī (al-Muraikhi)	Ḥāmād bin ṣaqr al-Murīkhī Khalaf bin Sulṭan al-Murīkhī ẓāhir bin Sulṭān al-Murīkhī
Al-Ni‘ma (al-Naama)	‘Abdu Al-‘Azīz ḥusīn al-Ni‘ma
Al-Nāṣir (al-Nasser)	‘Abdu Al-Karīm al-Nāṣir
Al-‘āmirī (al-‘Ameri)	Rāshid al-‘āmirī
Al-Bākir (al-Baker)	’Ibrāhīm al-Bākir
Al-Manāniʿa (al-Mannana)	‘Isā bin ‘alī al-Manā‘ī ‘Alī bin Muḥamid al-Manā‘ī ‘Abdu Al-Raḥman bin ‘Isā al-Manā‘ī Ḥasan al-Manā‘ī Muḥamid bin Salmān al-Manā‘ī
Al-Dūsarī (al-Dosari)	‘Abdu Al-‘Azīz Muḥamid Bū Zūar
Al-Haidūs (al-Haydos)	’Ismā‘īl al-Haidūs
Al-Hatmī (al-Hitmi)	Hatmī ’Aḥmad al-Hatmī Mubārak bin Hatmī al-Hatmī
Al-Jaida (al-Jaida)	Jāsim al-Jaida Muḥamid Yūsuf al-Jaida
Al-Khalīfī (al-Khalifi)	‘Isā bin ‘Alī al-Khalīfī Ḥamad bin Khalīfa al-Khalīfī
Al-Khāṭir (al-Khater)	‘Abdu Al-‘Azīz al-Khāṭir ‘Abdu Al-‘Azīz bin ‘Abdu Allah al-Khāṭir ‘Alī bin Yūsuf al-Khāṭir
Al-kubīsī (al-Kubaisi)	Sālim bin Khalīfa al-Kubīsī Muḥamid bin Sa‘d al-Kubīsī Khalīfa bin Ghānim al-Kubīsī ‘Abdu Al-Raḥman al-Kubīsī ‘Abdu Allah bin Jum‘a al-Kubīsī

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Family/Tribal affiliation	Name of the member
Al-Kūārī (al-Kuwari)	Sa'id bin Rabī'a al-Kūārī Khalīfa bin Muḥamid al-Kūārī Jabr bin Sulṭān Tawār al-Kūārī 'Isā Al-Kūārī Jāsim bin 'Alī al-Kūārī Mājid bin Sa'd Al-Sa'd al-Kūārī Sa'd bin Sāliḥ al-Kūārī Sulṭān Muḥamid al-Kūārī Sa'id bin Ghānim al-Kūārī Sāliḥ Muḥamid Hāmza al-Kūārī 'Aḥmad bin 'Alī bin 'imrān al-Kūārī 'Abdu Al-'Azīz 'Alī bin 'Imrān al-Kūārī
Al-Linghāwī (al-Lingawi)	Khalaf bin Muḥamid Al-Linghāwī
Al-Muhānida (al-Muhannda)	'Aḥmad Muḥamid al-Muhannadī 'Aḥmad bin 'Alī al-Muhannadī Khalil bin 'Ibrāhīm al-Muhannadī Himīd bin Rabī'a al-Muhannadī 'Alī bin Hasan al-Muhannadī Yūsuf bin Rāshid al-Muhannadī Sa'd bin Musnad al-Muhannadī Fāris bin 'Abdu Allah al-bin'alī Nāṣir bin 'Abdu Allah al-Musnad 'Aḥmad bin 'Abdu Allah al-Musnad
Al-Na'īm (al-Naimi)	Fīṣal Jabr al-Na'īmī Khamīs bin Faḍl al-Na'īmī Rāshid bin Huṣīn al-Na'īmī
Al-Nāṣr (al-Nasr)	Nāṣir Mubārak al-Nāṣr 'Abdu Allah 'Isā al-Nāṣr
Al-'Ubaidalī (al-'Ubaidly)	Muḥamid al-'Ubaidalī
Al-Sahlāwī (al-Sahlawi)	Rāshid al-Sahlāwī Rāshid Ghānim al-Sahlāwī
Al-Subī'ī (al-Suba'ie)	Turkī bin 'Abdu Allah bin Turkī al-Subī'ī
Al-Sulīṭī (al-Sulaiti)	'Aḥmad bin Sāliḥ al-Sulīṭī Maḥmūd bin Sāliḥ al-Sulīṭī Ḥusīn Mājid al-Sulīṭī
Fakhrū (Fakhroo)	'Aḥmad Nāṣir 'Ubaidān 'Aḥmad bin 'Abdu al-Raḥman 'Ubaidān 'Abdu Allah 'Ubaidān
Al-Ma'āḍīd (al-Maadheed)	Jāsim Muḥamid al-Bādī Muḥamid bin Khālid al-Rubbān 'Ibrāhīm al-'Usīrī
Mīkānīk (Mikanik)	'Abdu Allah Yūsuf Mīkānīk
Al-Sūdān (al-Sudan)	Khalīfa bin Khālid al-Sūydī Sālimīn bin Khālid al-Sūydī 'Alī bin Khalfān al-Sūydī Ghānim bin 'Alī al-Sūydī 'Aḥmad bin Muḥamid al-Sūydī 'Abdu Allah bin 'Alī al-Sūydī 'Abdu Al-'Azīz Muḥamid al-Sūydī

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Appendix E: Key Arabic Words

Qabila	Tribes
Ashiras	Clans
Asl	Origin
Dawla	State

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Anonymous. (2017, October 24). Female from the Hadhar family and senior student at Kuwait University.
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Anonymous. (2017, December 24). Male member of the prominent Al-Hajri Bedouin tribe in Qatar.
Anonymous. (2018, December 16). Man from the al-Bukuwari tribe in Qatar.
Anonymous. (2018, December 17) Old Qatari man from the al-Hitmi family.
Anonymous. (2018, December 24). A 30-year-old female from the Hadhar family and a Qatar University Alumni.
Anonymous. (2018, December 24). A 33-year-old female and member of a Bedouin tribe in Qatar.
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