RESEARCH PAPER

Reviving the Local Dialect in Qatar: An Issue of Linguistic Concern or Identity Politics?

Hessa Hamad Khalifa Al-Attiyah | May 2013

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Abstract

Historically, Qataris have strived for autonomy and independence, and have always sought to define themselves apart from others. This has dictated a specifically defined identity in which language stands at the core of identity formation. In the process of constructing a national identity, Qataris realized that a revival of the Arabic language, following a decline in its use, needed to stress the use of *Nabati,* a local Qatari dialect that is closely linked to Qatar's historical identity, and the tribal structure that preceded state formation. Alongside a linguistic revival in Qatar, came a rebirth of national history that paved the way for the construction of national discourse. The Qatari dialect being revived forms part of the current state ideology, which sees the language's revival as a critical step in state building. Differentiation, even from the closest neighbors, is an essential component in Qatar's state ideology, which supports the nations desire to build an independent Qatari identity within its borders.

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Introduction

In Qatar, identity-formation is taking place extensively at different levels—from primary schools, to universities, to places of work, and across the country via the media and different events. Significantly, the focus is not just on reviving the Arabic language itself, but on reviving the dynamics of Arabic by creating realities through words, and learning the different use of words in Arabic. Language is, after all, not just about speaking, but about knowing where and how it is used—this is what defines the power of language. Indeed, the strongest indicator of the power of language is in its application. For example, in order to use it as a scientific language, one needs to understand it as a language of thought and critical analysis. The more people apply language in everyday life, whether socially or professionally, the more powerful it becomes. Likewise, the more individuals feel dependent on a specific language, the more powerful and central it becomes. By understanding how language empowers people, one can begin to understand how the revival of nationalism and national history is taking place in Qatar.

This paper seeks to trace the different methods of revival and their successes, as well as identify earlier indicators of a language in crisis that are linked to an increased use of English and its long- and short-term impacts on the national language. When analyzing the progression of the language's revival and the different changes that took place, especially how they influenced Qatar's society, the following questions are key: how did the dominance of the English language impact the culture, local society, and its members? What was the role of educational and professional institutions in this context? How do individuals define themselves when a language crisis occurs, and how are they defined by others within, or outside, their society? How does language impact the power structure and the structure of local society? Finally, what will change when revitalization takes place?

Theoretically, the paper utilizes Pierre Bourdieu and Peter Gran's hypotheses to analyze the Qatari context. Bourdieu's s *Language and Symbolic Power* will provide the basis of the theories advanced with some areas of his theory on language looked at more specifically, such as those regarding linguistic production and circulation, modes of expression, linguistic exchange and symbolic power, and linguistic exchange as a sign of wealth and authority.[1] Peter Gran's *The Rise of the Rich: A New View of Modern*

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[1] Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, (USA: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 35.

World History is useful in that it suggests that today's world is shaped by a specific Eurocentric narrative that also impacts one's understanding of the world, and that the language associated with it by default becomes dominant.[2] He also suggests that history empowers individuals; therefore, a Eurocentric narrative implies that Europeans view themselves as dominant while others remain marginalized because they feel that they lack a history.[3] The way history is written, therefore, reflects power relations. To revive the local language means to revive the local history; in Qatar, the initial focus was on reviving the classic Arabic language. Over the years, this revival began to include the local Qatari dialect, a process that has been accompanied by the construction of a historical narrative that was part of nation-state building.

Gran holds that for the current Eurocentric paradigm to change a crisis is required, which is precisely what has happened in Qatar.[4] The local dialect and the classical Arabic language were in crisis following a decline in their use and in the people's ability to express meaning. More specifically, the crisis became political because tribal dissatisfaction increased as the youth communicated in a foreign language: English. The government realized the gravity of this predicament, particularly considering that those born in the 1980s and 1990s will be the country's future leaders and managers. The state was, and continues to be, sensitive about its language crisis, and has sought to address this problem since language is strongly tied to the government's aim of building a solid national identity. The building of a state and the formation of identity ultimately necessitated the strengthening of the Arabic language.

The 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s encompassed a new experience for Qatar, one that saw it rapidly opening up to other cultures and slowly shifting away from its tribal structure. This was not anticipated, but something that automatically occurred with the discovery of oil and the collision with other cultures. The country gradually witnessed the impact of identity loss on the younger generations. Their knowledge about historical identity became weak, which is one explanation of why the revival process began to increase in the recent past. A consequence of this opening up process has been the increased use of the English language, which occurred at the expense of Arabic, something that is clearly apparent in the younger generations. Additionally, this began occurring largely due to the Americanization process that stared to grow significantly.

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[2] Gran, *The Rise of the Rich*, p. XI.
[3] Ibid., p. XII.
[4] Ibid., p. XX.

Perhaps the first question to ask, then, is: how can the existence of a language crisis be identified and defined? In Qatar, the revival of the Arabic language was necessary for many reasons, the most important being that a national identity cannot possibly be formed without having a strong national language and with it a national history.

Durkheim's analysis in *The Rules of Sociological Method and Selected Texts on Sociology and its Method* on how education is used to create a specific citizen proves useful here, as does his definition of society.[5] James Scott's *Seeing Like a State* on developing a standard official language for the state is also important.[6] Undeniably, Qatar's aim for international recognition has been growing over the last few years; parallel to this is its drive to develop its own national identity with its own national history and dialect. Politically, this would allow Qatar to distinguish itself from its neighbors, and strengthen nationalism and bonding among Qataris. With a strong, tightly-bound state, the government can reflect a strong image of an independent and sovereign state. Once the basis is set in terms of nationalism, language, and history, Qatar can then progress and enter the international arena with a distinct identity. One concrete example is Qatar's increasing involvement in sports, nationally, regionally, and internationally.

The language of sports is a unique and crucial aspect to highlight in respect to Qatar's revitalization of Arabic. An analysis of the language used when Qatar hosted the Asian Games is, therefore, fitting. Building a sports culture has its place in the revival process, and, simultaneously, in Qatar's aim for international recognition. For the Asian Games, five characters were created as mascots by a local Qatari.[7] These were all mice and represented the *jarbo*, a specific kind of mouse very well known for its speed that is endemic to Qatar and the Gulf. The five mascots represented different areas in Qatar's north, south, east, and west. This choice of mascots symbolizes a revival process because it is bringing back traditional words that were used in the local dialect. The older generation were familiar with the names and the descriptions associated with them, but, unsurprisingly, this was not the case with the younger generations; those born in the 1980s and 1990s found it challenging to understand the words and their meanings.

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[5] Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, p. 54.
[6] Scott, *Seeing like a State*, p. 72.
[7] Al-Gharbawi, "Revealing the Asian Cup Spell".

A close look at the language used in Qatar's advertising campaign in their bid for the FIFA World Cup in 2022, including its wording, symbols, images, and other elements used, is key to understanding how Qatar perceives itself. Arabic national symbols and words are pervasive on the signs, advertisements, and merchandise, so that viewers are able to understand and absorb the specific "national" image being created. At this point, a pertinent question central to this analysis is: what is this national image and why does Qatar want both the locals and the foreigners to understand it?

In its approach, the state ensures that the national image permeates different areas. The notion of nationalism is worth scrutinizing and proves central in understanding Qatar's development of national identity and its future vision. The use of language is here key and the revival of language brings about the revival of culture and, thus, the revival of national identity. It is not a sequence as much as it is an interconnected set of elements, each being necessary and vital for the progression and development of the other.

Despite specifically focusing on the revival of the local Qatari dialect, this analysis also acknowledges the significance of similar efforts at reviving classical Arabic. In fact, a lot of work has been done in this area, particularly in the education sector. The most prevalent example is the government's legally requiring classical Arabic to be the language of instruction at Qatar University for most courses. However, for the purpose this paper, the focus is on the creation of national identity through the revival of the local Qatari dialect.

These different methods have been adopted by the state of Qatar with the sole aim of shaping identity. In addition to the general symbolism embodied in stamps, the national anthem, the flag, and other items, Qatari media has also played a crucial role in this regards, as seen in the emergence of old national songs that were forgotten over time. Many of the national songs that were prevalent in the 1970s are now being played repeatedly on Qatari radio stations and television channels. For example, the song "Qatar, You are My Life" (*Allah ya Umri Qatar*) is nationalistic and addresses Qatar poetically. In its attempt to create nationalism and cement state identity, no other event equals Qatar's National Day, which began in 2008 and takes place every year on December 18. Qatar's national day replaced Independence Day, which was previously held yearly on September 3 and marked the end of British involvement. Qatar was not

under direct British imperial conquest, and was not really colonized in the direct sense of the word. Rather, it fell under British "protection" which meant they overlooked certain aspects of the country.

With every national day comes new additions that shape Qatar's national identity. In fact, many of the day's events and components existed in the past but were forgotten, overlooked, or labeled as unimportant and unnecessary. Once the state began to revive its identity, distinctive "national" elements gained momentum. Their power was not realized, however, until the process of national identity formation occurred, especially in terms of local history, culture, and society. For instance, national day focuses on and highlights the importance of national symbols, such as the life of Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed—the founder of the State of Qatar—whose life is presented as the day's central focus. His national accomplishments and how the State of Qatar was brought into existence are highlighted as part of the nation's history and constitute the basis for Qatar's national history. The Qatar National Day channel (*Qanat al-Yawm al-Watani*) was created to cover all the events and aims of national day, and typically starts airing on December 11 and continues for approximately a week after the national day.

Qatar's National Day includes events such as poetry, traditional sword dancing, cultural TV shows, camel races, horse races, and many other associated events, which not only represent government efforts, but also those of local individuals. For instance, a Qatari female broadcasted a message on Blackberry on December 1, 2010, detailing a national day mini-project that she came up with—Qatar National Day shirts. This demonstrates that though the government initially conducted the efforts for national day, Qatari citizens have taken to support the national identity and the overall movement toward Qatari nationalism.

Such events prompt an interest in analyzing the different ways in which language is used and constructed to create a specific image. How are the words used and represented in each of these events? How will viewers understand them? What if they do not have enough background information? What would assist their understanding? What if they understand it differently? Undeniably, the older generations in Qatar have different interpretations when compared to the younger generation. One needs to ask whether or not they should all have the same interpretations, and what problems occur if the interpretations differ. Would the sense of belonging to a nation with a specifically outlined national identity be reached in the end? Can individuals from different age

groups agree on one overall national image? The state's approach is a key factor in this regard.

Qatar has adopted an innovative approach concerning language; it is developing a hegemonic national Arabic dialect that is not classical. At the same time, a colloquial new language is developing among the younger generations. These two processes are taking place as a third language. An E-language is being used across the different modes of communication, such as the internet (email, messenger, blogs, and even websites), mobile phones, and blackberries (text messaging). As the E-language gains strength, it becomes even more widespread through the media. The majority of the E-language users are younger and the most affected by the language crisis. From *Parallels and Paradoxes*, Edward Said makes a powerful statement: "… identity is a set of currents, flowing currents, rather than a fixed place or a stable set of objects."[8] He states that the change in language itself reflects this flowing current. It applies to the way this generation has lived their lives, especially in their social use of Arabic and their educational use of English. In this scenario, a fusion of languages and cultures has occurred, which would explain the changes in language and identity. For example, the new language developed by Qatar's youth uses English letters and numbers to represent the Arabic language. One must ask if there are implications to using such a language, as well as whether this development should be viewed positively or negatively. The older generation disapproves of it because they see it as not being a part of their local identity. One might wonder whether this language could be reverted. Or has it become part of the identity of the youth? This E-language mirrors the globalizing factor of language. It transcends national borders and is an anti-systemic and hegemonic language.

Another central aspect for analysis is Qatar's oral history. The historical narrative *Glimpses from the History of Qatar*[9] by Sheikh Mohammed bin Ahmed Al-Thani is one example that confirms orality as the central method for constructing history in Qatar. Oral culture is central in Qatari society and thus forms the basis of national history, and illustrates how Qatari individuals and tribes have always striven for autonomy. Even before state formation, Qataris strove for independence; this holds true today in the current approach by the state of Qatar, one that aims to become internationally recognized with its own distinct Qatari identity.

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[8] Barenboim and Said, *Parallels and Paradoxes*, p. 5.
[9] Al-Thani, *op. cit.*

This study's main focus is on the methods used in reviving the Arabic language in Qatar, and how this signified a revival of the local Qatari dialect in the many areas of the state, overriding the importance of classical Arabic, which was mostly restricted to the realm of education. A revival of the Qatari dialect brought about other revitalization methods for national history. This study provides an explanation of how each of these elements combined to form the basis for Qatari nationalism.

This issue can also be approached from three stages of development: pre state formation, during state formation, and post state formation; different uses of Arabic are attached to each time period. Before state formation, around the late 1800s, the local Qatari dialect was linked to tribalism and tribal identity. This has been revived after the state was formed to define the Qatari identity and outline the state's national discourse. During this time period, I hypothesize that there is a new view of tribalism in which the tribal structure in Qatar and the Gulf is not linear; instead, it is fluid and complex. The second stage is during state and identity formation, when classical Arabic was introduced. This was a period when Qatar shifted its focus to education and the nation's identity with the Arab world. During the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, Qataris underwent a new experience with the discovery of oil as they opened up to other cultures, gradually moving away from the tribal identity associated with their history. As a result, the later generations lacked knowledge about their historical identity, providing one explanation for the revival process that is taking place today.

As the state solidified, the Qatari dialect was re-emphasized as a significant factor in Qatar's historical identity. The English language was introduced as an important language, and the use of classical Arabic declined. Alongside these language movements, the local Qatari dialect was revived because of the power of society; the Qataris wanted to keep their own dialect. This, in turn, also defines identity because this language is linked to tribal identity as well. One should highlight that the Qatari dialect is *Nabati*, a derivative of classical Arabic shaped by the local context. The revival of this dialect has increased significantly over the last six years. It came about as a reaction to the increasing use of English, which has impacted Qatari identity. To this end, it is important to investigate what this specific Qatari identity that the state is currently trying to revive and shape entails.

A New Hypothesis of Tribalism

History begins at home, which is how I personally started to learn about my family and my nation's history. The creation of a historical narrative in Qatar is initiated in the home by the family. It starts from within the family unit and moves through to the extended family. Specific historical events are retold and passed from one generation to another as members of the family retell these stories and show the younger generations how their ancestors played a part in their nation's history. Oral history is critical in Qatar today because it stands at the core of history's creation and the present day's national sentiments and perspectives. The importance of orality is so central it simply cannot be overlooked. If oral history were to be disregarded, we would have no history at all—it stands at the heart of our national history.

"Sons of the two martyrs" (*Abna al-Shahidayn*) was one of the first phrases that brought my attention towards my family history, and then to Qatar's history at large. It refers to the line of descent that my grandfather, Ali, and his siblings, Khalifa, Mohammed, Hamad, Khalid, and Nasser belong to. His father and grandfather were killed during the War of Al-Zubara (1937) and the Battle of Al-Wajba, which is also called "War of the Turks" in the 1890s. During the latter of these two, Abdulla bin Ali Al-Attiyah, my great-great-grandfather, was martyred at sea; he was with a group that went with Sheikh Ahmed bin Mohammed to negotiate with the Turks, subsequently they were held captive; he opposed and was martyred. His son, Abdulla bin Abdulla Al-Attiyah, was martyred during the Second War of Al-Zubara, and his son, Hamad, was killed during the Arab nationalist movement in Qatar in the 1950s. As one can see, the concept of a martyr is well-known within our family, and has consistently been a source of pride. For this reason, their stories are continuously circulating and retold.

Throughout our childhood, we were told about the initial stages of nation building in Qatar and how our family first entered the area. Important to this narrative is the explanation of "Sons of Al-Nfaii Alliance" (*Hilf Awlad al-Nfaii*), also well-known in the Qatari dialect as *Alaad Nfaii*, referring to an alliance between seven Qatari tribes: Al-Maadid, Al-Suwaidi, Al-Attiyah, Al-Kuwari, Al-Malki, and Al-Muhannadi. The main reason for naming them as such was recounted by Sheikh Mohammed bin Ahmed Al-Thani in his book *Glimpses from the History of Qatar: Narrated by the late Sheikh Mohammed bin Ahmed Al-Thani,* in which he gives a personal account of Qatar's history. In order to stress the oral tradition of Qatar, he orally narrated the book, which was then written and compiled by Sheikh Nasser bin Ali bin Ahmed Al-Thani in 2006.

The narrated period of Qatar's history was a response to several inquiries from Sheikh Abdulla bin Jassim Al-Thani, ruler of Qatar from 1913 to 1956.[10] In the book, Sheikh Mohammed states that he was repeatedly questioned about historic events, and that he knew those making the enquiries were sent by Sheikh Abdulla bin Jassim.[11] He was aware that Sheikh Abdulla bin Jassim knew the history well, and swore to God to tell everything he knew about the history of Qatar, whether it was for or against Qataris, regardless of any bias or offence to individuals.[12] He vowed to tell the events exactly as he heard them from those who took part in, or otherwise experienced, these events.[13] Though Sheikh Mohammed knew all these historical facts, and orally re-counted them, they were never recorded until this book was published.

The language used in *Glimpses from the History of Qatar* is a combination of classical Arabic and the local Qatari dialect.[14] In the introduction, Sheikh Nasser Al-Thani, the book's compiler, states that the oral stories told by Sheikh Mohammed were in the local dialect.[15] Being aware that this might be difficult for some to understand, he translated most of it to classical Arabic,[16] though some parts remain in the local dialect, particularly quotes, sayings, and poetry verses.

In reference to the Al-Nfaii alliance, Sheikh Mohammed states that it included men from specific tribes who married the daughters and sisters of Mohammed bin Saad Al-Nfaii, who is from the Utub tribe and had five daughters and two sisters.[17] His lineage is as follows:

1. Rouda bint Mohammed Al-Nfaii married Thamer bin Ali Al-Maadid, who Sheikh Mohammed says is their grandfather, and had a son named Mohammed; Thamer then passed away and she married his brother Ahmed and had a son named Salman.
2. Muneera bint Mohammed Al-Nfaii married Sultan bin Nasser Al-Suwaidi and had a son, Sultan, who is the grandfather of Salmin bin Nasser bin Sultan.

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[10] Sinan, *The General History of Qatar*, p. 35.
[11] Ibid., p. 35.
[12] Ibid., p. 36.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid., p. 17.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Al-Thani, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

3. Moza bint Mohammed Al-Nfaii married Amr bin Attiyah, who is the grandfather of Al-Attiyah, and had a son Ali, who is the grandfather of Abdulla bin Ali bin Abdulla bin Ali bin Amr Al-Attiyah.
4. Kaltham bint Mohammed Al-Nfaii married Rashid bin Shahin Al-Kuwari and had a son Nasser, who is the grandfather of "Towar Nasser" bin Shahin bin Nasser bin Rashid bin Shahin.
5. Metha bint Mohammed Al-Nfaii married Abdulla bin Nasser bin Mohammed bin Haji Al-Mawalik (also known as Al-Malki) and had two sons Mohammed and Haji.
6. Maryam, Mohammed Al-Nfaii's sister, married Al-Awami from Al-Mahanda (also known as Al-Muhannadi).
7. Afra, Mohammed Al-Nfaii's sister, married Yousif bin Ali Al-Abd Al-Sheikh Al-Bukuwara (also known as Al-Kuwari; Al-Sheikh later on became a branch of Al-Kuwari, just as Al-Towar branched out from "Towar Nasser" bin Shahin).

Mohammed bin Saad Al-Nfaii was killed, and as one can see by his lineage, he did not have any sons or cousins in Qatar to revenge his killing. His sisters became distraught and said that if Mohammed was killed in Nejd, then his blood would not have been spilled like that of a deer,[18] alluding to the need for someone to take revenge for his killing. When his son-in-laws heard this, it moved them and they went in search of the man who killed Mohammed, eventually finding and killing him. Upon their return, they told his sisters that although Al-Nfaii had no sons, they now became the sons of Al-Nfaii. Therefore, this is how these men and their sons became known as the sons of Al-Nfaii. As a result, an alliance that encompassed these tribes on the matriarchal basis, as the mothers of each were sisters, was formed.[19] It is even said that when Sheikh Mohammed bin Thani was in conflict with the people of Fuwairet, these tribes from the Al-Nfaii alliance gathered to support him and confront his enemies. They all moved with Sheikh Mohammed bin Thani and settled in Doha.[20] This narrative is of key importance when analyzing identity formation because it illustrates how an oral narrative can outline this process, and, ultimately, how oral narratives are essential to nation and identity building.

The power of this alliance is demonstrated in the poetry written about it, which shows how close these tribes remained even as time passed. One relevant verse is as follows: *Wa in nashadtu 'uzwatihi fa Al-Nfaiiya ... bin 'aql ma shiluhu sabiq hani.* Essentially, this

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[18] Ibid., 88.
[19] Ibid., p. 88.
[20] Ibid.

verse conveys how people felt about the pride of Al-Nfaii's descendants, and that when one asks about the pride of Al-Nfaii, the response is that they earned the title they got. Sheikh Mohammed mentions that many of these verses show how united the members of Al-Nfaii alliance were and have remained over time.[21] It is interesting that the alliance was not patriarchal but matriarchal. These tribes also shared the same camel markings, or *wasm*. The story of the Al-Nfaii alliance occurred three hundred years ago, and over time, the term "Alaad Nfaii" began to refer to all tribes in Qatar.[22] However, if one goes back to its origins, it belongs to these specific tribes, where the sons married the daughters and sisters of Mohammed bin Saad Al-Nfaii; thus, the later generations were matriarchal relatives.[23]

This story stands at the heart of Qatar's national history. In a recent article published in *Al-Rayyan Magazine*, the author mentioned that many of the magazine's readers have been asking for further clarification and an explanation of the Al-Nfaii alliance; the readers wanted to learn more about the alliance itself. This specific narrative is widely known by the older generations, but not among the youth. With more awareness, people began to realize what they had, and they began to appreciate the importance of such stories. Though I had heard about the alliance and the name is very familiar, I did not know the actual story until I asked my father about it and began doing further research.

Sheikh Abdulla bin Jassim, the past ruler of Qatar from 1913-1948, also asked Sheikh Mohammed bin Ahmad Al-Thani to narrate the history of Qatar. In response, he discussed the birth of the state, the earliest tribes that settled in Qatar, the tribes that later settled in Qatar, the Al-Nfaii alliance, the events that occurred in Qatar and Bahrain, in which the tribes of Al-Zubara were involved, and the events as described by individuals who participated in them.[24]

Sheikh Mohammed discusses Qatar in earlier times, stating that the Al-Thani family, and the people of Doha more specifically, played a significant role during their time, and that these individuals were key to supporting the country in the journey to becoming independent. He recounts that several individuals played an important role alongside the Al-Thani family in establishing the emirate. As the events were retold, it transpired

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[21] Ibid., p. 89.
[22] "Alaad Nfaii: The Story of the Name," p.105.
[23] Ibid., p. 105.
[24] Al-Thani, *op. cit.*, p. 295-297.

that a certain group of individuals remained central in the formation process. Before narrating the events, Sheikh Mohammed stated his wish to accurately portray the history of Qatar, and to rectify the mistakes historians had made about the facts.[25] With this in mind, any description of Qatar's early history must include an analysis of tribalism and, more specifically, Qatari tribes.

The following events will show how the tribes were a social force that managed society and determined how it functioned. Given the fact that the subject of this analysis focuses on the revival of the Arabic language, and more specifically the Qatari dialect, the role of the tribes is fundamental. The tribal network defines what applies to society, and the language associated with it thus becomes dominant. The link between the revival of language and tribal history is also vital—Qataris revived the local Qatari dialect because it relates to their historical tribal identity.

Looking at its early history, Qatar witnessed a period when it was a gathering point for many of the migratory tribes from Iraq, North of Hijaz, and Najd, with some tribes moving permanently and settling in Qatar while others spread across the Arabian Peninsula. Additionally, some moved to Oman and the Iranian coast, prior to the presence of the Portuguese from 1521-1602. During this time, the Al-Maghamis Al-Ashraf, the sheikhs of the tribal alliance in Al-Montafij of Albasra, and their power dominated Bahrain, Al-Zubara, and areas of Oman; they were allied with the tribes of the area, and over time many, if not all, of the tribes were considered allies of the Al-Montafij.[26] Following this, the Al-Saadoon Emirate appeared in Al-Montafij and were allied with Al-Saadoon; accordingly, their power spread to Al-Hasa, Kuwait, Qatar, and Oman. Later, Al-Utub Emirate emerged in 1197 (according to the Islamic *Hijri* calendar) and their power extended to Bahrain and Al-Zubara, eventually leading to their ability to become the rulers of Bahrain. In fact, most of the tribes in northern Qatar originated from al-Utub either by blood or alliance.[27]

Significantly, this indicates that individuals or groups can become members of a tribe through an alliance, meaning that a relationship by blood is not necessary; rather, an alliance is enough to consider them part of the tribe. This brings forth an important conclusion—the tribal system in the Arabian Peninsula is complex and fluid, contrary to

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[25] Ibid., p. 36.
[26] Ibid., p. 37-38.
[27] Ibid., p. 39.

popular perceptions that tribal systems are clearly defined. It is not structured as a pyramid like many may think. The relationship between and within the different tribes is extremely dynamic, and the establishment of Al-Utub Emirate is such an example. Other events in Qatar's history also clearly demonstrate the complexity of the tribal structure and that it cannot be simplified in linear terms.

In his narrative, Sheikh Mohammed also talks of how after Al-Utub Emirate, Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani separated from Qatar, taking with him the Bani Tamim tribes and the tribes that allied with him. They settled in Doha, and this is how the Al-Thani Emirate began. After this, Sheikh Mohammed specifically discusses the tribes and begins by outlining the tribal system, which is key to Qatar's history because it clarifies the misperceptions that many have had about the tribal system. His description clearly explains tribal formation and evolution in the Arabian Peninsula. He states that it is usual for a tribe to merge with another tribe based on patriarchal or matriarchal connections; that they would keep their original lineage unless they lost it which would mean that they would be named after the tribe they allied with. In most cases, however, the alliances included tribes that kept their original lineage, or *nassab*, while remaining part of a larger alliance. They did so in case of conflict between members of the alliance; if they kept their lineage, then the allied tribes could easily separate themselves.[28] If they lost their lineage, they would name themselves after the villages they settled in, or they would ally themselves with other tribes. These tribes are less attached to the concept of *assabiya* compared to the tribes that keep their original lineage. Examples of these tribes include the Huwala, with tribes throughout the Gulf; Al-Zatoot, with the tribes of Oman; Bani Khuthair, with the tribes of Najd and al-Hijaz; and the Salab and Hutaim, with the tribes of Northern Arabia and Iraq.[29] These tribes ally themselves with other tribes for various purposes, and do not keep their original lineage. Hence, tribes that do keep their original lineage are strongly attached to the concept of *assabiya*. To begin with, Sheikh Mohammed went on to introduce the oldest tribes that settled in Qatar, telling us that most of the tribes in Qatar are Tamimi Mudri or Nahdi Gudaii. An alliance that dates back to the Jahilliya period exists between these two tribes, both of which have spread across all the Gulf countries.[30]

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[28] Ibid., p. 40.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid., p. 45.

Over time, different tribes began to settle in Qatar after the dispersion of the Bani Nahd, and have become the most commonly known today. The main Qatari tribes that Sheikh Mohammed outlines in his narrative are: Al-Utub, Al-Maadid, Al-Bin Ali, Al-Mahanda (Al-Mohannadi)—one of the oldest tribes in Qatar and people of diving, Al-Suluta Banu Malik, Al-Bukuwara (Al-Kuwari), Al-Attiyah, Al-Soudan (Al-Suwaidi), Al-Naim (Al-Naimi), Al-Manana (Al-Mannai), Al-Manaseer, Al-Burmaih (Al-Rumaihi), Al-Busmait, Al-Sada, Al-Musallam, Al-Humaidat (Al-Humaidi), Al-Kuban (Al-Kaabi), Al-Kbsa (Al-Kubaisi), Al-Buainain, Al-Dawaser, Bani Hajer, Al-Murra, Gahtan, Al-Ajman, Al-Awamer, and Alhuwula.[31]

Several incidents occurred afterwards, but one must be highlighted in particular. In 1235 *Hijri*, a plague spread across the northern Qatari villages, killing many of its inhabitants and the individuals that survived migrated. The Al-Utub in Al-Zubara moved to Bahrain and with them the tribes of Al-Sada, Al-Mannai, Al-Naimi, Al-Kubaisi, and Al-Rumaihi. The tribes of Al-Sulaiti and Al-Malki moved to Doha with the Al-Suwaidi while some of the Al-Nahashla, Al-Maadid, and Al-Bukuwara moved to Al-Muharag and others to Al-Wakra. Sheikh Mohammed bin Thani moved to Al-Muharag where he married his cousin Noora bint Fahad bin Ghanim Al-Buafra, who is the mother of Sheikh Jassim.[32] Therefore, one can here see the movement pattern after the plague hit Northern Qatar. The tribes moved easily and settled in different places, but, over time, they tend to move back to their places of origin, while others stay in the areas to which they migrated.

In 1243 *Hijri*, the Battle of Fuwairet occurred between the people of Doha and the people of Fuwairet. The conflict began with Sheikh Mohammed bin Thani and Khalfan bin Khalfan bin Salem, who were partners in a business led by Thani bin Mohammed and Khalfan bin Khalfan, the son of Hessa bint Mohammed, Thani's sister. Khalfan bin Salem was a wealthy pearl trader, a *tawash*; when he passed away, Hessa bint Mohammed named her son Khalfan bin Khalfan, taking his share of the inheritance. She then gave it to his uncle, Thani, to invest on behalf of her son. They lived in Fuwairet with the maternal cousins of Mohammed bin Thani, and when Mohammed bin Thani and Khalfan bin Khalfan grew up, Thani gave them their money, which was now a substantial fortune.

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[31] Ibid., p. 56-82.
[32] Ibid., p. 107.

They then began to operate their business in addition to being successful *tawaweesh*. The people of Fuwairet envied them and tension began to arise between the men and the people, with the people eventually robbing them of all of their money. They attempted to claim their money back, but the people of Fuwairet outnumbered them, so the men went to Abdulla bin Ahmad al-Khalifa to complain. Unfortunately, he was too busy with problems in Bahrain after his brother Salman passed away. Ali bin Amr bin Attiya was present and he was connected to Mohammed bin Thani from the Nfaii side, and for this reason he promised to help the men, agreeing upon a specific time to take action. They then headed to Doha calling for the backing of Al-Soudan, Bani Malik, and Al-Suluta, with whom they were related.[33] The people of Doha agreed and said they were ready for victory, so they all went by boat to Fuwairet. Poet Abdulla bin Ghanim Abu Duhaim said the following verses to draw on the position of the men going for war:[34]

> We will help any oppressed person from our group, as we shelter those who are afraid. If they intend to do evil, we will bravely challenge the greatest dangers.[35]

When the people of Fuwairet heard of what was about to come, they returned all the money for they did not want a battle. A few months later, Thani passed away, so Mohammed bin Thani and Khalfan bin Khalfan moved to Doha.[36] This incident shows that even between themselves the people of Qatar united for specific causes. If someone was oppressed or faced injustice, they would solve the issue as one cohesive unit. This is important because it demonstrates that there was some form of unity that connected the different tribes even though there was no official state yet. A system existed that encompassed these different tribes, and despite their differences, a connection remained that brought them together and defined the way they would act as a group or association.

Another incident that occurred shortly after the one recounted above, also narrated by Sheikh Mohammed, includes two individuals who confront, rob, and then free an Indian trader. The trader complained to the British resident, who then sent a note to the

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[33] Ibid., p. 118.
[34] Ibid., p. 118.
[35] Ibid., p. 118; "Ya al-manhadim damink mina … Hinna dhara man kan khayif. La nwafu lil-shar hinna … nard mawarid al-hatayif."
[36] Ibid., p. 118.

people of Doha asking them to repay the Indian trader or else a force would be sent to destroy Doha as had happened a few years prior during the "The First Destruction of Doha" (*Kharab al-Doha al-Awwal*). It was proven that the two did really rob the Indian trader, so they went to Salmin bin Nasser al-Suwaidi, who refused to help them. Next, they went to Ali bin Attiya, who also refused them; in the end, all of the tribes declined help for these two individuals. Finally, they decided to go to Khalfan bin Khalfan who told them that he could not do anything without consulting his partner in trade, Mohammed bin Thani refused support and said that what these two have done is an act of robbery. He felt that anyone who assisted them would be associated with them and punished by the British resident. However, it came to Mohammed bin Thani's attention that he was related to the two convicted individuals through the Al-Nfaii alliance; ultimately, he realized that even if they were wrong in committing robbery, he still had to stand by them and compensate for what they took. The elderly women, such as Mohammed bin Thani's paternal aunt, Hessa bint Mohammed bin Thamer, spoke to him, telling him that money can change people; these are still your people and you should help them.[37]

> We were deceived by you Mohammed. What is this strictness that made you lose your morals? You hope for power and this is the price you pay, and you do not even ask for a bargain. Your grandfather took on the responsibility of Bani Nahd and conciliated for them after the Harb Al-Yatim war. And now you refrain on something worthless; do not punish your people. When you were in crisis with the people of Fuwairet, you called for the sons of Al-Nfaii and they were there for you. God does not bless money that does not benefit its owner; you and Khalfan go and pay off the sum of those two, and hold for better or for worse.[38]

Mohammed bin Thani agreed and said that he wanted them to be punished, but he would not disappoint them, so he would pay their debts and hence he paid for what they took. The two promised him that they would never do this again.[39] This narration demonstrates how a society develops a system that has its own definitions and ways of

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[37] Ibid., p. 122.

[38] Ibid., p. 122; this was passed on in the local Qatari dialect: "Ightarayna fik ya Mhaymid, wish dha (al-taw) illi dayya' muru'tak w titmanna (al-kabara) wa hadha thamanha yu'rad 'alik wa la tsawmu wajdak qabl naql hamalah bani Nahd kulhum wa aslihhum 'iqb harb al-Yatim w inta mumtani' 'ala (bhanis) la tghrimha 'an jama'tak w yawm dayyaq 'alik ahl Fwirt i'tazayt bi-awlad al-Nfai'i wa ashfu ghalilak la barak Allah fi mal ma yanfa' sahbu qum int wa khilfan wa idmanu lil-matlubin ghrmahum 'ala al-khir wa al-shar."

[39] Ibid., p. 123.

operating. According to Durkheim, "… society is not the mere sum of individuals, but the system formed by their association represents a specific reality which has its own characteristic."[40] In the context of this story, even if these people committed robbery, they remained connected to the community and, therefore, had to be helped. A different reality is here being formed, one that acknowledges the importance of social bonds. This reality is also applicable to current times, in that the revival of the Qatari dialect was determined by the social force of the tribes in Qatar.

In 1268 *Hijri*, Imam Faisal bin Turki invaded Qatar, and the people of Doha soon found out. The Qatari tribes gathered to negotiate and sent for Mohammed bin Khalifa al-Khalifa, who then ordered them to fight, pledging them men and weaponry. During the negotiations, the tribes from northern Qatar stated their allegiance to Al-Khalifa and retreated to their areas until the assistance arrived from Mohammed bin Khalifa.[41] The tribes in Doha, however, stayed and heard that Musaeed Al-Otaibi, part of bin Turki's forces, was very close. At this point, Ali bin Khalifa arrived with a naval force facing Doha, but he was reluctant to fight Faisal and wanted to see whether the people of Doha had the will to carry out the plans. As a result, the people of Doha gathered with Mohammed bin Thani and said that Ali bin Khalifa was remaining an observer; they were alone in their fight against Faisal. They sent for Ali bin Khalifa and asked what his position was at that point, and he responded by stating that he was counting on the arrival of Nasser bin Jaber and his people, but they knew that Nasser and the northern tribes had retreated.[42] Ali bin Khalifa said that he was in no position to fight Faisal, so the people of Doha negotiated and chose Jassim bin Mohammed and his people to face Musaeed al-Otaibi. As they marched, each tribe recited a different verse, finally settling on one that stresses loyalty to Bani Tamim: "If the flag of Tamim moves forward, we all march behind. We are united by a common pain by the enemy, if it increases we will destroy the source."[43]

Mohammed bin Thani stated that this should unite them all. The tribes of Doha, including Nasser bin Sultan of Al-Suwaidi, Al-Kuwari, Al-Attiya, Al-Mannai, Al-Maadid, Al-Mawalik, and Al-Suluta, marched for battle repeating these verses. Jassim Musaeed Al-Otaibi was killed and his forces collapsed, obliging them to retreat to Faisal. Following

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[40] Durkheim, *op. cit.*, p. 129.
[41] Ibid., p. 131.
[42] Ibid., p. 132.
[43] Ibid, p. 133; "La masha bayraq Tamim … kulna nimshi warah Jama'na 'uq al-khasim … law kithir niqta' ladhah."

rumors that Faisal gathered a Bedouin force to invade Doha, the people of Doha gathered to negotiate an agreed upon an alliance with Faisal to avoid war. They were, after all, pearling people, and if the pearling season began while they were fighting it would not have been safe to leave their belongings behind knowing that the Bedouins allied with Faisal would attack. An alliance with Faisal would also get rid of the tax they paid to Mohammed bin Khalifa al-Khalifa; they also remembered Ali bin Khalifa's neutral position, which led them to ally themselves; Mohammed bin Thani sent to the Imam Faisal to inform him. The Imam agreed, thereby irritating Ali bin Khalifa, who then moved from Doha to Bahrain; thus, the people of Doha became derived from the tribes that were allied to Imam Faisal and, consequently, entered Wahabbism. After the Wahabbi influence weakened in Doha, Mohammed bin Khalifa yet again angered the people of Doha by inducing a pearling tax; the tribes of Doha, Al-Wakra, Al-Khor, and Fuwairet gathered and decided to fight Al-Khalifa; they were victorious.[44]

The balance that the Qatari tribes were after demonstrates the shifting of alliances and the complexity of the tribal system. The tribes rejected the notion of a power controlling and dictating them, such as the example of paying the pearling tax. To end their allegiance with Bahrain, they decided to ally with Faisal, which would remove the pearling tax from Al-Khalifa while simultaneously earning protection from the Bedouins aligned with Faisal. Entering Wahabbism would ensure security, lower losses, and greater autonomy from Bahrain. The situation was complex, but the final choice led to some balance and the tribes of Doha became more independent than before.

There was also a sense of cohesion within the Qatari peninsula, which the following example demonstrates. The First Battle of Al-Zubara, *Shad Al-Julaiia*, shows how Qatar first began perceiving itself as an independent political and social unit. The spark of the conflict was related to a boat that was carrying a large load of dates and got caught on the coastline. The captain, Jaber bin Abdulla, sent for help from a tribe who lived in Al-Zubara.[45] They responded to his call, but when they reached him and saw the goods on the ship, they shot the captain and took what was on the boat. The news reached Sheikh Jassim, and he demanded they return the goods to the rightful owners; however, they refused, so Sheikh Jassim negotiated with the tribes of Doha to fight the alleged tribe. The offending tribe sought refuge in the Castle of Mrair (*Qalaat Marir* or *Jlaat Mrair*, in the local Qatari dialect). They also asked for Sheikh Essa bin Ali Al-

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[44] Ibid., p. 135.
[45] Ibid., p. 160.

Khalifa's assistance, who acquiesced and sent an army headed by Sheikh Ali Al-Khalifa; however, they were stopped by the British resident, who quelled their attempts to fight the Qataris. Sheikh Essa told them that they wanted to assist the tribe that was being attacked by Sheikh Jassim, but the British wanted to first consult with Sheikh Jassim. Sheikh Jassim replied that the specific tribe are considered dependents in Qatar, and they had been seen robbing many times; they were asked to return the goods, but they refused. He highlighted that, as Qataris, they were responsible for ensuring the security on land, while the British were responsible for maintaining security at sea. The British agreed and prevented Sheikh Essa bin Ali from helping that tribe.[46] Sheikh Jassim then surrounded that particular tribe in the Castle of Julaiia for forty days until they surrendered.[47]

In the previous example, social cohesion can be seen in that the people felt that every tribe had to be held accountable for its actions, and that its actions did not affect the tribe alone, but the greater area and the other tribes living within the same boundaries as well. Like the previous examples, there are aspects of nationhood, such as political unity and accountability, although an official state has not yet been founded. Durkheim states that "by aggregating together, by interpenetrating, by fusing together, individuals give birth to a being, psychical if you will, but one which constitutes a psychical individuality of a new kind."[48] There was an agenda that allowed certain actions and prohibited others. The tribes were aware of these regulatory measures, and would come to a consensus if these were violated.

Again, even if tribalism was at the center, there was fluidity. A tribe was not forced to do a certain act but was given the choice; with this choice, however, came consequences that the tribe itself would have had to face. When the tribes met to consult each other, they would, in the end, reach decisions that the majority agreed upon. There are, of course, cases where a few tribes might disagree, but the chosen option is the one agreed upon by the majority. A multifaceted political decision-making system was present and clearly seen through the interactions between the different tribes in the Qatari peninsula. This framework exists between the tribes until today.

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[46] Ibid., p. 160-161.
[47] Ibid., p. 161.
[48] Durkheim, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

Linguistically, this social network determined which language would dominate. Clearly, the current revival of the local Qatari dialect mirrors this. Society itself has demanded this revival; the tribes themselves want to preserve this language, demonstrating that tribal identity is linked to the local Qatari dialect. As the state began to develop its national discourse, with tribalism at its center, the local Qatari dialect had to be strengthened.

Qatari Sovereignty

The rulers of Qatar have always striven for autonomy. Ever since its beginnings, Qatar wanted to develop as an independent entity. Even before the official founding of the state, leaders of the area stressed and aimed for autonomy. Hence, it was the narrative of self-definition that highlighted not only what defined a Qatari, but also what was behind the cohesion that existed among the people. The underlying hypothesis of this study is that the Qatari's independent outlook is what determined the revival of a specifically Qatari dialect. As previously mentioned, Qataris historically endeavored for independence as they do in the present-day, though now it is with more complexity. Language is central as it is deeply linked to independence. Politically, they would govern themselves; socially, they would have their own dialect, which would in turn define their identity. Their historical identity is linked to the tribal structure; thus, the type of language associated with the tribal structure is what is being revived. In this case, it is the local Qatari dialect. Prior to discussing its linguistic revival, an overview of incidents that shows Qatar's struggle towards autonomy proves significant.

Qataris also experienced a type of alliance and unity between the different areas that existed in Qatar, a sort of cohesion between the different areas, even before the official establishment of the state. At the same time, a certain degree of autonomy was clear. Durkheim's concept of social bonds is applicable here in that his focus was on social bonds "which are never between individuals or groups but are always seen as regulating individual desires and passions or attaching individuals to collective goals and meanings."[49] Tribes were brought together by a collective goal of independence. They wanted to govern themselves locally without the interference of an external force. Events that occurred in Qatar and Bahrain reflect the struggle for independence and autonomy.

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[49] Durkheim, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

Historically, it was known that Bahrain was very controlling, but there were counter efforts from the people of Qatar as time passed on. Al-Zubara, an important location for both countries, lies at the north of Qatar on the coastline facing Bahrain.[50] At first, when Ahmad bin Rizq left Al-Zubara and settled in Al-Basra, Al-Zubara started declining, and after the Bani Khalid state in Al-Ahsa was weakened, the settlers of Al-Zubara refused to pay tax to Ibn Musallam.[51] They were encouraged to do this by a powerful and strong figure who began to emerge in Al-Zubara—Sheikh Mohamed bin Khalifa Al-Khalifa. He built the Castle of Mrair in Al-Zubara, and was trading with the Ajam traders in Bahrain, eventually becoming the most powerful trader in Al-Zubara and having a monopoly on pearl diving boats during a time when pearl diving was the main source of living for the people of the Arabian Peninsula. He supported the pearl divers to a great extent, which created a special place for him in the minds of the people of Al-Zubara.[52]

One other interesting incident in Qatar's early history is the day of Al-Ajam, or the day of Nasoor. The people of Al-Zubara dealt with Bahrain on many fronts. They owned property there and they paid a tax for it to the government of Iran. They also paid a pearling tax to Saod bin Abdulaziz until, at one point, they could not pay the tax to the government of Iran. Chaos began shortly after when the Ajam began to steal money from Al-Utub. During these tense times, a slave of Al-Utub was killed, which the people of Al-Zubara vindicated by killing some Al-Ajam in the area. Al-Ajam traders complained to the government of Iran about the situation, and, consequently, the ruler of Shiraz issued an order to Nasser bin Mathkoor to invade and destroy Al-Zubara. Nasser bin Mathkoor sent a messenger to the people of Al-Zubara ordering them to immediately leave Al-Zubara and not take anything with them or else he would attack and kill them all. The people of Al-Zubara did not want to enter into a confrontation, and felt that they could negotiate compensation instead. Mathkoor rejected this thought and attacked Al-Zubara. He almost succeeded in occupying it, but people from Al-Khuwair, Furaiha, and Al-Rubaija (which are different areas in Qatar) came to support the people of Al-Zubara in order to counter the attack and defeat Nasser bin Mathkoor's forces.[53]

In 1238 *Hijri*, the sultan of Muscat prepared another attack to invade Bahrain and take revenge for his brother's death, but Sheikh Salman bin Ahmad was against war and instead offered to reconcile by paying the sultan a sum of money every year, and the

[50] Sinan, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
[51] Al-Thani, *op. cit.*, p. 98.
[52] Ibid., p. 99.
[53] Ibid., p. 99-100.

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sultan agreed. However, some of the Qatari tribes disagreed and moved out as a result.[54] The Al-Maadid and Al-Bukuwara tribes moved to Fuwairet; Al-Mawalik and Al-Suluta to Al-Huwaila; and Al-Buainain to Al-Wakra. In this manner, the people of Qatar separated themselves from Salman.[55] This reflects the general theme underlying the Qataris' desire for autonomy and independence. The tribes disagreed with Sheikh Salman's suggestions of paying a yearly sum to the sultan of Muscat, knowing full well that this agreement would be binding over the long run. This shows how a group acts differently from an individual. As Durkheim suggests, "the group thinks, feels and acts entirely different from the ways its members would if they were isolated."[56] The situation becomes more complex when a group is involved, but the benefits in the end are more. A different reality is presented when social bonds exist. Collective life produces different outcomes compared to an individual approach. Durkheim claims that "the organization is no less a form of compulsion. If the population clusters together in our cities instead of being scattered over the rural areas, it is because there exists a trend of opinion, a collective drive which imposes this concentration upon individuals."[57] It is this "collective drive" that shaped the outlook of the Qatari tribes before state formation. A communal bond existed between them that shaped the decisions they made. In the example above, the tribes knew that the yearly sum would not be beneficial for all of them in the long run. Again, this collective approach later defined the revival of the Qatari dialect.

A similar occurrence happened two years later, in 1239 *Hijri*, when Sheikh Salman bin Ahmad Al-Khalifa contacted the tribes of Al-Soudan, Al-Manana, Al-Mawalik, and Al-Suluta, who moved to Al-Sharjah, asking them to return to Qatar.[58] They agreed and moved to Al-Bida and Al-Murghab. Al-Bida was the home of Al-Soudan at the time of Al-Ashgar, but it was in ruins. They started to rebuild it and built their homes there again. Al-Bida became an equal to Al-Wakra and possessed many diving boats; hence, Sheikh Salman bin Ahmad Al-Khalifa sent Mohammed Al-Musallam on his behalf to build the castle of Al-Bida. From then on, Al-Musallam wanted to implement the pearling tax under Sheikh Salman's name, but the people of Al-Bida refused and threatened Al-Musallam, who then told Sheikh Salman what happened and suggested sending a

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[54] Ibid., p. 108.
[55] Ibid., p. 109.
[56] Durkheim, *op. cit.*, p. 129.
[57] Durkheim, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
[58] Ibid., p. 111.

power to punish them. Salman sent Bedouins from Al-Ajman, Bani Hajer, and Al-Murra to punish the people of Doha.

When the people of Doha began to witness large numbers of Bedouins arriving, they showed contempt towards them.[59] When Mohammed Al-Musallam saw that he had enough people on his side to begin demanding the payment of the pearling tax, he sent someone to inform Salmin bin Nasser Al-Suwaidi, and let him know that they had until the following day to pay. Salmin and the people of Doha came to a consensus to reject the implementation of the pearling tax, an indication of the Qataris strong will for independence as even a tax payment was seen as an obstruction to their sovereignty. Refusing to pay the tax, they concentrated their efforts on fighting the Bedouins that Sheikh Salman bin Ahmad had sent, which led to their victory against the Bedouins. It is even said that women participated in the fighting. When Al-Musallam saw this he fled with his family and retired to Fuwairet where Sheikh Mohammed bin Thani was living. Al-Musallam informed Sheikh Salman bin Ahmad Al-Khalifa about what happened, but during that time Sheikh Salman was occupied with problems in Bahrain and could not intervene. Sheikh Salman instead sent Essa Al-Mudaihki and Rashid Al-Awadhi to apologize to the people of Doha and their grievances subjected by Al-Musallam. He wanted to take a pledge from the people of Doha that they would side with him, promising them that he would not demand the pearling tax fee from the people of Doha, and, most importantly, that they were free to govern themselves.[60] This is extremely significant because it parallels their persistent efforts for autonomy, a trend visible much earlier than the official establishment of the state of Qatar. Also, in Lorimer's *The Gulf Guide: Historical Section*, he states that even though Bahrain's authority in Qatar was not questioned, opposition was still present.[61]

After the battle with the Turks, Sheikh Jassim resigned from his chiefdom, delegating his powers to his brother Ahmed, and moved to Al-Wsail. Sheikh Ahmed began to manage all the affairs of Qatar, and fought the Bedouin forces while continuing the negotiations with the English and the Turks.[62] In December 1905, Sheikh Ahmed was killed by one of his servants.[63] It is said that he was killed after finishing his afternoon

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[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid., p. 112.
[61] Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, p. 14.
[62] Ibid., p. 222.
[63] Lorimer, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

prayers, and that the person who killed him did so for revenge from an earlier conflict.[64] Hence, after Sheikh Ahmed's death, Sheikh Abdullah, Sheikh Jassim's fourth son, took the lead.[65] It was clear that the Turks cleverly avoided interference in the appointment of a new sheikh to Doha, and they left it for Sheikh Jassim to decide. The Turks respected his independence, especially in resolving internal tribal conflicts.[66] Here, even external forces, in this case the Turks, realized and respected the boundaries that were set by Sheikh Jassim. They were well aware of not interfering especially in delicate internal matters like the election of a new sheikh.

The desire for independence was an evident streak existent in its people since its early history. More importantly, this analysis contributes to an early history that lacks narration from a Qatari perspective. Throughout the years, numerous accounts exemplify the self-perception Qatari tribes had. The earlier incidents showed that a political structure organized around the different tribes did, in fact, exist. It is hereafter important to look at how this feature of independence has prevailed after the founding of the state by looking at examples from Qatar's contemporary history.

Sheikh Abdulla bin Jassim Al-Thani ruled from 1913,[67] and during his time in power, and because of conflicts in the Balkans, the Ottoman influence declined, as they saw it in their best interest to settle an agreement with the British regarding their position in the Gulf. The British representative Lord Grey and Haqi Pasha negotiated an agreement that acknowledged Qatar's independence as an emirate, disclaiming all rights the Ottomans had to the Qatari peninsula.[68] The agreement also drew boundaries between Qatar and Al-Hasa, which is now part of Saudi Arabia. More importantly, the British government guaranteed that they would prevent Bahrain from taking over Qatar, and in this way Qatar officially gained its own political unity under the supervision and protection of the British government. In fact, Qatar signed the protection accord with Britain in 1882 and renewed it in 1916 and then in 1934.[69] It is important to note that the struggle for autonomy came from the Qataris themselves; the agreements mirror these efforts and put them officially on record. The area and the people in it have long been known for their efforts toward becoming independent and autonomous.

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[64] Al-Thani, *op. cit.*, p. 223.
[65] Lorimer, *op. cit.*, p. 70.
[66] Ibid., p. 70.
[67] Sinan, *op. cit.*, p. 97.
[68] Ibid., p. 97.
[69] Ibid., p. 84.

During Sheikh Abdulla's rule several important events took place that should be underlined, the most central being the achievement of political unity in Qatar, the acknowledgment of its independence, and the assignment of boundaries.[70] It is important to note that political unity existed between the different Qatari tribes before the founding of the state, but was at this point made official. Durkheim claims that "a society's political structure is only the way in which its various component segments have become accustomed to living with each other. If relationships between them are traditionally close, the segments tend to merge together…"[71] Traditionally, Qatari tribes were close and were tied together in a larger political association. The formation of the state, then, was simply a matter of proclamation.

In addition, Ibn Saud pledged not to re-engage in war with Qatar, and Al-Zubara was officially declared a Qatari territory, which the al-Khalifa tribe always assumed to be theirs. In 1940, petroleum was found in the Qatari peninsula, where the British had been surveying since 1937. Sheikh Abdulla bin Jassim was able to accomplish all of this in his time and he was highly respected by those he negotiated with. Though interaction with the British increased during this time, the agreements reflected the same concept of autonomy and independence. Although there were some clauses forfeiting control, such as the agreement between Qatar and Britain in 1934 outlining how the British would supervise the external affairs of Qatar,[72] a balance had to be made that would simultaneously maintain the Qatar's autonomy and ensure good relations with the different actors.

Sheikh Ali, Sheikh Abdulla's son, came to power in 1949. During his time, a number of momentous events in Qatar's history took place, particularly the granting of petroleum extraction at sea. Sheikh Ali, being passionate about old Arab manuscripts, put his efforts into finding, buying, and then printing and distributing them, and went on to set up a library. In 1960, he decided to resign from his position because of his poor health and passed it to his son, Sheikh Ahmed. He called for a council meeting to be held in Al-Rayyan (a suburb of Doha); those in attendance were Al-Thani family members representing the family council, the British consulate, including Mr. M.C.G. Man the deputy political resident, and R. Cochrane the chief of police. Sheikh Ali asked the

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[70] Ibid., p. 97.
[71] Durkheim, *op. cit.,* p. 58.
[72] Ibid., p. 98.

family council for their opinion, and they gave their agreement; Sheikh Ahmed was then made the ruler of Qatar with Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad as the heir apparent.[73]

During Sheikh Ahmed's time, Qatar progressed in a number of fields, and a number of significant events took place. For example, wealth increased, construction projects spread, and health and educational institutions improved, as did public utilities.[74] Additionally, the position of the British consultant came to an end and a number of laws that delineated a centralized state were passed. In so doing, different elements were incorporated into the political and economic systems. In 1961, the official government newspaper was established, and the government stipulated laws regarding Qatari citizenship.[75] In 1962, law number one was passed, which included the organization of a higher administration for the government, outlining the establishment of a central system for the government.[76] Law number seven was issued in 1963 setting up the Department of Labor and Social Affairs. Regulations were increased and the various bodies of government became outlined. A number of other laws were passed to organize the different sectors within the state.

On February 22, 1972, Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad came to power.[77] He reorganized the government by first appointing a minister of foreign affairs and a consultant to the emir for the country's daily affairs.[78] On April 19, 1972, he amended the constitution and appointed more ministers, in addition to assigning ambassadors to a number of countries.[79] In the mid-1990s, natural gas was extracted in the North Field, thus establishing the Northern gas plant. Sheikh Khalifa also contributed a great deal to the development of the education and health sectors.

As has been demonstrated, Qatar and its people have always aimed and striven for autonomy. Additionally, the Qatari people have always wanted to distinguish themselves as Qataris even though the state itself was established later. Qatar did not want to follow Bahrain or Saudi Arabia; it wanted to be independent. The way they dealt with the British and the Turks also reflects this attitude in that the relationship

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[73] Ibid., p. 105.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Al-Diwan al-Amiri, 2011.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.

was more of an alliance than one of control. The Qataris became allied with them, but they did not submit to them. This history also shows that the marking of territories and the fight for independence has been intrinsic. Therefore, looking at local history is the key to defining the present. An explanation of the ongoing process to revitalize the Qatari dialect and the identity associated with its history can be found in Durkheim's work:

> The principle causes of historical development would not therefore be found among the circumfuse (external influences). They would all be found in the past. They would themselves form part of that development, constituting simply more remote phases of it. The contemporary events of social life would not derive from the present state of society, but from prior events and historical precedents, and sociological explanations would consist exclusively linking the present to the past.[80]

To become independent, Qataris had to define their own language, but English is currently dominating, providing an excellent example of Gran's theory of Eurocentric paradigms. If one accepts this paradigm, they then accept the language associated with it, and with it its history.[81] Within this framework of analysis, power lies with the English language, which is not associated with Qatar's historical identity. In this respect, becoming independent does not simply rest on politics, but on linguistics as well. Qatar's autonomy is, therefore, also defined linguistically. The power of language lies in its application, which means that the Qatari dialect had to be revived to regain its strength as a language and as a marker of Qatari identity, something Qatari society is striving for.

Reviving Arabic: From Linguistics to Self-Definition

The process of reviving Arabic has been complex in that it has also led to the revival of nationalism. Pierre Bourdieu's *Language and Symbolic Power*, Durkheim's *The Rules of Sociological Method*, James Scott's *Seeing like a State*, and Gran's *The Rise of the Rich* all provide a theoretical basis concerning language and nationalism. This analysis stems from these theories, specifically seeking to adapt them to the context of language and nationalism in Qatar.

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[80] Durkheim, *op. cit.*, p. 139.
[81] Gran, *op. cit.*, p. XII.

In *Language and Symbolic Power*, Bourdieu discusses linguistic production and circulation, stating that "linguistic exchanges are also relations of symbolic power in which the power relations between speakers or their respective groups are actualized."[82] This relates to the positions of the Arabic and English language in Qatar. Prior to the revival of the Arabic language in Qatar, English was a language associated with higher status. Those who spoke English were viewed as more educated than those who spoke Arabic. This is no longer the case, but the issue of people speaking more English than Arabic remains. Even after efforts at reviving Arabic have been established, this situation is still widespread. An article published by Hasan Ali in Qatar's *Al-Sharq* daily newspaper, "Because of its regular use, the youth now use foreign words to brag and show off," poignantly addressed this issue.[83] Written in 2009, referring mostly to those between the ages of 14 and early-20s, Ali states that the phenomenon of speaking English instead of Arabic has spread throughout Qatar in recent years. He explores the reasons behind why the youth have moved away from speaking Arabic and their local Gulf dialect. Hasan al-Khuzaii is quoted saying that some individuals feel that speaking a foreign language means that they are educated, special, and different from his or her peers. This can be linked back to Bourdieu's notion of symbolic power. Foreign words carry a certain status and those speaking them are viewed as superior. This is one form of social power, essentially referring to social status associated with using a specific language. In this situation, the words give power to the individuals, not the other way around. Bourdieu suggests that "a performative utterance is destined to fail each time that it is not pronounced by a person who has the 'power' to pronounce it…the speaker does not have the authority to emit the words that he utters."[84] This presents the issue of language and its relation to power.

Bourdieu claims that it is important to look at language in terms of its social conditions of productions,[85] which is precisely what Al-Khuzaii talks about. As Bourdieu stresses, "the naïve question of the power of words is logically implicated in the initial suppression of the question of the uses of language, and therefore of the social conditions in which the words are employed."[86] Arabic is ingrained in Qatar's consciousness of its past in that the majority of its historical narratives, particularly those that are oral, are in Arabic, such as Sheikh Mohammed's narrative mentioned

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[82] Bourdieu, *op. cit.*, p. 35.
[83] Ali, "Because of its regular use".
[84] Bourdieu, *op. cit.*, p. 111.
[85] Ibid., p. 38.
[86] Ibid., p. 107.

earlier. However, one should note that the Arabic attached to Qatar's early history, prior to it becoming a state, is the local dialect and not classical Arabic. It is known as *Nabati* Arabic, which means that its roots are from classical Arabic, but has been made different due to the culture in which it developed. *Nabati* has been the form of Arabic used in the Arabian Peninsula from earlier times, and the language shifted with the movement of the tribes. Differences in dialect are witnessed and defined when one traces where the tribe has come from. Those who came from Najd speak the *Nabati* form, which is observed in their spoken and written language, such as poetry.

Another social condition is the continuous use of English in schools since institutions play a central role in language formation and circulation. The existence of an institution defines the conditions in terms of the actors, time, and place that have to be realized for the words to operate.[87] In his article, Hasan Ali states that educational institutions have been focusing more on English than Arabic, so it would seem natural that this language would travel from school into their homes. This also applies to the different universities that use English as the standard language. Even Qatar University, the state university, has been undergoing changes to use more English in some of its departments. In addition, places of work are also increasingly using English. Hasan Ali claims that individuals in many cases use English at work. Because this foreign language is utilized increasingly at work, it starts to get used unconsciously, especially among youth.[88] The more the language is used, the more important it becomes. As Bourdieu suggests, "utterances receive their value (and their sense) only in relation to a market….The value of the utterance depends on the relation of power…"[89] Hence, value depends on the existing power relations. More usage means more appreciation and more power as a result. Ali claims that the use of a foreign language in the education sector is the most important factor influencing the spread of a language.[90] On that note, Bourdieu highlights the role of institutions as a medium between groups or individuals involved and the social world. He says,

> The social conditions of the *institution* of the ministry, which constitutes
> the legitimate representative as an agent capable of acting on the social
> world through words, by instituting him as a medium between the group
> and the social world; and it does that, among other things, by equipping

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[87] Ibid., p. 73.
[88] Ali, *op. cit.*, 2009.
[89] Bourdieu, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
[90] Ali, *op. cit.*, 2009.

him with the signs and the insignia aimed at underlining the fact that he is not acting in his own name and under his own authority.[91]

Furthermore, he discusses the notion of style, which correlates to Hasan Ali's analysis, stating,

> This individual deviation from the linguistic norm, this particular elaboration which tends to give discourse its distinctive properties, is a being perceived which exists only in relation to perceiving subjects, endowed with the diacritical dispositions which enable them to make *distinctions* between different *ways of saying*, distinctive manners of speaking.[92]

These different ways of saying underline different social distinctions. As stated, those who speak English are distinguishable from others who do not. Therefore, "what circulates on the linguistic market is not 'language' as such, but rather discourses that are stylistically marked both in their production […] and in their reception."[93] Therefore, language is not the only element being circulated; rather, all factors that relate to it are also passed around.

Hence, throughout the process of linguistic exchange, "utterances are not only […] signs to be understood and deciphered, but are also *signs of wealth*, intended to be evaluated and appreciated, and *signs of authority*, intended to be believed and obeyed […] it is rare in everyday life for language to function as a pure instrument of communication."[94] In Qatar, because those who speak English are viewed as better than others who do not, Ali asks whether the youth are embarrassed to use their own local language.[95] This would explain how the English language has a certain status or power and authority associated with it. If power is socially given, then the language itself becomes more powerful. Ali states that this phenomenon is more prevalent among women in Qatari society. Furthermore, the words that are more widely used between the youth, such as "good," "already," "you know," and "ok," are spontaneously included in process of linguistic production. Over time, they have been integrated into Arabic.

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[91] Ibid., p. 75.
[92] Ibid., p. 38.
[93] Ibid., p. 39.
[94] Ibid., p. 66.
[95] Ali, *op. cit.*, 2009.

This introduces the concept of a colloquial language, or e-language, that has been developed by Qatar's youth in the last few years. Basically, this e-language consists of Arabic letters transliterated into English letters and numbers, which stand for sounds that do not exist in English. For example, 2=أ (*alif*), 3=ع (*'ayn*), 5=خ (*kha'*), 6=ط (*tah*), 6'=ظ (*dhah*), 7=ح (*ha'*), 8=ق (*qaf*), and 9=ص (*sadd*). This colloquial language is now used in different forms of media. For example, during the month of Ramadan in 2010, a Gulf TV series called *Aneen* used this colloquial language to present the cast list at the start of each episode. This was an ordinary Gulf series that did not discuss the issue of this new language, but it was used because this is what the youth were familiar with at the time. There are a number of benefits to using language in this way, but many first envision the downside—that the use of Arabic is declining.

However, though the language is not written with Arabic letters, the youth are still communicating in Arabic, even if using this language goes against the main approach of reviving the local Qatari dialect. It shows that the Qatari identity is still under formation and, alongside this, a new language is being developed. The methods used to revive the native dialect will lead to a much clearer view of the Qatari identity. In his article, Hasan Ali notes that the internet plays a substantial role in connecting the youth with foreign languages, which in Qatar's case is English. He states that foreign languages are increasingly used in chat rooms, emails, blogs, and websites.[96] This e-language is utilized to a large extent in this context because it is easier to use and can be more convenient, especially for the younger generations who have attended English speaking schools, but have spoken Arabic in their homes and everyday social life. Their daily communication included both languages, with each language carrying its own level of importance. Thus, the development of a somewhat unified language is to be expected.

Ali also expresses concern about the spread of English in restaurants, shops, hotels, and many other places, a trend that is increasing significantly in Qatar and the other countries in the Gulf. He feels that this is a negative trend that is an intrusion on local society and contradicts its norms and traditions. Concluding his article, he advises the youth to hold on to the Arabic language, stressing that Arabic is after all the language of their religion—Islam. Additionally, they should put more effort and importance towards the use of Arabic because of its cultural significance and the creativity associated with it. He further suggests that they should refrain from using English in

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[96] Ibid.

their everyday dialogue with family and friends, and stresses that they should be proud that Arabic is the language of the Quran and Islam.

Hasan Ali includes the opinion of Saleh Al-Sulaiti, who also criticizes this new phenomenon, reiterating the argument that this trend exists mainly among the youth, linking it to their desire to seem educated and exceptional. He questions the Arab identity of this younger generation, wondering where this identity, as well as the original Gulf cultural roots, has gone.[97] Recounting his own experience, Al-Sulaiti states that even though he speaks English fluently, he still talks with his friends in Arabic because he says that he is proud of the Arabic language since it forms part of his identity and culture.[98] Al-Sulaiti has no issue in confronting youth who deliberately speak English, advising them to use Arabic since there is no need for a façade. As has been shown, different factors shape the approach youth have taken toward the Arabic language. All are notable in their impact, but the educational system is still the major player.

The increased use of English in education is behind the decline of Arabic. Education is used to create a specific citizen, to mold an individual through the various institutions within the educational system.[99] Durkheim suggests that "all education consists of a continual effort to impose upon the child ways of seeing, thinking, and acting which he himself would not have arrived at spontaneously."[100] Over the last decade, the majority of schools in Qatar have been intensifying the use of English, creating a generation strong in English and weak in Arabic. This stands in contrast to the previous generations, who are strong in Arabic and sometimes fluent in English. Prior to this decade, the school curricula was taught in Arabic, with English introduced in year five. Some went to language institutes after finishing school to strengthen their English language, but Arabic remained the dominant language throughout their formative years. When considering that generation, the approach was beneficial; they kept their native language, and gained from the use of both languages. They had a strong Arabic basis, and English was an option for those who wished to strengthen it further.

More recently, a different trend developed by decreasing the number of hours for Arabic and Islamic Studies classes at schools. Again, this impacted the generation born

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[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Durkheim, *op. cit.*, p. 53-54.
[100] Ibid., p. 53.

in the late-1980s, early-1990s. It later transpired that most of the students who graduated from high school and entered university realized what they had lost. Their English was fluent, but at the expense of their Arabic. They were left to decide if they wanted to strengthen their Arabic or not. This issue was widespread and widely criticized by the parents and the older generation. This issue has been approached governmentally and societally. Consensus on this issue was clear: the Arabic language had to be strengthened. As Durkheim claims,

> Education sets out precisely with the object of creating a social being. Thus, there can be seen, as in an abbreviated form, how the social being has been fashioned historically. The pressure to which the child is subjected unremittingly is the same pressure of the social environment which seeks to shape him in its own image, and in which parents and teachers are only the representatives and intermediaries.[101]

In this equation, the educational system is just as important as the social system in shaping an individual, especially during the early years. Once the realization that Qatar was facing a language crisis came, different approaches were taken, the most important being the reformation of the education system. Arabic was made compulsory and was increasingly brought into the private schools. For example, Arabic was previously a minor subject at Qatar Academy, but there has recently been an increase in the number of hours during the week in which Arabic and Islamic Studies are taught, as well as a focus on the quality, so that when students graduate they have mastered the language at an advanced level. Another example is the Gulf English School. Prior to 2010, once the students reached their GCSE level at year ten, they had to choose two languages to study: Arabic, English, or French. Students had complete freedom to choose which two languages they wanted. After 2010, all native speakers of Arabic had to take Arabic and the second option was elective. These changes, even if they are taking place at a micro level, will definitely have a positive impact on these generations. One can say that the loss the past generation has suffered is a lesson to learn from. When a crisis occurred, the need for change became clear.

The above echoes Gran's concept of the Eurocentric paradigm, stating that "a paradigm change requires a crisis,"[102] which is exactly what happened in Qatar. Firstly, a

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[101] Ibid., 54.
[102] Gran, *op. cit.*, p. XX.

Eurocentric paradigm insinuates that everything, including history, is looked at from the perspective of the rise of the West. When language is introduced, it means the language of the West—English. Thus, to solve the problem, a paradigm shift is necessary. In Qatar, English should not be looked at as the dominant language, despite the benefits and importance in learning it, especially when it comes at the cost of one's native language. This is because language is not simply a mode of communication, but is also a central component of identity. An individual can subconsciously lose part of his or her identity by acquiring a foreign language at the expense of their native language.

Therefore, accepting the paradigm means accepting the different elements that come with it, and language is just one example, as is the importance of history. Gran suggests that history empowers individuals; having a Eurocentric paradigm would mean that the Europeans would view themselves as more powerful.[103] If a paradigm shift occurs, this would also change. In Qatar, with the revival of Arabic, specifically the local dialect, came the revival of national history. The realization came that the younger generations were not just weak in Arabic, but were also unaware of their national history, especially those who attended private schools. Their history classes focused on the First and Second World Wars, the Cold War, and their aftermaths, from primary through secondary education. Once these students entered university, they had no knowledge of their national history unless it had been taught in the home. For this reason, regional history courses were made available for university students, with many suggesting the need for more courses to be offered on Qatari national history, again applying to the same generation of students as previously mentioned. For later generations, reforms began within the primary and secondary schools. Qatar Academy began to introduce national history in its history classes, and hold more cultural activities, such as Qatar National Day celebrations. Like language, the crisis concerning history was more prevalent in private English speaking schools.

In the beginning, Arabic was revived in its classical form, but this soon switched to a revival of the local dialect. This approach strengthened not only the language basis, but it also played a role in triggering the formation of a specific national identity. This dialect holds such importance that it has developed into being the official language of the state. In the words of James Scott in *Seeing like a State,* "a distinct language […] is a far more powerful basis for autonomy than a complex residential pattern. It is also the bearer of a distinctive history, cultural sensibility, a literature, a mythology, a

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[103] Ibid., p. XII.

musical past."[104] This language would bring all these different elements together under the umbrella of state autonomy. Hence, "of all state simplifications, then, the imposition of a single, official language may be the most powerful, and it is the precondition of many other simplifications."[105] Language is the starting point from which the state can develop its different fields. In Qatar's case, it includes the development of its history and with this history comes the norms and traditions. Thus, as Scott claims, a cultural project stands behind this linguistic centralization.[106] This approach creates a specific definition of who and what it means to be Qatari, a concept that marks the beginning of the development of Qatar's national discourse.

The Shift toward a National Qatari Identity

Nationalism was more strongly reinforced when the state shifted the focus from Qatar's Independence Day to Qatar National Day. Independence Day was held on September 3, and National Day is now held on December 18. National Day marks the founding of the State of Qatar by Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani. The idea behind having a national day was to strengthen the national identity of the Qataris. Before the founding of the state, the affiliation was with the clan. This has now shifted to the state, though one should remember that the clan remains central. On the other hand, Independence Day had less emphasis in this area. Qatar was not colonized in the traditional sense of the word, the relationship with the British was more of an alliance and not of ownership and control. Hence, celebrating a national day was more appropriate. The state's national discourse would be developed with this approach, while Qataris would be provided with a lot more knowledge about their own national identity. National Day stresses nationalism within the context of identity, while Independence Day only focused on nationalism and patriotism. The idea was to revive a national identity that was forgotten over the years. Having a solid basis of the past and the identity associated with it would provide a smooth transition to the development of a modern national identity that would include elements from the past, while being somewhat developed to suit the present situation.

Revival of the Arabic language, specifically the local dialect, can be seen as directly associated with this national discourse. This was a necessary step in developing a solid national identity since language lies at the core of this identity formation for the new

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[104] Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid.

nation state. However, the focus was not simply on reviving the Arabic language, but on reviving the dynamics of Arabic. The state would create realities through words and these words would be in Arabic. Initially, the state focused on reviving Arabic in its classical form through different educational institutions. With the development of national identity, the local Qatari dialect was simultaneously being revived. Despite classical Arabic being important, particularly for the Qataris Islamic identity, the local dialect nonetheless played a larger role in culturally defining a Qatari. Though this was a state initiative, it also came from society itself. Again, Bourdieu's notion of the social conditions of production is applicable here in that Qatari society exerted pressure to ensure that the local Qatari dialect was preserved and welcomed the different efforts at reviving it.[107]

The Qatari dialect is, therefore, a socially embedded language, which according to James Scott is one that is attached to "resonances, connotations, ready metaphors, literature, oral history, idioms, and traditions of practical use."[108] This demonstrates how with the revival of the Qatari dialect also came the revival of Qatari national history and the development of Qatari nationalism. The state focused on creating a specifically Qatari national discourse.

The approach toward a unified nationalism is directly reflected in Qatar's National Day. As stated, it takes place every year on December 18, and has since 2008. The focus was to create a united Qatari identity that would include all the different tribes under the banner of nationalism. A huge part of the national day focuses on Qatar's national history since many of the country's youth had virtually no knowledge of their history. The Doha Channel (*Qanat al-Dawha*) was a state-sponsored television channel that focused on the history of Qatar and covered the events that took place on the day. The viewers were also introduced to the life of Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed, and informed of many of his sayings, poems, acts, approaches to life, and other things. The channel also outlined how the state of Qatar was formed.

Later, on May 18, 2012, Al-Rayyan Satellite Channel was launched to air throughout the year, and took on the role of Doha Channel. It replaced the channel on matters concerning the national day, though it has wider objectives in different areas. On its official website, Al-Rayyan TV states that one of its most important objectives is: "to

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[107] Bourdieu, *op. cit.*, p. 105.
[108] Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 257.

establish the concept of a Qatari national identity that cherishes the past, originality, the sense of belonging; to keep up with the modern times and the peoples race towards progress and modernization, without conflicting with the community's values and identity; and to contribute to the achievement of Qatar's National Vision for 2030."[109] In addition, one of the stated functions of the channel is to develop information and to educate the public on oral heritage stressing the emphasis on a clear-cut aim to raise awareness on oral history.[110]

Furthermore, if one looks at the programs archive, the names of the programs are in the local Qatari dialect and cover different aspects. For example, the program *Hal al-Bahar,* which means people of the sea, focuses on the marine environment in Qatar and the culture of the sea as a whole. Additionally, there is a program called *Mganees* which concerns falconry and hunting. These are just two examples of programs named using the local Qatari dialect, also focusing on local culture and history as well. These programs are continuously developed to include aspects from the past and the present, in addition to including an outlook toward the future. On National Day in 2012, an animated film "A Hero and a Message" (*Batal wa Risala*) tells the story of two children, Lolwa and Mohammed, on a journey to discover the history of Qatar.[111] The names of the children are traditional Qatari, Arab names. This approach reflects how the Qatari dialect is used and how national history is being reinforced.

The events that take place on national day are carefully chosen with a specific aim and purpose behind each of the events, though they are all united under the theme of fostering a Qatari national identity. The local Qatari dialect of Arabic is at the core of this process. The events benefit and inform the participants as well as the viewers. Firstly, there is the event of *Shad Al-Thlool*. Here, *Al-Thlool* is another word for camels. In this competition, the participants exhibit and compete for the best prepared camel for riding, which involves fitting the saddle (*shdad*) on the camel and positioning it firmly so that it does not fall off. Another similar competition is *Adab Al-Thlool*, which is a competition that focuses on who has the best control over their camel. It also highlights the manners that each camel should have. The best participants in this

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[109] Al-Rayyan Satellite TV Channel.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Al-Rayyan Satellite TV Channel broadcasted two movies: *al-Adaam* and *A Hero and a Message* in celebration of Qatar's national day. Al-Rayyan Media Center, Press Releases: Press details. http://www.alrayyan.tv/Arabic/MediaCenter/PressReleases/Pages/PressDetails.aspx?ItemID=84.

competition must demonstrate their leadership abilities through controlling the camel and teaching it specific manners. This competition also highlights which participants exhibit the most patience, which is an essential component in this situation, stressing aspects from the traditional Qatari culture, and benefits for the individual. These attributes were important historically, but over time they seem to have been forgotten. With a national day for celebration, they were brought back to the scene. Members of the newer generation became familiar with many different elements of their traditions. Poetry readings are particularly significant and are viewed as an essential part of the cultural history of the nation. A competition open to all is set up by the channel to encourage everyone to participate. The show is divided into two segments. The first part includes individuals who create their own poems, and the second features those that memorize poems of other poets. This stresses their power of memorization as well as their accuracy in the pronunciation of specific words in the local dialect. Four judges are present to correct and critique the participants.

Another important activity that takes place on the national day, and involves only male Qataris, is the *Al-Ardha*. Each tribe can have their own *Ardha*. The event consists of them choosing a suitable area to set up what they need, usually including such things as a large tent, horses, and flags. At the end of 2011, the construction of Al-Rifaa Street was complete linking Al-Shamal Road to Al-Shahanya Road. From the time of its opening, the street has been used for many national events. For national day, the street is divided into numbered zones on both sides for the different tribes, each tribe then uses this area for their *Ardha.* The members of the tribe are present early in the afternoon, and after the afternoon prayers the celebrations begin, starting with *Al-Rzif*, a type of sword dancing accompanied by music called *shala*. Tea and coffee are served until everyone goes to dinner after Isha (evening) prayers. This activity stresses communal bonding, and shows that each tribe is celebrating the formation of the State of Qatar. They are acknowledging that this event is a crucial part in their history, a history that deserves recognition. This is extremely important for the younger generations because the older members have experienced almost all of these events. To some, these events remind them of earlier times. The general atmosphere makes them feel like they went back several decades. Thus, one can say that history can also be visually represented. Through this visual representation, one finds it much easier to learn and understand their own history. The most important element that should be highlighted in Qatar's national day is experience. These events take place not just for the viewing of individuals, but for participation and involvement.

Additionally, in an effort to entrench the local Qatari dialect, streets and areas were re-named. Some gained their original name while others were re-spelled so that they would be pronounced in the Qatari dialect. For example, the Old Rayyan area used to be called *Al-Rayyan Al-Qadim* but has now been changed to *Al-Rayyan Al-Aateeq*, its original name. *Aateeq* is the equivalent of "old" in the local Qatari dialect, and is pronounced in the local dialect as *Al-Aateej*. In addition, Qatari license plates are now written in Arabic numbers, instead of the earlier Indian origin numbers. Finally, another important step is that formal communication between the ministries has to be done in the Arabic language. In line with these efforts, different government services and agencies were re-named. For example, Qatar's Taxis changed to *Karwa*, which has also become the name of the company, and is an old word that means money used today to ask about a sum of money or rent.[112] There is also a company called *Barwa*, a traditional Qatari word that means an official document. In the past, Qataris placed these in a box to protect them and to avoid losing them. Choosing this name for the company was based on two things: the first was the word's link to the old heritage for the purpose of uniting the next generation and preserving the Qatari identity, while the second relates to the importance and relevance of this word, especially in the real estate sector when ownership of property is considered.[113] Additionally, the police used to be called *Shurtat Al-Najda*, but are now called *Al-Fazaa*, in reference to those who promptly come to help if someone is in trouble, the *yafza lahu*. There is another police division that was introduced called *Likhwiya*, referring to those who are always around for help, and, historically, accompanied the ruler. Furthermore, there is also *Mitrash*, a phone service provided by the Ministry of Interior that sends text messages to its customers informing them about relevant information, such as traffic violations, passport expiration, and other helpful updates; this is provided free for its customers.[114] These examples show how the local Qatari dialect is being revived and brought back through usage in different areas, aiding it in becoming the operating language; this is exactly what reviving the dynamics of language means.

The same process is also occurring through different cultural events taking place in Qatar. As stressed earlier in this paper, sports carry a huge importance in Qatari culture, especially football. This is part of state formation and the notion of creating a

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[112] *Karwa Encyclopedia*.
[113] Qatar Shares.
[114] Qatar Ministry of Interior.

specified identity; hence, analyzing the language used in sports would further illustrate this phenomenon. It should be noted that, in addition to the revival of language, the area of sports also carries significant importance for the state. It mirrors Qatar's aim for international recognition. There is increasing involvement in sports on a national, regional, and international level, making this a multilayered process. At the local level, the Qatari dialect is being revived, and a place is being set for the Qatari state internationally. For example, the Doha Asian Games Opening Ceremony held in December 2005 illustrates this approach. The ceremony took place in Qatar's Khalifa Stadium and focused on the future and aims of the Qatari youth.[115] Qatari children were the first to perform, creating the vision of a traditional Arabian carpet, or in the local Qatari dialect the *Sadu* carpet, which covered the stadium floor. [116]

The official mascot for the games was the Arabian Oryx named "Orry". During the opening ceremony, young individuals from Aspire Sports Academy sprinted around the stadium chasing the Oryx. "Qatar always wanted to be on the sports map again and this performance done by the youngsters created an emphasis on youth to comprehend that Qatar wants to be the sports capital of the Middle East."[117] The Oryx is not just a mascot that was used, but was also a symbol of Qatar and the identity of the desert associated with it. No matter how much the state progressed, elements of the past would still define its identity.

In line with the general theme, the music used was also traditional. The first part of the ceremony, which focused on a young man called "seeker," who began the discovery of Asia guided only by the stars and his astrolabe, was called "The Journey Begins".[118] He faced a storm at sea, and was then rescued by a falcon that led him to land where he began discovering the different cultures and history of Asia. At the end, after a variety of cultural presentations had been shown, the seeker began to show his son "the Arab world's contributions to modern science in the past, present, and the future. Sixty-four horsemen also entered the stadium in the piece 'Tribute to the Desert Horseman'".[119] These are the segments in the opening ceremony that focused on different aspects of the Qatari and Arab identity. One can also see here the utilization of the Arabic

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[115] The Official Website of the 16th Asian Games.
[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid.

language in mirroring these specific identities, again demonstrating the dynamics of language revival.

The power of language is measured in its application, and these examples show how Arabic is being utilized in different areas, especially considering the importance of words and symbols used in these events. Similarly, looking at the language and symbols used in the 2011 Asian Cup in Doha, the conclusion is the same. The mascots for the Asian Cup were inspired by the surrounding local environment, with the Qatari designed mascots—five mice characters, though the Arabic word for mouse was not used; rather, the designer, Ahmad Al-Maadeed, assigned the traditional Qatari term *Aljarboo*. This is a mouse that specifically lives in the Gulf area. The most known fact about this type of mouse is its amazing speed, which explains one reason why it was chosen for a sporting event. More importantly, each of the five *Jarabee*, the plural of *Aljarboo*, was given a traditional name that represented different areas in Qatar, comprising a family with a father, mother, an older sister, a middle brother, and a younger brother.[120]

The father was called *Zikreeti* and was colored green; he worked hard to protect his family, and his main traits were wisdom, love of life, and calmness. His name comes from the area of *Zikreet* in the west of Qatar. The mother, *Trana*, was passionate about raising her children and was colored purple; she was considered noble and able to make decisions wisely, in addition to being highly imaginative. Her name is derived from the area of *Tiriyana* in the south of Qatar. The eldest daughter, *Fraiha*, was red, and was seen as a good role model for her brothers and was lively and energetic, always happy and helping others; her name is obtained from an area that lies in the north of Qatar, which was one of the most important trading centers in the 18th century. Then, there was Sboog the middle son who was blue. He was strong, active, and had a leader's spirit; he was also smart and very fast with a lot of enthusiasm. Sboog is the traditional name for the *Jarboo* in Qatar. This provides the example of how the local Qatari dialect is being revived through these sporting events. Lastly, there was the younger brother called *Timbki* who was yellow, and was characterized by his courage and firmness, as well as his ability to smile even during the hardest of times. His name comes from an area east of Qatar, called *Timbik*.[121]

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[120] al-Gharbawi, "Revealing the Asian Cup Spell".
[121] Ibid.

Also, when analyzing the bid for the FIFA 2022 World Cup the first issue that stands out is identity construction. Winning the FIFA 2022 World Cup bid directly expresses the drive to form an independent identity. In the world of sports, Qatar has succeeded to make a name for itself internationally. The build up towards 2022 will be very interesting to witness, especially in terms of the different development strategies that the state will use to show a specific Qatari identity to the rest of the world.

Conclusion

> The fact remains that social science has to take account of the autonomy of language, its specific logic, and its particular rules of operation. In particular, one cannot understand the symbolic effects of language without making allowance for the fact, frequently attested, that language is the exemplary formal mechanism whose generative capacities are without limits. There is nothing that cannot be said and it is possible to say nothing. One can say everything in language...[122]

One can say that the symbolism of language is just as important as language itself. This study pays particular attention to the power of the symbols produced in society, which is linked to the concept of language and nationalism. Pure linguistics can function as a communicative tool, but the symbols created through it are much more powerful. Here, "language forms a kind of wealth... [and] freely participating in the general treasure, unconsciously aid in its preservation."[123] In Qatar, with the strengthening of classical Arabic came the revival of the local Qatari dialect. This has gone hand in hand with the formation of a Qatari national identity as language is used to create this treasure for citizens. With this also came the centrality of oral history, especially since oral narratives are essential to nation and identity building.

With the process of writing this paper came the realization that the linguistic or the communicative aspect of the Arabic language was just one part of this revival process. The more significant and influential aspect was the development of a specifically defined Qatari identity. The language itself is being revived, but the outcome shows that other dimensions are being created. Linguistics is a dynamic feature of identity. Thus, Arabic in Qatar is not simply linguistics, but is also a vital reflection of identity, placing language at the core of identity formation.

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[122] Bourdieu, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
[123] Ibid., p. 43.

As demonstrated above, Qatar's focus has been on reviving the local *Nabati* dialect, a dialect derived from classical Arabic that has been reshaped by the surrounding culture. Within this context, the redefinition of tribalism was crucial to this analysis. The study demonstrated how the tribal structure in the Gulf is not triangular; rather, it is fluid and complex. A structure exists that binds the tribes together, though each has its own autonomy. They are interconnected but independent at the same time.

In light of the above, the main conclusion on language and language theory are as follows: language is formed by the surrounding social and political context in which society becomes a powerful force in determining which language dominates. More importantly, a strong connection is evident between language and nationalism. Pure linguistics can function as a communicative tool, but the symbols created through language are much more powerful and assist in the formation of a national identity. Language becomes operative.

Context-specific conclusions were reached, mainly indicating how the state played an important role in the revival process, as did Qatari society when they pushed for the revival of the local Qatari dialect. Historically, Qataris have striven for autonomy which dictates a specifically defined identity. Qatar's historical identity is tied to the tribal structure, which is connected to a specific type of language. This language is not classical, but is the local dialect.

The revival has been a two way process. The strong influence of Qatari society suggests that the Qatari dialect is a socially embedded language in which the social context lies at the core. This explains how the revival of national history came about in Qatar, one which is strongly linked to the tribal structure and its identity. Thus, as language and history are being revived, the state has an outlined approach for nationalism. The aim is to create a specifically defined Qatari national discourse that highlights a particular identity for the state on the national, as well as the international, level. As Qatar is becoming more involved in the global arena, it needs a well-defined identity to distinguish itself from others. This fits well in the state's current ideology.

In the future, the paper can be expanded to include the rest of the Gulf where similar processes are also taking place. This opens the arena for further research on this topic, which can be expanded to include the different contexts of the GCC countries. One can then compare and define the similarities and differences. Important questions would

need to be addressed here, including: if there are similarities why do they exist? Are they determined by the strong overlap of history and culture? What about the differences? Why would they exist and what would these differences explain? How do the different approaches define the agenda of the state?

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