SEEING SECURITY: 
SOCIETAL SECURITIZATION IN QATAR

A Dissertation 
submitted to the Faculty of the 
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences 
of Georgetown University 
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the 
degree of 
Doctor of Philosophy 
in Government 

By

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Washington, D.C. 
March 2, 2010
ABSTRACT

This dissertation applies securitization theory to Qatari society, and develops a new regime type, the “laissez faire autocracy.” Qatari society is securitized against the constructed threats of Western influence and South Asian migrant labor. Four advances to securitization theory are made in this non-Western, non-democratic context. First, this project deconstructs Western-centric notions of “strong” and “weak” states in the context of securitization. Second, securitization theory’s privileging of the speech-act is subsumed into a larger discussion of action, because in states without full freedom of speech, actions often do speak louder than words. Third, the case study is an example of institutionalized securitization, because rigid ethnic/tribal conceptions of “Qatari society” have led to a politics of exclusion with regards to migration and outside influence. Fourth and finally, securitization theory’s focus on decision-making and audience is called into question; the power of decision-making is purposely vague in a laissez faire autocracy, and securitization is highly intersubjective. At a policy level, an understanding of society in Qatar as securitized, and informing the perceptions of migrant labor and Western ideas as the major security threats in the Gulf region, should inform policy alternatives for Gulf states and Western democracies.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation could never have been completed without the assistance of Andrew Gardner, who provided me with a crash course in Gulf anthropology. His cooperation and feedback throughout the project was selfless, and he is a truly generous scholar and person. Uday Rosario has also been particularly helpful in my research in both Doha and Kerala; he has shared with me his deep knowledge of and passion for migrant laborers in the Gulf. Both Andrew and Uday allowed me to tag along on their visits to the Industrial Area, for which I am extremely grateful. I am deeply indebted to my primary adviser, Tony Arend, and my committee: Mehran Kamrava, Kate McNamara, and my friend and mentor Laura Sjoberg. Gary Johnson and Len Gambrell’s faith in me early on in my education, and their passing on of the travel bug, was important in my choice to pursue graduate work in international politics. My employers at Texas A&M at Qatar, especially Todd Kent, have been supportive and patient in the final two years of the dissertation process. I am grateful to Lene Hansen and Claire Wilkinson, both of whom have been extremely thoughtful in their feedback, which has substantively improved this dissertation. Jenny Lobasz and Lauren Wilcox have provided excellent feedback on this and multiple other projects. Tatiana Mollazadeh kept my paperwork in order in Washington while I have spent these years abroad, and has made sure that I never missed a deadline thanks to her careful eye. Finally, I’d like to thank the Department of Government at Georgetown University—Georgetown Forever—for giving me the opportunity to live and study in Washington, DC, and the Gulf region.
This dissertation is dedicated to my family:

For Laura, Sara, and my parents (Mum and Pa)…
I could never have made this journey without your love and unconditional support.

And to the builders of Doha:

It is my hope that this project shines some light on your daily experiences, and provides suggestions for real change.
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INTRODUCTION

Imagine a country where less than 20% of the residents are citizens, and the vast majority are expatriates. Citizens are granted land, interest-free home loans, heavy subsidies, and plum job appointments, whereas the expats who build the citizens’ homes themselves reside in aluminum “labour camps” with sporadic water and electricity. In this place, citizens guard their status closely, while simultaneously limiting the right of expatriates to exit the country without express permission. Newfound wealth brings satellite televisions and international schools, while simultaneously provoking a backlash against “Western” values. Migration, citizenship, human rights: all of these are security issues in such a state.

This is the reality in the oil- and gas-rich Persian Gulf (known simply as “the Gulf” on the Arabian side), in small states including Qatar, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates. As this dissertation will demonstrate, Qatari society has been securitized as a reaction to constructed threats including Western cultural influence and South Asian migrant labor. By utilizing work from the Copenhagen School of critical security studies, these threats to societal security (or societal securitization) will shed new light on the most important security issues in Qatar and the Gulf more broadly.

While contributing to the discussion of Gulf security, this dissertation’s largest contributions may be in the theoretical realm. As will be discussed at length, securitization theory revolves around the central claim that security is a speech act, and therefore requires discourse analysis to be studied. This dissertation applies securitization theory in the Gulf, where press freedoms are strictly limited and
government rulings are not transparent. Within the current debate, I posit that securitization theory is indeed relevant outside the EU or U.S., and furthermore, that its application elsewhere has important consequences for the central claim that security is a speech act. In non-democracies, action and not speech is the means by which security is constructed and understood. This claim has potentially wide-ranging implications for the utility of discourse analysis in non-democracies, and also opens up new possibilities for qualitative work in political science more broadly.

This dissertation is divided into six chapters. In the first chapter, I review the literature and concepts from the Copenhagen School of critical security studies. By studying securitization in a non-democratic context (Qatar), I am able to make four major theoretical advances. These will be introduced in this chapter, and discussed more fully in light of the case study in upcoming chapters.

In chapter two, I provide a background to Qatar and Qatari society, focusing on recent history and the effects of tribalism and Islam on modern Qatar. As will be demonstrated, tribalism has not died out with the making of a modern state; on the contrary, it remains central to the organization and functioning of Qatar (Gause 1994). Here, the popular Arab saying remains salient: “I against my brothers; my brothers and I against our cousins; my brothers and cousins and I against the world.” In other words, Qatari society may be best understood as a series of concentric circles, wherein one’s immediate family garners the most loyalty, followed by cousins, fellow tribespeople,
other Qataris, Gulf nationals, Arabs, and so on, as demonstrated in Figure 1:

In the second chapter, a new regime type (the laissez-faire autocracy) will be introduced, and my dissertation’s methodology—which is directly affected by the particularities of fieldwork in Qatar—will be discussed.

Following in the vein of the “concentric circles” metaphor, chapter three will elaborate on the innermost circles: the relations of Qataris with other Qataris, with Gulf nationals, and with other Arabs. As will be demonstrated, societal securitization occurs even at level of family and tribe, with strict differentiations within Qatari society and only a distant affinity to Arabs from outside the Gulf (such as Egypt or Lebanon). Non-Gulf Arab migrants are a highly politicized group; however, their presence is generally seen as threatening to the state (regime) sector, rather than to the (Qatari) societal sector, in the parlance of the Copenhagen School. In this third chapter, I will begin a discussion
on spatial separation in traditional and modern Doha: specifically the phenomenon of walled villas and gated compounds that make homes imposing from the outside, and neighborhoods less “neighborly.”

In chapter four, Qatari society’s love/hate relationship with “The West” will be examined. This broad category includes the increasing hegemony of the English language as a *lingua franca* throughout the Gulf. The (real and perceived) effects of new technologies such as the internet, satellite television and American programming, mobile phones, and Bluetooth also will be discussed. I will analyze the tension and occasional disconnect between the modern, Western-looking Qatari emir and his traditional subjects/citizens.

Chapter five will expand to the furthest “concentric circle” and focus on the securitized relationship between Qatari society and the large South Asian migrant population in Qatar. Focusing specifically on migrants from India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines, I will explore how the concept of “societal securitization” is *lived* by this population. Many of these migrants are men who leave their families (often wives and children) behind in their home country, and upon arrival to Qatar are designated “bachelors.” This chapter demonstrates most clearly that discourse is at times inadequate—in polyglot Qatar, action often speaks volumes. By focusing on spatial separation in public areas (the banning of bachelors in “Family Only” parks and “Family Day” policies at shopping malls), as well as their separate “bachelor” accommodation in labor camps, I seek to demonstrate that at times, security does *not* require a speech act in
order to exist. This Family Day example will also be used throughout chapter one as I lay out the theoretical framework of the dissertation.

In the sixth and final chapter, I will develop more fully the four advances to securitization theory which are introduced in chapter one. I will also re-engage in a further discussion of methodology, picking up where chapter two left off in light of the case studies. Because studying action requires moving beyond discourse analysis, I have taken inspiration from the fields of visual anthropology and visual sociology, utilizing photography and video in ways not commonplace within political science. By introducing the possibility of a “visual political science,” and combining it with more traditional research methods, I hope to advance the discussion on the limits of discourse analysis and the advantages of multi-method qualitative work.

At a policy level, a better understanding of the Middle East, and especially the resource-rich Gulf, is crucial to global security. In these pages, I argue that traditional security studies’ Westphalian focus on sovereign states has led to a critical misreading of the major threats to security in the Gulf. I agree with Ole Wæver (2004) when he writes that IR’s “focus on sovereignty, inter-state war and abstract theory” has led to a “striking misfit” between IR theory and the reality in the developing world. By incorporating domestic-level insights from the field of comparative politics into this application of IR theory, this dissertation is well poised to speak to broad audiences. Specifically, I will apply an understanding of security as intersubjectively constructed in the Gulf, and use it

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1 If one performs a search in academic journals (and indeed on the internet as a whole) for “visual political science,” only minimal and peripheral hits are gathered. As of yet, there is no such thing as visual political science. Though my methods do not rely solely on visual images, they do play a large part in the project.
to make the insight that the greatest perceived threat to security in the region is societal, and not to the political/military state sectors.

Whereas traditional Gulf security analyses focus on the threat of a dueling or balancing Saudi Arabia and Iran, extended fieldwork in Qatar has exposed quite a different reality. As a result of societal securitization, the duties of the Qatari state include first and foremost the protection of Qatari society. By developing a new regime type, the “laissez-faire autocracy,” I am able to demonstrate the means by which the Qatari rulers, merchants, and public have worked together both to co-construct and to respond to outside threats.

A small but growing number of practitioners have been arguing that the number one threat to regional stability in the Gulf is actually internal: potential unrest from the large population of unskilled migrant labor. This analysis stems from one undeniable yet astonishing fact: in Qatar, at least 85% of the residents are actually expatriates. As Col. Alastair Campbell, Director of the Qatar offices of the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) has pointed out, the small Gulf states operate on the assumption that in the unlikely event of a regional power invasion (namely Saudi Arabia or Iran), the U.S. and other Western powers would support and defend their strategic interests—much as when Iraq invaded Kuwait. (Campbell also points out that a more likely scenario is that Iran could cause trouble within Qatar’s territorial sea.) On the other hand, goes Campbell’s argument, were Qatar to suffer internal instability (as has occurred in Bahrain and Dubai,
when labor has mobilized and rioted), the emir and his government are effectively on their own.²

This threat to internal stability is being taken so seriously that RUSI has been contracted by the Qatari Ministry of the Interior to produce a report. As Campbell wrote, “The remit is to assess the effect of migrant labour on the security and prosperity of Qatar with recommendations for further regulation and adapting policing techniques.”³ In other words, the Qatari government has tasked RUSI with determining best-practice policing strategies for the various worker populations in the country. This project and the high levels of access that RUSI enjoys suggests that the Qatari state takes internal security very seriously.

Yet as this dissertation demonstrates, it seems highly unlikely that migrant labor—itself a group with little linguistic or social cohesiveness—will organize to present a threat to the Qatari state (or the military) itself. Likewise, Western (American) military presence is not often held up as threatening the Qatari way of life, but Western television programs are. The weakness of traditional security analyses is their failure to identify the various sectors in which security is lived and understood. The Copenhagen School of critical security studies introduces us to the idea that security threats are felt in several sectors, including military, political, societal, economic, and environmental. Identifying and theorizing security threats in the Gulf region is made much clearer with the incorporation of concepts from critical security studies.

² As stated by Col. Campbell in a lecture to Texas A&M graduate students in Doha, January 2009, and repeated privately at a function hosted by Georgetown University in Qatar, 10 March 2009.
³ Email correspondence, 12 March 2009.
Such a suggestion comes at an important time. The Gulf’s natural gas and petroleum reserves guarantee that GCC\(^4\) states will remain chief concerns to U.S. and EU foreign policymakers for years to come, and the geopolitics of the region have effects worldwide. Yet, few if any students of IR have attempted to study Gulf security from a critical perspective.\(^5\) This dissertation will expand our understanding of securitization theory’s utility outside of Western democracies. Furthermore, I hope to provide a highly policy-relevant analysis of the spaces for improvement in human rights in Qatar.

\(^4\) Gulf Cooperation Council, made up of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman.

\(^5\) Comprehensive studies so far have either been situated in regional/comparative literature, other specialized literature (such as media studies), or traditional security studies. Many of the best of these are now quite dated. For regional/comparative studies, see Cardenas and Flibbert 2005; Crystal 2005; Kamrava and Mora 1998; Kubba 2000; Melikian and Al-Easa 1981; Rathmell and Schulze 2000; for media studies, see Al-Hail 2000; Al-Khater and Naser 2003; for general discussions (in IR journals, but not utilizing IR theory) see Ross 2001.
CHAPTER ONE:

THE COPENHAGEN SCHOOL AND SECURITIZATION

This chapter will be devoted to introducing the concept of critical security studies, and locating the contributions of the Copenhagen School within this framework. I also introduce four advances to the Copenhagen School’s theoretical framework which this dissertation seeks to make by utilizing the case of migration in Qatar.

1.1 Critical security studies

The field of international security studies emerged during the Cold War and has its roots firmly planted in a state-centric, politico-military understanding of security (Fierke 2007). Security as a concept is unproblematicized in this literature, and is treated instead as a commodity that states (and actors) seek. Traditional realists agree that all states seek security; structural realists argue that this intractable problem has one overarching systemic-level cause: anarchy (Morgenthau 1978; Waltz 1979). Defensive realists extend this further, and focus on the balance of threat, pointing out that while states may not be inherently aggressive, they are inherently security-seeking and therefore evaluate potential threats to their existence (Walt 1987).

From this realist starting point, critical security studies starts to question the underlying assumptions of security-seeking behavior. Security is a broadly used term that, at its most basic, means to be safe from danger (Booth 2005, 13; Fierke 2007, 13).
Are states the only security-seeking actors in the international system? Is politico-military security the only sort of security that actors seek? As Krause and Williams point out, “security is in itself meaningless. To have any meaning, security necessarily presupposes something to be secured; as a realm of study it cannot be self-referential” (1997, ix). Critical security studies as a field reminds us that states are not the only security-seeking actors, and that danger is not limited to military threat. After the end of the Cold War, it became more evident that some transnational and global security threats are non-military in nature (such as climate change, poverty, and trafficking in human beings). It also became more evident that non-state actors play an important role in world politics, an insight shared and developed alongside the increase in popularity of constructivism as a school of thought in IR (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Wendt 1999).

Thinking about security studies from a critical perspective involves recognizing these two major insights: that non-military threats do play a role in international behavior, and that states are not the only (or even the primary) actors in world politics. There has been a rich and growing literature around these concepts for at least the past ten to fifteen years. In 1997, Keith Krause and Michael C. Williams organized many self-described critical security theories into one edited volume, *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases*. Whereas Ken Booth of the Frankfurt School uses the “Critical Security Studies” label to refer exclusively to Habermasian and Gramscian approaches to security, Krause and Williams’s volume is explicitly inclusive of a range of “small-c” critical theories.
Theories that are broadly considered by Krause and Williams to be “critical” include social constructivism, Marxism, feminism, “fallen realist,” Third World, and post-modernism, to name but a few. Krause and Williams, like Fierke (2007) after them, rely on a definition of “critical” no more strict than the one proposed by Robert Cox in 1981.

Cox differentiates between what he calls “problem-solving theory” and “critical theory,” arguing that the former “takes prevailing social and power relationships and the institutions in which they are organized…as the given framework for action” while the latter “calls them into question by concerning itself with their origins and how and whether they might be in the process of changing” (Cox 1981, 128-9). In other words, while traditional analyses tend to take the sovereign state system (and its counterpart, anarchy) for granted, and strives to understand political and military interactions such as voting behavior and the causes of war, critical theorists tend to question these assumptions, focusing instead (for example) on the origins, development, and limits of

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6 Wæver (2004) describes the “capital-C capital-T Critical Theory” of the Frankfurt School, which seeks to problematize state-centric notions of security, and focus instead on advancing human-centric reconceptualizations. The goal of this variant of Critical Theory is understood to be “emancipation”—that is, humans’ freedom from the constraints of state goals (such as war, which produces misery and human suffering) and a devolution of power to more local authorities, while at the same time connecting less-sovereign states into a community (Booth, Security and Emancipation 1991). Some in this vein focus on “human security” as an alternative to state-centric security. The concept of human security arguably first arose in the 1994 United Nations Human Development Report, and has been picked up by many theorists and some states (namely, Canada) as an attractive alternative to the lens of state-centric security. This school of thought is influenced mostly by Habermas’s concept of communicative action and by Gramsci’s notion of cultural hegemony (Wyn Jones 1999). It remains more or less optimistic about the possibility for transformation (or emancipation) from the current global order.
sovereignty, and on whether anarchy is an appropriate way to describe the international order. Critical security theorists tend to accept an “expansionist agenda” which “sought to replace the emphasis on the state and the threat or use of force with a broader array of referent objects and sources of insecurity” (Fierke 2007, 2).

The critical approach does not seek to replace, but rather to incorporate, traditional approaches to security. To take the classic Cold War example of the Cuban Missile Crisis, a critical analysis would not deny that the security threat of nuclear war was central to the U.S. and Soviet interactions. However, it would examine “the dynamics by which security and insecurity are produced” (Fierke 2007, 2) and problematize, perhaps, the thinking that led to “Mutually Assured Destruction” as a possible outcome and strategy under deterrence theory. By critiquing the assumptions of deterrence theory, critical theorists could highlight the ways in which “all inquiries into security are normative” and based on “social, ideological, cultural or political structures” (Fierke 2007, 3). Likewise, a critical study of the Vietnam war could examine the ideological and normative underpinnings of containment policy and how this belief system led to U.S. intervention.

The critical approach reminds us that “processes by which security is defined, by which threats become security threats, and by which individuals, states or others become subjects of security are fundamentally political” (Fierke 2007, 4). It is not ontologically predetermined, to take a modern example, that the practice of human trafficking should be defined as a security problem or as a human rights problem (or some combination of the two). In fact, the U.S. has tended to favor a security-centric approach to the
epidemic, focusing on breaking up trafficking rings and imprisoning kingpins, while the European Union has paid relatively more attention to treatment and recovery of the victims of trafficking (Heeg 2005).

Fierke (2007) cautions against the notion that in the post-9/11 world, traditional, politico-military conceptions of security have re-taken the mainstream, and that critical approaches will fall by the wayside. Instead, she argues, “security, post-11 September 2001, can be seen less as a reaffirmation of the narrow military definition than as part of a larger process of broadening and transformation” (Fierke 2007, 5). This transformation involves a re-definition of a world where wars are fought between sovereign states “to one where multiple risks, threats and responses are being defined in a more complex world, involving both state and non-state actors, against the backdrop of globalization” (Fierke 2007, 28). Indeed, this “backdrop of globalization” is precisely why securitization in Qatar has taken place.

The remainder of this dissertation will focus on one subset of critical security studies, the so-called Copenhagen School. In the remainder of this chapter, the major contributions of the Copenhagen School will be laid out, and the theoretical advances of this dissertation will be introduced.

1.2 The Copenhagen School of critical security studies

Like all critical security studies, the Copenhagen School’s theories are based on the concept that security is a normative, not a material, structure. The central texts in the
Copenhagen School (CS) include Ole Wæver (1995) and Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde (1998), henceforth Buzan et al. The CS has made several contributions to international relations theory; the two most relevant to this project are the concepts of *security sectors* (specifically, the societal sector) and *securitization*. After a brief introduction, this section will introduce each of these in turn.

The CS and the field of critical security studies more generally adheres to an understanding of security as intersubjectively constructed, and not ontologically given as it would appear in many traditional security studies accounts. Buzan writes, “security (as with all politics) ultimately rests neither with the objects nor with the subjects but among the subjects (cf. Arendt 1958, 1959; Wæver 1990; Huysmans 1996)” (Buzan et al 1998, 31). For example, how a society or government chooses to respond to a terrorist act differs across time and place—whereas the United States had a militaristic reaction to the 9/11 attacks, Japan and Germany have typically viewed terrorist attacks “not as a military but as a policing problem” (Katzenstein 2003, 732). The central point is that the topics we define as security issues can vary.

What is security, according to the CS? Wæver (1995, 55) summarizes it:

> With the help of language theory, we can regard ‘security’ as a speech act. In this usage, security is not of interest as a sign that refers to something more real; the utterance itself is the act. By saying it, something is done (as in betting, giving a promise, naming a ship). By uttering ‘security’ a state-representative moves a particular development into a specific area, and thereby claims a special right to use whatever means necessary to block it.

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7 Wæver 2004’s summary of the Copenhagen School names one other major category of theoretical development, the regional security sector; this concept is less relevant to the dissertation’s case study but is described at length in (Buzan and Wæver 2003).

8 Katzenstein does not consider himself to be part of the Copenhagen School; the idea that security is intersubjectively constructed is not exclusive to the CS.
The CS’s focus on the speech-act comes from the work of philosopher/linguist John Austin, one of the early proponents of discourse analysis.

Buzan et al stress that “the security speech act is not defined by uttering the word security. What is essential is the designation of an existential threat requiring emergency action or special measures and the acceptance of that designation by a significant audience” (1998, 27). Societal securitization in Qatar makes an excellent testing ground for this conception of security for four reasons. First, Qatari society does not fit with Westphalian assumptions; the state and society do not neatly overlap. Second, there is no “uttering,” because in the highly securitized arena of migration, the regime is intransigent or, more often, silent. This presents a fundamental challenge to the portrayal of security as speech-act, and suggests that action (versus discourse) may be an equally appropriate marker for security, especially in non-democratic contexts. Third, “emergency measures” have become institutionalized in this non-democratic context. Fourth, the designation of existential threat is not clearly initiated by the state apparatus in this laissez faire autocracy.

“In securitization theory, ‘security’ is treated not as an objective condition but as the outcome of a specific social process; the social construction of security issues” (Williams 2003, 513). “Issues become ‘securitized,’ treated as security issues, through…speech-acts which do not simply describe an existing security situation, but bring it into being as a security situation by successfully representing it as such.” Consider financial systems collapse, global warming, and human trafficking to take a few more examples: when these phenomena are characterized as existential threats to the
The CS understands security as existing within several sectors, including the traditional-security studies realm of the military but also in the political, economic, societal, and environmental sectors. Sectors are not ontologically separate, but instead they are analytical devices or lenses (Buzan et al 1998, 168).

One way of looking at sectors is to see them as identifying specific types of interaction. In this view, the military sector is about relationships of forceful coercion; the political sector is about relationships of authority, governing status, and recognition; the economic sector is about relationships of trade, production, and finance; the societal sector is about relationships of collective identity; and the environmental sector is about relationships between human activity and the planetary biosphere (Buzan et al 1998, 7).

For example, Wæver (1995) demonstrates that in the environmental sector in the Netherlands, flooding is securitized, or perceived as an existential threat, so that extreme measures will be taken to ensure that dikes are built. “If we place the survival of collective units and principles—the politics of existential threat—as the defining core of security studies, we have the basis for applying security analysis to a variety of sectors without losing the essential quality of the concept” (Buzan et al 1998, 27).

For this study, the societal sector is most relevant, as it is Qatari society who perceives the threat to its identity. The most common threat to societal security is migration (Buzan et al 1998, 121). Membership in Qatari society is based on ethnicity,

Wæver (2002) also suggests the existence of a religious sector.
because membership in the Qatari state is closely tied to membership in the Qatari nation. When nations correspond closely to the state, “references to the nation and its identity are often made by persons in positions of state power” (Buzan et al 1998, 123). Although citizens form a small minority in Qatar, the state is run by and for Qatari nationals; their rights are enfranchised and their citizenship is closely guarded by the state. So in Qatar we can expect to see appeals to the maintenance and protection of the Qatari nation made by state officials. In fact, these calls are fully institutionalized into the state bureaucracy, manifested as (for example) the National Council for Culture, Arts and Heritage, whose objective is to “protect” and “preserve” national heritage—language used often by various state-level actors.\footnote{But as we shall see, it is often the merchant class (business owners) doing the everyday securitization.}

Security in the societal sector depends on shared identity—a society’s sense of ‘we-ness.’ According to Wæver (1995, 67): “a society that loses its identity fears that it will no longer be able to live as itself.” The concepts of society and identity are inextricably linked: “Society is about identity, the self-conception of communities and of individuals identifying themselves as members of a community” (Buzan et al 1998, 119).

In Qatar, “Qatari society” correlates to Qatari nationals. The remaining 85% of the population is a combination of skilled and unskilled expats, of Western, Asian, African, Arab, and other descent. The idea that unskilled, Asian, male laborers are the main threat to identity (not all expatriates for example) is highly constructed.

\footnote{See for example “Sheikha Mozah’s speech,” \textit{Gulf Times} 4 November 2008, in which Sheikha Mozah talks about defending the traditional way of life in the face of threat from outside (al-Misned 2008).}
The idea that “Qatari society” only includes 15% of the people in Qatar may be surprising. In Qatar, in practice, several “societies” exist side-by-side.\textsuperscript{11} The life-worlds of Qatari families, families housed in Western compounds, and men living in the Industrial Area rarely (if ever) mix outside the area of commerce and business transactions. However, because of the state-centric bias of both international relations and personal experience, we normally assume that “society” = the people who live in and are loyal to a state (American society; French society). The expat/migrant (indeed, the vast majority of Qatar’s population) exists outside “Qatari society” in this understanding, and as this dissertation will demonstrate in upcoming chapters, this understanding is the basis for securitization and repression, because the delineation between Qataris and non-Qataris is strict.

This is not to say that “Qatari identity” need be fixed—only that because it is constructed along ethnic lines, the result is a relatively fixed identity (under threat). One criticism of the Copenhagen School’s securitization theory is that it reifies notions of society and identity, and does not treat these concepts as fluid, changing, and multiple, as they are in reality (McSweeny 1999, 72). Michael C. Williams answers this critique forcefully, by pointing out that “it is when identities are securitized that their negotiability and flexibility are challenged, denied, or suppressed” (2003, 519). Notions of citizenship in Qatar are fixed and permanent. While the Qatari people have countless identities like

\textsuperscript{11} On this point, I differ from Longva’s (1997) analysis in Kuwait when she assumes that Kuwaiti society includes everyone within the sovereign territory. I agree instead with the conceptualization advanced by Kapiszewski, that although there is some level of integration exists (usually based on shared material interests such as business and commerce), “it is still too early to regard the Gulf peoples as forming societies in the full meaning of the term” (Kapiszewski 2001, 197).
the rest of us (Muslim, Sunni, student, woman, Al-Thani family, Al-Maadeed tribe, just to name a few examples), the Qatari identity and the Qatari state have been constructed in a short period of time (independence was only in 1971) and they have been constructed very rigidly. Chapter two will demonstrate that tribalism plays a large role in this. In addition, I hypothesize that this rigid construction of Qatari identity is in part because of the natural resources (oil and gas) under Qatari territory, which makes citizenship in Qatar come with disproportionate opportunities for wealth and privilege. The idea that Qatari society is under threat from the influx of foreign workers thus has material causes as well. But the construction of male, Asian, unskilled laborers as one primary threat (not, say, Lebanese salesmen who might actually have a greater likelihood of marrying a Qatari woman) points to the constructed nature of this threat to societal security.

1.2b Securitization

What is securitization? Be it the sale of treasury bonds, deforestation, or Iran’s shooting a satellite into space, securitization means that “the issue is presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure” (Buzan et al 1998, 24). It is very difficult to measure objectively at what rate any one issue becomes a security issue. Even if objective measurement were possible, “Different states and nations have different thresholds for defining a threat: Finns are concerned about immigration at a level of 0.3 percent foreigners, whereas Switzerland functions with a level of 14.7 percent (Romero 1990)” (Buzan et al 1998, 30).
According to Buzan et al (1998, 26, cited in Williams 2003), securitization “has three components (or steps): existential threats, emergency action, and effects on interunit relations by breaking free of rules.”

Although in one sense securitization is a further intensification of politicization…in another sense it is opposed to politicization. Politicization means to make an issue appear to be open, a matter of choice, something that is decided upon and that therefore entails responsibility, in contrast to issues that either could not be different (laws of nature) or should not be put under political control (e.g., a free economy, the private sphere, and matters for expert decision). By contrast, securitization on the international level (although often not on the domestic one) means to present an issue as urgent and existential, as so important it should not be exposed to the normal haggling of politics but should be dealt with decisively by top leaders prior to other issues (Buzan et al 1998, 29).

Like politicization, securitization is a fundamentally intersubjective process (Buzan et al 1998, 30).

The idea of requiring emergency measures, I argue, is biased toward democratic states, where “normal bounds of political procedure” makes a reasonable effort to protect what are considered to be basic rights and freedoms (under, for example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

Buzan et al seem to make contradictory statements regarding securitization in non-democracies when they first say that one should use any state’s “normal politics” as a baseline (1998, 24), and securitized issues are those that deviate from normal politics, but then saying later that securitization can be institutionalized—that is, a part of normal politics (1998, 27). I argue that in order to expand the utility of securitization theory, the focus on “normal politics” is less necessary than prior theorists assume, because (as will be demonstrated) in non-democracies especially, securitization can be very much an integral part of normal politics.
All this is not to say that securitization of some issue, and its raising outside normal politics, is considered to be normatively a positive thing for the Copenhagen School. On the contrary, as Fierke points out, there is a “danger inherent in the application of security” and that its application to “new fields, such as the environment or migration, may locate agency in states rather than in actors in those specific fields, and risks the militarization of issues that require a political solution” (Fierke 2007, 6). So the goal of the Copenhagen School is not to make political issues into security issues—but rather, to examine how and why this happens, and under what conditions.

Well over ten years ago, Jef Huysmans (1997) wrote that securitization theory is “possibly the most thorough and continuous exploration of the significance and implications of a widening security agenda for security studies.” Years later, this continues to be the case. The challenge now for securitization theory is its own “widening,” as we see whether the theory is applicable outside of the Euro-American context. The majority of past studies on securitization have been based on European cases, but this may be changing as a growing number of scholars are starting to recognize the utility of securitization theory.\(^\text{12}\)

### 1.3 Theoretical advances of this dissertation

#### 1.3a Rethinking Western definitions: “strong,” “society,” “sovereign”

\(^{12}\) At the 2009 annual meeting of the International Studies Association, there was one panel devoted to applying securitization theory outside Europe; the panelists focused with varying degrees of success on Russia, South Africa, and Malaysia. Wilkinson (2007) is the best known (possibly only?) example of a peer-reviewed article applying securitization theory outside its current boundaries, this time in Kyrgyzstan.
Claire Wilkinson (2007, 5) reminds us that “there is a presumption that European understandings of society and the state are universal.” As I will discuss in the next chapter, traditional analyses tend to categorize states as either “weak” or “strong.” However, as this dissertation seeks to demonstrate, a perceived weakness—such as the Qatari government’s failure to regulate abuses against migrant labor—actually contributes to the regime’s strength as it allows them to avoid responsibility.

Additionally, when discussing “society” in a state such as Germany, for example, we tend to assume that “German society” extends roughly to the sovereign borders of Germany. While some groups may not be included in “German society” at all times, the majority are—or rather, they have the option to be. In short, the (Western) constructed notion that “society” maps at least theoretically onto “state” does not take into account other forms of organization including clans, tribes, families, and ethnic groups. In Qatar, however, “Qatari society” only includes a small minority—Qatari citizens.13

The implication is that when we discuss the securitization of migrant labor in Qatar, we are really discussing a phenomenon that takes place at many levels simultaneously, and where “the state” acts to protect a “society” that makes up only a portion of its subjects. While Michael Barnett (1995) postulates that “the state system [throughout the Middle East] is steadily deepening its roots, weakening the overarching Arab and Islamic identities,” (as summarized by Buzan et al 1998, 133), he ignores the

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13 The boundaries are not entirely fixed, however: as Chapter Three discusses, some families of Saudi or Bahraini descent, for example, live and interact within “Qatari society,” but this practice tends to be limited to other Gulf Arabs.
ingrained tribally-based identities that existed long before the idea of a sovereign Qatari state (and much longer ago than independence, which only came in 1971). Indeed, it seems that Qatari society is not premised on the sovereign state, but rather on membership in ancient tribal families that are associated with the area now called “Qatar.” As chapter two discusses, some Qatari citizens call themselves “Kuwaiti,” for example, if their tribal origins and/or extended family remains there. Identities within the GCC tend to be multiple, and based on citizenship only when the state is the referent object or focus of discussion.

In addition, and much like Wilkinson’s analysis of Kyrgyzstan, the term “civil society” in Qatar was “largely empty of meaning, and certainly did not correspond with the social reality beyond the formal level of high politics” (Wilkinson 2007, 16). As Crystal (1996) and Hawthorne (2004) have convincingly demonstrated, “civil society” in the Arabian Gulf tends to be an empty phrase, largely bandied about by those in power when meant for a Western audience.

The concept of citizenship also takes a very different meaning in the Gulf context, largely because of the region’s rentier characteristics. Anh Longva’s chapter (in Butenschon et al (2000)) reminds us that while the Gulf states were undertaking their national identity-building projects, migrant labor was present in large numbers. The definition of “citizen” was therefore forged in opposition to “alien,” leading to a politics of exclusion inherent in the Gulf states (Longva 2000, 183). According to Harald Bauder
Pierre Bourdieu would conceptualize this deployment of citizenship as “capital.”

In Bauder’s words:

This view of citizenship corresponds to the treatment of citizenship as a strategic concept not only in association with constructions of identity and belonging, struggles over recognition, and the politics of participation and contribution, but also in relation to regulating access to scarce resources and institutionalizing difference. (p.316)

Bourdieu’s theories are frequently utilized in discussions of Gulf relations in the field of anthropology. If citizenship is strategically deployed as Bourdieu’s “capital,” as Bauder asserts, citizens themselves are said to act in the “habitus” of a “master-servant mentality” (Leonard 2003, 144) (Gardner 2008, 63). For Bourdieu (1977), “habitus” is the basis of society: the reservoir of social interactions that shape future interactions. For the Qatari society (made up of Qatari nationals), this master-servant habitus perpetuates the use of citizenship as capital. These concepts of society, civil society, and citizenship—on which much of the Copenhagen School’s theories are built—are fundamentally different in the non-Western context of the Gulf.

1.3b Incorporating action and discourse

In a work foreshadowing the need to move beyond speech act theory, Lene Hansen (2000) wrote about the “silent security dilemma”—who can and cannot “speak” security (in her gender-sensitive analysis, it was victims of honor killings in Pakistan who could not “speak security”). Indeed, there seems to be space within the CS’s rules to move beyond discourse: Buzan et al (1998, 27) writes: “It is important to note that the security speech-act is not defined by uttering the word security. What is essential is the
designation of an existential threat requiring emergency action or special measures and
the acceptance of that designation by a significant audience” (underline added). How this
designation is made—by decree, discourse, or action, seems open. Williams agrees:

The speech-act of securitization is not reducible to a purely verbal act or a
linguistic rhetoric: it is a broader performative act which draws upon a variety of
contextual, institutional, and symbolic resources for its effectiveness. Crucially,
however, this aspect of securitization theory remains almost wholly
underdeveloped” (2003, 526, emphasis added).

A small but growing number of scholars have honed in on this problem. Claire
Wilkinson took securitization theory “on tour” to Kyrgyzstan, and used the experience to
criticize the tendency of “privileging of speech over other means of expression”
(Wilkinson 2007, 12). Unskilled migrants (all expats, really) cannot “speak security” in
Qatar. And neither can the state, actually, because it could upset things. In Qatar, action
is crucial, because it allows the state to buck-pass on security while effective measures
are taken (like Family Day). According to Wilkinson (2007, 12), speech may be

possible and desirable…where principles of democracy and free speech are de
facto as well as de jure, but is often not the case in non-Western countries, where
significant sections of the population may not be afforded the ability to express
societal security concerns actively (censorship, imprisonment, threats) or
passively (political/social disenfranchisement).

Wilkinson continues, “The central position of speech in the [Copenhagen] School’s
conceptualization of security thus sets overly restrictive criteria for an analysis of
security” (Wilkinson 2007, 12). Building off Williams (2003, 512), who suggests a focus
on “a broader understanding of the mediums, structures, and institutions of contemporary
political communication”, Wilkinson posits that it “is especially important in settings
where politics is not a public and/or participatory process and access to traditional forums
such as print media is limited” by censorship, prohibition, or factors such as underdevelopment and poverty. While Williams suggests that security may be understood through discourse and images, arguing that “treating social communication in a strictly linguistic-discursive form risks limiting the kinds of acts and contexts that can be analyzed as contributing to securitizations” (2003, 525), Wilkinson takes Williams’ focus on discourse and images one step further when she writes that “security discourses are constructed…via words, images, and actions” (2007, 12). In the Qatari case, omitting the practices of Family Day and racial segregation (about which there is no official position, and very little written in the news media) would unnecessarily limit the scope of analysis. Chapters four and five will use these practices to discuss securitization in Qatar.

Williams argues that incorporating images is necessary to “grasp fully the social contexts and complex communicative and institutional processes of securitization” in modern (contemporary) politics (Williams 2003, 528). He further writes that discourse analysis might not be enough “in a world where political communication is increasingly bound with images” (2003, 524)—but I would remind the reader that images are actually nothing new. Actions (and their importance) were always already there, even before technology. To take a historical example, during the early days of the American Revolution, it was the actions of the Brits and the colonists under cover of darkness that mattered at least as much as the speeches, statements, and proclamations. New approaches incorporating televisual images are great—but they assume that the influence of imagery is something new.
In reality, imagery and especially actions predate or at least are simultaneous with speech-acts. As El Guindi (2004, ix) points out, as early as 35,000 years ago, humans produced “a vast pictorial record of life and ideas” in the form of cave drawings. In fact, we have long striven to understand and make ourselves understood through images. Sometimes the effects of images are unintentional or unpredictable, as when grainy television images of illegal immigrants in Britain trigger a securitizing response (Williams 2003). In Qatar, there is no “CNN effect”—there is no locally televised news—but it is a small state after all, and securitizing moves in Doha (such as security guards denying access to malls on Family Day) are a meaningful exercise of securitization which is just as visible to residents of Qatar as CNN is to Americans.

Observation of the ethnic basis of segregation during Family Day clearly demonstrates that certain groups (South Asian males) are considered to pose security threats to the sanctity of Qatari society, while others (such as unaccompanied males of Arab or European ethnicities) are not. (Note that Doha-based Al Jazeera is generally uncritical of Qatar, while being critical of its neighbors, especially Saudi Arabia). Free political and public discourse is rare in the Gulf, and speech-acts are often after the fact, in the form of proclamations by government officials or complicit newspapers.

Securitization is currently unable to describe such a sequence of events without ‘cleaning up’ the order of events to fit the need for the speech-act to have chronological precedence. This fact…is likely to have a far greater impact in non-democratic contexts, since it is under such conditions that freedom of speech is likely to be restricted, especially for non-state actors (Wilkinson 2007, 20).

As the case-based chapters of this dissertation discuss at length, the real securitization happens in practice in Qatar. Whereas the small-state case may seem insignificant to
some at first, the theoretical implications are nothing short of standing the Copenhagen School’s conception of security (as a speech act) on it head.

1.3c Institutionalized securitization

The distinguishing feature of securitization is a specific rhetorical structure…That quality is the staging of existential issues in politics to lift them above politics. In security discourse, an issue is dramatized and presented as an issue of extreme priority; thus by labeling it as security an agent claims a need for and a right to treat it by extraordinary means (Buzan et al 1998, 26).

The Copenhagen School posits that in international relations, “what makes something an international security issue can be found in the traditional military-political understanding of security. In this context, security is about survival. It is when an issue is presented as posing an existential threat to a designated referent object (traditionally, but necessarily, the state, incorporating government, territory, and society). Chapter three briefly discusses the existential threat that non-Gulf Arab migrants pose to the political sector of Qatar, as demonstrated by expulsions of Arab migrants corresponding to political crises between states; chapters four and five focus respectively on instances where Western ideas and South Asian labor pose existential threats to the societal sector in Qatar. The special nature of security threats justifies the use of extraordinary measures to handle them” (Buzan et al 1998, 21, emphasis added).

These twin concepts, of existential threat and extraordinary measures, are central to the CS’s identification of a securitized (rather than a politicized) issue. I argue that the use of extraordinary measures, however, is valid mostly in cases of advanced democracies. In many non-democracies, limiting of freedoms such as speech and
movement, which would be considered “extraordinary measures” in the U.S. or Europe, for example, are simply part of everyday life. Thus, non-democracies are an ideal testing ground for expanding our understanding of securitization, as they provide an ideal place to study institutionalized instances of securitization. In rapidly developing states (Qatar and the Gulf; Brunei, Singapore, Thailand) an understanding of institutionalized securitization as securitization (and therefore, as a phenomenon also common in advanced democracies) provides crucial linkages and enhances our understanding of the persistence of human rights violations despite international pressure.

In Qatar, for example, the denial of basic human rights to migrant laborers, when understood through the lens of societal securitization (a phenomenon also common in the West), becomes less foreign, less other; and more recognizable and understandable. To be clear, the denial of rights (such as adequate housing, the right of exit, and the right to timely pay) and the backlash against “Western” television programs, trends, and habits, are not the securitizing moves in and of themselves—but they become much more understandable when we take into account the immense threat that Qataris experience as a securitized society.


In some cases, securitization has become institutionalized. Constant drama does not have to be present, because it is implicitly assumed that when we talk of this (typically, but not necessarily, defense issues), we are by definition in the area of urgency: By saying ‘defense’ (or, in Holland, ‘dikes’), one has also implicitly said security and priority. We use this logic as a definition of security because it has a consistency and precision the word as such lacks. …Securitization can be either ad hoc or institutionalized. If a given type of threat is persistent or recurrent, it is no surprise to find that the response and sense of urgency become institutionalized. This situation is most visible in the military sector, where states have long endured threats of armed coercion or invasion and in response have
built up standing bureaucracies, procedures, and military establishments to deal with those threats. *Although such a procedure may seem to reduce security to a species of normal politics, it does not do so…* Behind the first layers of ordinary bureaucratic arguments, one will ultimately find a—probably irritated—repetition of a security argument so well established that it is taken for granted.

So how to apply securitization theory when the rules themselves are securitized?

There has traditionally been a focus on “securitization as placing an issue ‘beyond normal politics,’ that is, beyond public debate” (Williams 2003, 515, citing Carl Schmitt’s conception of normal politics). “Normal politics” does not entail public debate in non-democracies. This is another part of the Copenhagen School’s theory that is less useful in most states outside its European origins. Often “normal politics” is full of securitized issues (such as unskilled migrant labor in Qatar, which are consistently framed as a threat to identity and the society sector in Qatar). The politics of exclusion is consistently employed against unskilled migrants in Qatar.14 Urgency and existential threat is sustained…it is the fabric of “normal politics,” not a move away from it. The threat of the survival of Qatari society (societal security) is on the line.

### 1.3d Focus on decisionmaking and audience

One of the Copenhagen School’s great strengths is its understanding of security as intersubjectively constructed. Therefore, it is perplexing that the theory would also attempt to demarcate the “decision” to securitize an issue as one facilitating condition

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14 As chapter three discusses, non-Gulf Arabs are often excluded from Qatari society when it comes to inter-marriage, but socialization and friendships between GCC Arabs, non-Gulf Arabs, and even some Persians are generally more common except in times of political tension between any two given groups.
(Buzan et al 1998, 33), and the acceptance of an existential threat by a particular “audience” (ibid, p.27), thereby placing it outside the realm of “normal politics.” As the Qatari case demonstrates, often there is no clear decision, no clear audience, but rather a process of securitization at many levels (including political leaders, the merchant class, the media, Qatari citizens, and all residents).

In Qatar, who is the audience? The Qatari people themselves, or everyone living there? To the skilled expatriates, whose ideas about “normal politics” are shaped elsewhere (often in advanced industrial democracies of the West), there is a deviation from what is considered “normal” in their home states, but it has gone relatively accepted (no protests, outrage registered online on blogs but not really elsewhere). Even the Western audience seems to accept that Qatari society needs to be protected, so even by the loosest definition of audience (understood to be everyone living in Qatar), the threshold of acceptance is passed, and the securitizing move has been successful. At any rate, the “audience” may be less important in a non-democratic regime, where public opinion is not taken into account in a formal, institutionalized way.

According to Williams (2003, 518): “Securitization marks a decision, a ‘breaking free of rules’ and the suspension of normal politics.” But this conception assumes that the agent in charge of securitizing moves is a political actor. In Qatar, private recruitment agencies control the sponsorship (kefala) system, which controls immigration and exit for the 85% of the population who are non-citizens. This pattern extends to the ‘everyday’ institutionalized politics of exclusion.
Members of the merchant class are the decision-makers when it comes to Family Day, specifically the mall manager and owner. The security guard (who is often South Asian himself) is the one who decides who can enter the mall freely, based on his own judgment. According to an official of The Mall, as reported by Qazi, “their security officials basically differentiated between decency and indecency.”\textsuperscript{15} Customer preference is also taken into account: a “family-only” mall is nearing completion, and the owner of Royal Plaza mall stated that he decided on Family Day policy because of the responses from a survey given to his customers.\textsuperscript{16} Here we see that the customers, mall owners, and security guards all securitize unskilled, South Asian migrant labor—this is an intersubjective understanding that actually has little to do with the state apparatus itself. The “decision” to suspend business as usual is an intersubjective process, rather than one or several discursive acts.

My definition of Qatar as a laissez faire autocracy in the next chapter highlights the facilitating conditions—namely, the reluctance of state leaders to take responsibility for policies that could be perceived as an international human rights violation. Citing Tickner (2003), Wilkinson (2007) points out how in the West, theorists often regard states with little internal capacity as “weak”—but the Qatari state often actively avoids involvement in these issues, deeming it a private matter, and outside the realm of state responsibility. Tickner writes, “the multiple adjectives and classification schemes

\textsuperscript{15} Qazi, 12 Oct 08.
\textsuperscript{16} “Families-only shopping mall coming up in Muaither area,” \textit{Gulf Times} 20 October 2008; “Malls can enforce their own policies” \textit{The Peninsula} 13 October 2008. Landmark Mall’s decision to enforce a family day also apparently arose out of the results of a survey taken in 2000 upon the mall’s opening, according to Qazi’s untitled article in the \textit{Gulf Times}, 12 October 2008.
employed—weak, quasi, failed, corrupt, incomplete, backward—make use of dichotomous, evolutionary language that suggests that third world states simply fail to live up to the basic standard of modern civilization” (2003, 315). State capacity in Qatar varies incredibly in the different sectors (and in some sectors, most importantly, the state doesn’t aim for capacity, stating “it’s not our responsibility” and leaving it at that). Shopping mall owners are more powerful than the Qatari state on making and enforcing Family Day policies—and the state chooses this arrangement, because it allows them to maintain stability and duck responsibility.

Recall Buzan et al’s comment that “securitization on the international level (although often not on the domestic one) means to present an issue as urgent and existential, as so important it should not be exposed to the normal haggling of politics but should be dealt with decisively by top leaders prior to other issues.” Again there is Western bias here, especially in the last sentence—assuming that politics involves haggling or negotiating, and that security issues are dealt with by the top leaders. In Qatar, the top leaders allow labor law violations (for example) to continue by not stepping in and upsetting the balance—their inaction is what shows this is a security issue; they have modernized and internationalized almost everything else, but are reluctant to act on migrant labor out of fear that the region’s cultural traditions (and the entire regional economy) would collapse.

In the next chapter, Qatar’s particular tribal heritage and recent history will be outlined, providing historical and theoretical underpinnings for the exclusionary form of
social organization that shapes life in Qatar, and also shapes the structure of this case study. After proper background is provided in chapter two, chapters three through five will follow the “concentric circles” metaphor, providing further justification for the advances to the Copenhagen School’s theory introduced here.
CHAPTER TWO:

GULF STATES, SOCIETIES, AND APPROPRIATE METHODS FOR STUDY

Now that the basics of Copenhagen School-style security studies have been laid out, it is appropriate to elaborate on the single-case study with which this dissertation is concerned. To that end, this chapter will organize and introduce the classic and recent literature on Qatar and the Gulf, mainly in the fields of political science (comparative politics) and anthropology. After this general discussion of Gulf literature, the remainder of this chapter will focus on Qatar, starting with the coup in 1995 which deposed Emir Sheikh Khalifa and seated his son, Sheikh Hamad, in his place. From this proceeds a discussion of Qatari state and society, with my addition to the “regime type” literature: the laissez faire autocracy. Fourth and finally, the methodology for the rest of this dissertation will be laid out. Only after discussing the particular difficulties confronting the fieldworker in Qatar, which are based on the closed nature of the Qatari state and society, can my somewhat unusual choice of methodology be fully understood.

2.1 Literature on the Gulf

2.1a. The “modern classics”
Comprehensive studies of the Gulf so far have either been situated in regional/comparative literature in political science and anthropology, or other specialized literature (such as media studies). \(^{17}\) Most often, these works have not systematically utilized dominant IR theories (not to mention critical security studies, which has not been utilized in the Gulf context). Many of the “classics” are now quite dated.

There is tremendous variation within and among the GCC states. For example, Jill Crystal (1989) points out that Kuwait’s infrastructure and education systems developed much more quickly than those of Qatar, and this has dramatic consequences for the current state’s level of authoritarianism. While Kuwait has had a strong merchant class for generations, and a somewhat participatory democracy (parliament) on and off for at least 50 years, Qatar is lacking both. This allows for the emir and ruling family to assume vast power, according to Crystal (1989)—as I hope to demonstrate here, it also makes possible and even necessitates the laissez faire character of Qatari autocracy.

The logical consequence of regional variation is that while attempts to address the entire Gulf in one volume are admirable, most often they short of this goal, which I would argue is very difficult if not impossible. In addition, studies of the entire Gulf rarely move beyond reporting facts with some interpretation—rarely if ever are theoretical frameworks (such as “societal security” and “securitization”) applied. For example, while Kapiszewski’s (2001) analysis of the growing pains of rapid development in the Gulf is based at least in part on his several years’ residence as Polish Ambassador to the UAE and Qatar, at times state-specific intricacies become inaccuracies in the final

\(^{17}\) See for example (Al-Hail 2000); (Al-Khater and Naser 2003).
text. While Kapiszewski’s broad analysis of the relations between various ethnic groups in the Gulf is extremely insightful, he fails to recognize, for example, that labor camps still permeate Qatar and the UAE, and that the *majlis* remains central to (male) Qatari social life. Because of my extensive fieldwork, including a full two years’ worth of interviews and informal conversations with college-age Qataris, I am able to provide up-to-date background on how *majlis* culture is changing of late. An extended single-case analysis (as this dissertation is) opens up space for the application of critical IR theory, something which should only be attempted if the case is known quite intimately.

Anh Nga Longva’s 1997 *Walls Built on Sand: Migration, Exclusion and Society in Kuwait* is an example of an in-depth single-case analysis. Longva provides a rich anthropological study of the origins of the Kuwaiti state, making a strong case that the presence of a sizeable migrant labor force at the time of Kuwait’s founding led to a condition whereby citizenship has always been based on a “politics of exclusion.” Her discussion of the *kafala* (sponsorship) system in Kuwait is very similar to the current system in Qatar, which will be discussed in this dissertation (chapters three through five). Longva utilizes anthropologist Joseph Furnivall’s concept of “plural society” to describe Kuwait. Furnivall defines plural society in this way:

> It is in the strictest sense a medley, for [people] mix but do not combine. Each group holds by its own religion, its own culture and language, its own ideals and ways. As individuals, they meet, but only in the marketplace, in buying and selling…Even in the economic sphere there is a division of labor along racial lines (1948, 304; cited in Longva 1997, 3).

As the following chapters will demonstrate, Qatar is also a plural society, although at times even meeting in the marketplace is limited (on Family Day).
The concept of the plural society travels well throughout the Gulf, as pointed out by Kapiszewski 2001. An economist, diplomat, and academic, Kapiszewski’s *Nationals and Expatriates: Population and Labour Dilemmas of the Gulf Cooperation Council States* focuses on demographic trends, and—although not using the terminology—gives much support for the deployment of the concept of societal securitization in the Gulf. To wit, he focuses on the real and perceived threats to traditional Gulf society posed by various categories of migrants, and the more abstract threat of Westernization. As mentioned, while Kapiszewski’s broad insights tend to be highly relevant; it appears evident that a lack of in-depth, systematic and academic fieldwork and fact-checking lead to some over-generalizations and errors (for example, positing that labor camps are not widely used anymore). In addition, there is a lack of linking qualitative data with a theoretical framework, as this dissertation seeks to accomplish. Perhaps these flaws are inevitable when the varied cases of all GCC states are approached in one volume; at any rate, depth is sacrificed for the sake of breadth.

The same can be said of Rosemarie Said Zahlan’s (1989; updated edition 1998) *The Making of the Modern Gulf States: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman*. This work is highly detailed, providing a sound background of the evolution of the Gulf states from the colonial era to the present. But as the subtitle suggests, Zahlan’s ambitious analysis focuses on regional similarities and trends, and can only devote about a chapter on average to each individual state and its ruling family. While the book remains a classic in the literature on the Gulf, Qatar gets particularly
short shrift, being the only state without even a chapter of its own. In addition, the book is largely historical and provides little if any theoretical linkage.

Another wide-ranging Gulf classic is F. Gregory Gause III’s (1994) *Oil Monarchies: Domestic and Security Challenges in the Arab Gulf States*. More than most Gulf scholars, Gause focuses on security issues of the small states, but his traditional analysis tends to dichotomize the “domestic” and “security” issues in these states, looking mainly to regional powers such as Saudi Arabia and Iran as posing potential security threats, while treating the domestic situation in a separate realm. (Gause is by no means alone: (Cordesman, 1997) also focuses almost exclusively on Iran and Saudi Arabia in his analysis of Qatari security threats.) By focusing on foreign policy and external security, as most IR analyses have to date, Gause neglects the other forms of securitization that are I argue are more salient to understanding Gulf society, politics, and decision-making. However, Gause’s analysis of the importance of tribalism and Islam in understanding Gulf society is highly relevant to my own analysis, and will be the focus of much of the third chapter of this dissertation.

Jill Crystal (1990, updated 1995) seeks to provide a theoretical contribution to the Gulf literature by linking the concept of “rentier states” with Kuwait and Qatar. In Crystal’s *Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar* and her (1989) article on the same topic, Crystal convincingly demonstrates that political leaders have historically devolved much power to the merchant class. Like Gause (1994) and Ross (2001), Crystal focuses on the rentier qualities of the regimes, namely their ability to stay in power by providing material wealth to their constituencies. Their analyses,
while largely very successful, do not capture fully the dynamics by which the political regimes are empowered and legitimated through this process of devolution to the merchant class, which is why I believe a redefinition of Qatar as a “laissez faire autocracy” is necessary.

Like Longva over ten years before, much of the most recent richly case-based work comes from the field of anthropology. Sharon Nagy has focused on Qatar specifically, looking at practices of spatial separation in Doha neighborhoods (2006) and racial profiling in employment (1998). Her insights are quite relevant to my analysis, but again are mostly devoid of theoretical content that is relevant to IR and especially to critical security studies. In contrast, Andrew Gardner’s recent work on the Indian diaspora in Bahrain utilizes the Foucauldian concept of governmentality and Bourdieu’s *habitus* in a way that translates well to my IR-centric dissertation. Gardner’s (forthcoming) discussion of the “structural violence” of Bahrain’s *kafala* system fits nicely with my designation of Qatar as a laissez faire autocracy, and suggests that the concept travels well to Bahrain, and likely to the rest of the Gulf as well. In the spirit of the detailed single-case analysis, the next section will provide historical context as a backdrop to upcoming discussions of the modern Qatari state and society.

2.1b. Recent literature

The most recent additions to the Gulf literature reveal that (to use a colloquial phrase) the more things change, the more they stay the same. Mehran Kamrava’s 2009 article “Royal Factionalism and Political Liberalization in Qatar” concludes that political liberalization in Qatar was little more than a regime-strengthening strategy: “all talks of
liberalization have been dropped and the Qatari state remains fundamentally autocratic” (2009, 403). The following section will reflect on recent literature in light of the events of the past two decades.

2.2 Recent History in Qatar

In the summer of 1995, the Emir of the state of Qatar, HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad Al-Thani, was vacationing in Geneva, Switzerland. Completely unbeknownst to him, tension was brewing at home. The Emir’s son, the Heir Apparent HH Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, was growing tired of Sheikh Khalifa’s seemingly-arbitrary hiring and firing practices. Sheikh Hamad, educated in England (Sandhurst Military Academy) and fluent in both the English language and Western culture, believed that Qatar’s oil and gas revenues should be put to use in rapidly developing the economy, the Doha skyline, and opening the emirate to foreign and modern ideas. Whereas Sheikh Khalifa believed strongly that Qatari should remain a traditional state (and he should remain in firm control of oil revenues), Sheikh Hamad wanted the sort of modernization he saw taking place in the UAE.

On the 27th of June, 1995, Sheikh Hamad deposed his father in a surprise, bloodless coup. In the next year, the ousted Sheikh Khalifa staged a failed attempt to recapture power, and in the interim Sheikh Hamad worked deftly to establish legitimacy and consolidate his leadership, largely through an unorthodox policy of modernization.
Almost immediately, Qatar’s new Emir began implementing a series of reforms. In 1995, Sheikh Hamad started Qatar Foundation, a multi-billion dollar project meant to reform primary and secondary education, and make Qatar a magnet for top university students from all over the world. In 1996, he established and funded Al-Jazeera as an independent news agency; the network is arguably the freest press in the Gulf, if not the entire Arabic-speaking world. In 1997, the Emir announced that women would have full suffrage rights and the ability to run for office in Qatar’s first elections, a first in the GCC. In 2002, Sheikh Hamad established the National Commission on Human Rights (NCHR), an independent agency devoted to the protection of rights of citizens and residents of Qatar. In 2003, in potentially the most important change, a new constitution was introduced. And in 2005, in response to international pressure, Qatar banned underage camel jockeys, thus ending the practice of trafficking in young boys from Sudan, and replacing them with robots atop the camels.

It was clear that Sheikh Hamad’s style of rule would be a vast departure from traditional Gulf models of authoritarian monarchies. According to one writer, “Unlike other Arab rulers, who remained aloof from their subjects, the new Emir made a habit of explaining his policies and ideas, often speaking directly to the press.” (Miles 2005, 15)

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18 As Kamrava (2009) points out, these “liberalizing” reforms ultimately did not evolve into a more democratic state, and were likely implemented in order to enhance the new regime’s stability and legitimacy.

19 Significant questions about press freedom in Qatar remain (and will be addressed more fully in the methodology section of this chapter); Al-Jazeera is often critical of Arab elites who are not Qatari, though, and occasionally broadcast news specials such as “Blood, Sweat, and Tears,” an undercover investigation of the lives of migrant laborers in Dubai and Qatar.

20 The NHRC has not been without criticism, as my dissertation will describe in depth.
Sheikh Hamad is often spotted driving around Doha alone, and is known for stopping off for tea at his favorite downtown spots, chatting informally with his subjects.

A further example of the new regime’s more open tendencies\textsuperscript{21} is the unprecedented influence and public presence of the Emir’s preferred wife, HH Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al-Missned. As the first and only wife of a Qatari ruler ever to be seen in public, Sheikha Mozah has not only appears repeatedly—unveiled, at that\textsuperscript{22}—but she also takes an active role in politics, giving speeches and holding high posts within Qatari leadership and the UN. In April 2008, on Sheikha Mozah’s initiative and with her strong backing,\textsuperscript{23} the Doha Center for Media Freedom was formed, and Robert Ménard was named director. (Ménard was the founder and Secretary General of Reporters Sans Frontières (Reporters Without Borders) in Paris in 1985, stepping down in 2008 after 23 years in order to start the Doha Center.)

Interest in Sheikha Mozah abounds in western journalism, as illustrated by an excerpt from an in-depth article from the Christian Science Monitor:

[Sheikha] Mozah seems to be doing everything all at once – from improving public transportation for foreign workers to establishing the region’s first battered women’s shelter to reforming the higher education system, building non-Muslim public places of worship, sponsoring public debates, and serving as a UNESCO special envoy. Focused, energetic, and hardworking, the glamorous mother of seven of the emir’s 27 children rivals her husband in terms of influence in this land (Harman 2007, 2).

\textsuperscript{21} Compared to other Gulf rulers, but not necessarily compared to other Arab regimes.
\textsuperscript{22} By “unveiled” I mean to say that Sheikha Mozah allows her face to be shown in-person and on camera, which is unusual because many Qatari women will not allow themselves to be photographed at all (one Qatari friend of mine will not even allow her hands to be photographed, which often occurs when they are decorated with henna for weddings or celebrations). Sheikha Mozah continues to cover her hair.
\textsuperscript{23} Unconfirmed reports suggest that the emir never warmed to the idea of the Doha Center.
In 2007, *Forbes* magazine named Sheikha Mozah number 79 in a list of the world’s most powerful women. She is a role model—perhaps the role model—for girls in Qatar and across the region. A young female Qatari student raves in the same article, “Her Highness is the best thing that ever happened to Qatar…She totally inspires us. Since she came to power, Qatar has changed 100 percent” (Harman 2007, 1).

Between Sheikh Hamad and Sheikha Mozah, then, there may have seemed to be an unstoppable movement towards democratic participation and expansion of rights. Yet the reforms only go so far—after all, each of the aforementioned reforms were established by emiri decree, without public debate or consultation (Crystal 2005, 11).

The most recent additions to the Gulf literature reveal that (to use a colloquial phrase) the more things change, the more they stay the same. Mehran Kamrava’s 2009 article “Royal Factionalism and Political Liberalization in Qatar” concludes that political liberalization in Qatar was little more than a regime-strengthening strategy: “all talks of liberalization have been dropped and the Qatari state remains fundamentally autocratic” (2009, 403). Qatar’s first constitution reaffirms hereditary rule, and the 2007 *Freedom House* listings categorize Qatar as “not free.” *The Economist*’s 2007 Index of Democracy labels Qatar as “authoritarian,” ranking it an unimpressive 142 out of 167 states worldwide—just behind Sudan and Iran. Although Qatar’s Al-Jazeera has been quick to criticize other regional leaders, critiques of the heads of Qatar are conspicuously absent,
as they are in the national papers. The country remains under Shariah law, and punishment for certain crimes is severe. (For example, non-practicing Muslims who are accused of public drunkenness face a penalty of flogging, and “outed” homosexuals risk imprisonment or deportation). The U.S. State Department warns American residents in Qatar that they may be detained without explanation, without any formal charges, and without a phone call, for days or even weeks if suspected of a crime.

Yet though the regime appears largely authoritarian and perhaps underdeveloped to Western eyes, many Qatari citizens are indifferent to the reforms that have taken place, and uncomfortable with many changes (for example, the allowance of alcohol on Qatar Airways flights). In fact, most reforms in the Gulf appear to be spurred by elites’ wishes for modern and prosperous region, despite the opposition or neutrality of their largely more traditional subjects (Ehteshami & Wright, 2007). As the next chapter will demonstrate, very traditional Islamic views still permeate much of Qatari society—even in families who send their children to American universities.

In the next section, I will focus on the relationship between Qatari state and society, developing the concept of the laissez faire autocracy.

2.3 Defining the Qatari state

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The oil-rich Gulf states (Qatar included) defy easy definition, yet scholars have fit them into several categories. These categories include rentier states, sultanistic states, and stable authoritarian regimes. Whereas each of these categorizations are partially successful lenses for understanding the Gulf states, my label “laissez faire autocracy” highlights the hands-off nature of the political regime in a way that will be highly relevant to this analysis. But each of these categorizations is also fair:

2.3a Rentier states

Instead of taxing their citizens, rentier states derive their income from profits made through the sale of natural resources (usually oil) on the international market. Almost all of the Gulf states are rentier, asking for little or no taxes while providing goods such as subsidized health care, petrol, housing, and utilities. “Spending is therefore the essential function of the rentier state, and generosity (as opposed to accountability) is the essential virtue of its ruler” (Luciani 2005, 91). The citizens, in turn, enjoy some of the highest standards of living in the world (with a per-capita GDP in Qatar ranking second globally, and climbing). There is little incentive for Qatari citizens to petition their government. Rathmell and Schulze put it well: “in these distributive states, the regime has offered material largesse in return for loyalty and non-participation” (2000, 48).

25 Although cultural classifications are used by some, for the purposes of this dissertation, “Arab” or “Middle Eastern” are not appropriate or meaningful categories of analysis. The Asian state of Brunei (also a small, oil-rich, authoritarian, sultanistic/rentier state) has much more in common with the mechanisms under investigation than does Egypt, for example.
Kamrava (2009, 404) writes that rentierism “[underpins the whole political formula” in Qatar. Certainly, the emir’s ability to provide a full welfare state from cradle to grave for Qatari citizens strengthens his hold on power. Also, as Kamrava points out, application for land grants and interest-free home loans (for which most if not all Qataris qualify) must be made directly at the Emiri Diwan, which “both symbolically and practically” reinforces the emir’s patronage (2009, 406).

It is unlikely that the rentier state will develop into a democracy, because it discourages an independent bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie gets and stays rich by supporting the state’s economic goals. And the state remains rentier: “all that it truly needs is just the consensus of the private entrepreneurial class in order to establish a new public/private relationship” (Luciani 2005, 96-7). There is no sense of obligation on the part of the state, because its income is not derived from its citizens. All of these factors are most especially true in smaller states such as Qatar or the United Arab Emirates, where all income is derived from outside and there is no taxation (Norton 2005, 138-9).

Michael Ross has convincingly demonstrated through a straightforward statistical model that rentier states are more likely to be non-democratic, regardless of their region (ie, it is not Islam or the Middle East that impede democracy according to Ross; it is the rentier state system itself). The effects are strongest on small rentier states, with populations under one million people, who rely on oil or other mineral wealth for their rents (2001, 246).26

26 In a much less-cited work, Michael Herb (Herb 2005) derives evidence that would appear to make Ross’s results more ambivalent—but Herb’s study does so by introducing many more variables, and without significant value-added to negate Ross’s conclusions.
Although the categorization of rentier state is largely correct in the case of Qatar, the definition is incomplete for three primary reasons. First, it is highly debatable that Qatari would want democracy if they were not wealthy. Rentier theory seems to assume that “if only they knew better, if only they weren’t bribed” they would naturally want it. But the messiness of the Iraqi occupation has served as a cautionary tale for many citizens of Middle Eastern states; many Qatari report that democracy, to them, is chaotic and undisciplined, unlike the hereditary tribal system—where, if an emir is unpopular, he runs the risk of being overthrown in a coup (which has happened in the Gulf with surprising frequency in the past century). This method of power transfer seems sufficient for many (but certainly not all) Gulf citizens.

Secondly, rentier theory tends to discuss the relationship between leaders and their citizenry, but in Qatar this population makes up only a minority of the total population. For those who are not granted the benefits of rentierism, another mechanism acts to keep the population satisfied (or, more likely, subdued). Rather than exercise direct power over the expatriate population, the political rulers have devolved authority in times of conflict to secondary actors including merchants (sponsors and mall owners), sending states and their embassies, and the Qatar Foundation. This mechanism (of intentional devolution of power in order to buck pass responsibility) is underdeveloped in rentier theory; it lies at the heart of my concept of “laissez faire autocracy.”

The third ill-fitting aspect of the “rentier state” classification is that it tends to underestimate the extent to which the emir of these tribally- and family-oriented states feels both an obligation and a desire to distribute the wealth. In Qatar at least, there is a
real sense of warmth and paternalism between the Emir Sheikh Hamad and his subjects. Qataris often remark favorably on how their emir takes care of them, and indeed cares about them. Perhaps this feature of Qatari society best foreshadows the next classification:

### 2.3b Sultanistic states

The Gulf states can also be classified as sultanistic regimes, meaning that “they are based on patrimonial rule in which the ruler holds unfettered power and it unencumbered by bureaucratic rules or by commitment to an ideology or value system” (Rathmell & Schulze, 2000, p. 48). In other words, the word of emir of Qatar is unquestionably law, and he (and increasingly the heir apparent, Sheikh Tamim) may alter the constitution without the consent of any other governing body.\(^{27}\) The single most necessary qualification for emiri rule is his membership in the proper tribe (Al-Thani) and immediate family. In Qatar, the heir apparent is not automatically the first-born son; instead, he is designated by his father after he has come into adulthood. Great stock is placed in the merit of the individual ruler, and he is deemed legitimate not largely because of the office he holds, but because of his lineage and character (Kamrava 2005, 297).

To Western eyes, the personalistic qualities of the Qatari regime are strikingly clear when one looks closely at the walls in banks, shops, and government ministries.

\(^{27}\) In keeping with Islamic tradition, though, laws are generally run by principle of *shura*, or consultation. But elections have been repeatedly postponed, and with them the creation of a formal legislative branch, the Majlis al-Shura (which was mandated in the constitution which came into effect in 2005).
around town: large officially-issued photographs and tapestries of the emir Sheikh Hamad and the heir apparent Sheikh Tamim can be found everywhere. More tellingly, private citizens proudly display photographs of the Emir and heir apparent all over Doha. Back windows of the ubiquitous SUVs, and t-shirts at the Old Souq, are decorated with the same official portraits as well as more casual shots (such as the Emir posing with a falcon). On the popular social website www.do7a.com28 images of the emir and two of his sons are the main elements of the background decoration.

Steffen Hertog (2007, 544) describes Saudi Arabia as a rentier state but with government institutions “tailored to the needs” of particular members of the ruling family during the period of Saudi state formation (1951-1962), a description also akin to the “sultanistic” label. In Qatar, this can be evidenced by the emir’s closest Al Thani friend and advisor, his cousin Hamad bin Jassim Al Thani, taking two important jobs: he is currently both Foreign Minister and Prime Minister in order to advise the emir on all domestic and foreign matters.

Clearly, Islam plays a large role in Qatar, but the emir and his family often adopt a slightly more progressive version compared to their very religiously-conservative population, which is mostly Wahhabi Sunni.29 For example, the emir’s consort Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Misned bucked centuries of tradition when she

28 Ranked in the top ten local sites every week of the date range examined (November 2008-March 2009), according to the web information company Alexa and reported by the Doha Daily e-newsletter. Also of note: “Do7a” is actually pronounced “Doha;” the 7 serves as a stand-in for the Arabic letter ج normally translated as an H.

29 Demographics of Qatari citizens’ religion are not provided by the government, and private sources vary widely, but most estimates state that over 90% of the citizenry are Sunni; Shi’a Muslims make up the vast majority of the remainder.
appeared on television with her husband, and she has done so with her face completely visible. (Previous emirs’ wives, and Sheikh Hamad’s two other wives, are never photographed, and never seen in public without their faces completely covered). In recent interviews, alongside the emir and (also unprecedented) solo, Sheikha Mozah wears a shayla (headscarf), but with her hair clearly showing.

Islam is also being re-interpreted in the realm of education. Both the emir and Sheikha Mozah have been driving forces behind Education City, a multi-billion dollar effort to establish foreign branches of prestigious international universities on one campus. In six universities so far (Georgetown, Texas A&M, Carnegie Mellon, Cornell, Virginia Commonwealth, and Northwestern), male and female student study side-by-side, taught by both male and female professors. This breaks from the more traditional Islamic practice at Qatar University, whose students are separated into men’s and women’s campuses. These developments, and the popular support the emir continues to enjoy, serve to underscore the immense influence and respect the ruling family is afforded.

2.3c Stable authoritarian regimes

Broadly speaking, the analysis of political regimes has often had normative undertones. In the West, Cold War-era studies often measured authoritarian states on their success in transitioning to more democratic forms of governance. In the field of comparative politics, one seminal work in the 1980s was O’Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead’s Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies (O’Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead 1986). This book series,
still hugely influential and considered to be foundational texts for the transitions paradigm, demonstrated repeatedly the “tentative,” “uncertain,” and reversible characteristics of democracy in transitional states. But the teleological assumption was implicit and explicit that democracy is an end; that reform and liberalization come through democracy.

Certainly, there is a vibrant and growing body of transitions literature, which remains committed to the principles of democratization. Augustus Richard Norton, whose work focuses on building civil society in order to facilitate democratic reforms, writes that although reforms in Middle Eastern states including Jordan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia may be small incremental steps, “the direction of change [towards democracy] is not in dispute” (Norton 2005, 3). However, some critics would actually strongly dispute Norton’s claims. “Post-transitions” scholars have a much less optimistic view about the likelihood of democratic transformation, and point instead to the crackdowns in Egypt, for example, that have followed recent reforms (Schlumberger 2007, 5).

One such critic is Thomas Carothers. In 2004, Carothers announced “the end of the transition paradigm,” questioning whether Arab states in particular are actually “emergent democracies,” as Schmitter (2001, 104) calls them, and calling once more for a focus on human rights and a more realistic, less normatively-tinged view of undemocratic regimes (Carothers 2004, 167-83). Carothers writes, “the almost automatic

30 See Daniel Brumberg 2004: “We live, shall we say, in a post-transitions world, one in which political scientists are only just now coming to grips with the failure of rationalist models of regime “transitions” to account for both the persistence of autocracy, and for the heterodox forms that regime changes have unfolded over the last decade” (emphasis added).
assumption of democracy promoters...that any country moving away from dictatorship was ‘in transition to democracy’ has often been inaccurate and misleading” (2004, 176).

“Liberalized autocracies” are not just adopting a temporary survival strategy; rather, they are a stable regime type in and of themselves (Brumberg 2002, 56). Political liberalization is used to garner legitimacy from international and citizen audiences—it does not equal democratization (Schlumberger 2007, 4-5).

And legitimacy, Sheikh Hamad has garnered. Again, however, this does not appear to have happened by pulling the wool over anyone’s eyes, as some scholars seem to assume when they implicitly give non-democracies a lower normative value than democracies. As this dissertation argues in later sections, the normative bias in IR towards Western democracies remains very strong, while the reality in Qatar is very different. Even Assma Al-Adawi, the (democratically elected) student body president at Georgetown University’s School of Foreign Service in Qatar has expressed publicly that she has no desire or need for her country to democratize. Many citizens of wealthy rentier states would agree, because they (like Assma) have no desire for their lives, or their governments, to change. This situation contributes to regime stability, and belies a much greater condition.

2.3d A new regime type: laissez faire autocracy

My term, laissez faire autocracy, will be discussed and refined throughout the dissertation. It attempts to capture what is missing in each of the preceding ideal-type definitions. As my analysis suggests, Qatar is a functioning welfare state (for citizens
especially) to a large degree, subsidizing education, health care, and other benefits that go above and beyond basics such as housing, food, and utilities, which are the assumed focus in rentier states. It is difficult to classify Qatar as a state where the emir gets by on simply providing largesse for his citizens. Al-Jazi Darwish, a Qatari undergraduate at Georgetown University in Qatar, posited at a November 18, 2008, filming of the Doha Debates (aired on the BBC) that the emir cares about his people, and that many Qataris take great offense to the suggestion that he is “buying them off” in any way. Indeed, Qatar’s tribal society strongly reinforces the shared sense of responsibility and closeness that the literature on rentierism avoids.

Traditionally, in IR theory one binary division has been between “weak” and “strong” states. In a weak state, the regime lacks capacity to make, enforce, and control rules. It is assumed that there is a correlation between capacity and strength. Rolf Schwarz (2008) categorizes rentier states as both “strong” (in the area of security) and “weak” (in terms of representation and legitimacy). However, as the Qatari case shows, sometimes strength is itself propped up by consciously devolving responsibility for, say, workplace safety or non-discrimination to the private sector (construction companies; mall owners). The Qatari regime retains international and domestic legitimacy while sidestepping accusations of human rights abuse via a bargain with the private entrepreneurial/merchant class, where the latter makes the rules the former is unwilling to make themselves.

A laissez faire autocracy as I define it gains stability precisely through the conscious devolution of state capacity. In Qatar, HH Sheikh Hamad Al Thani and his
regime must work to maintain authority with several groups: Qatari citizens and would-be rivals (including other Al Thani rivals), the “international community” on whom it relies for both military security (in the form of U.S. military bases) and its growing prestige and reputation, and the large migrant majority of the state, most of whom are unskilled or low-skilled, and hail from South Asian states. While the strategies taken by the political elite to maintain authority over these groups look slightly different from one another, they all have one goal in mind: when people get upset, be sure they’re not upset at you.

Kamrava discusses the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development (QF for short, which as this chapter details, was formed by the emir and his wife Sheikha Mozah in 1995), characterizing it as a pseudo-NGO which enhances “the penetrative arms of the state…in areas—such as education, social welfare, and religion—that are often neglected by authoritarian states and are, therefore, typically potential centers for the formation of anti-state anger and resentment” (2009, 407). This characterization is apt, and incredibly important to the understanding of the workings of the Qatari state—beyond the Qatari state—(Qatari) society relationship, this analogy can be extended to describe the relationship of the Qatari state with all of the plural societies within its sovereign borders.

In the case of Qatar Foundation, its mere existence as a center of (English-language, American) higher education, complete with mixed gender classes, frequent undergraduate travel abroad, and business/research practices not adhering strictly to Islamic values, is bound to upset many Qatari citizens who are more traditional or
religiously conservative than the political elite. QF, therefore, provides a sort of verbal (and at times physical) “punching bag” allowing the emir (and Sheikha Mozah) to make reforms while ducking responsibility. It is telling that, in the one recorded terrorist attack on Qatari soil since September 11, 2001, a Western playhouse was targeted and the sole casualty was a Western employee of the Qatar Foundation. Whatever anger there is about the opening of Qatar to the West (and especially to the U.S.), Qatar Foundation (and not the emir) seems to take the brunt of the blame.

In Qatar, “state-level” actors (the Emir, Ministry leaders, etc) are not the only political actors. The three groups that exercise “both political and economic power” in the Gulf are ruling families, merchant families, and shaikhly families (the main tribal families) (Peterson 2007). Peterson argues that the ruling families and merchant families continue to be the main actors as the Gulf modernizes, while other tribal leaders do not lose power but are either subsumed into the political/ruling realm or the merchant realm. Jill Crystal has written that while the merchant classes in Kuwait and Qatar were historically in charge of bringing revenue to the state (especially in the pearling industry era), they had “a sense of entitlement and the ability to organize politically” and so therefore the emirs of Kuwait and Qatar, “recognizing this, offered them economic advantages. Since money was no object, it was easier for the state to buy them out than to repress them” (1989, 433). The merchant class thus remains extremely powerful while being left out of the formal political process—which itself is just a small portion of the political realm in a laissez faire autocracy.
The assumption that the strong state would want control over decision-making is a Western one. Two examples that will be discussed at length in this dissertation are the kafala (sponsorship) system and the practice of “Family Day,” a policy of segregation where Asian males (unaccompanied by females) are not allowed into Doha shopping malls on Fridays. By leaving these policies, decisions and their enforcement to the private sector, the regime can claim detachment from the more deplorable aspects of racial segregation policies in the state. These policies exist, again, because society is highly securitized in Qatar, and the West and migrant labor are constructed as existential threats to society.

In Qatar, “the political system involves not only the governmental organs, but also all the political dynamics including the traditional values such as family ties, kinship, etc.; social strata; economic phenomena; and public institutions such as political parties, interest groups, and the mass media which play the feedback role” (Al-Alkim 1994, 50). In Qatar where political parties and interest groups are banned, and the mass media is severely curtailed, other non-governmental categories such as merchants still play a big role, the merchant class often stands in for political institutions/actors on things such as passport confiscation on the part of sponsors and enforcing Family Day policies, which are too unsavory for the emir himself to implement. In this way, overt authoritarianism is skirted, and the merchant class makes these decisions for themselves, allowing the emir to save face internationally (allowing the merchants freedom to determine these things for

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31 Gardner, forthcoming makes a similar point about Bahrain.
themselves) and also to avoid domestic political unrest (it is not the emir’s fault, but the merchants’, that these policies exist).

2.4 Qatari Society: Modern, Tribal, Securitized

The U.S. Department of State estimates that although there are 900,000 people living in Qatar, only around 200,000 are citizens (2008). These estimates are probably outdated: the Qatar Statistics Authority estimated an 18% growth in population in the first half of 2008 alone, and put the total as of August 2008 at 1.45 million (no author 2008). Of these, less than 200,000 are citizens—putting the percentage of citizens at less than 14%. The numbers are similar throughout the Gulf, where expatriate workers make up a majority of the population. Globalization is making this condition even more acute, as migration flows increase worldwide. It has been forecasted that by the year 2020, only 1% of the residents in the United Arab Emirates will be Emirati citizens (Tamanini 2007).33 The numbers are not dissimilar elsewhere in the Gulf. In the changing demographics of the Gulf, many citizens see instability as immanent, and expatriate populations as posing a threat to the identity of the citizenry (Longva 1999, 22).

Because of a strong tradition of close-knit tribal and family ties, the Qatari identity is perceived to be under threat, as it is unable to incorporate (to “Qatarize”) the influx of foreigners, making this a textbook case of societal securitization in many ways:

Given the conservative nature of ‘identity,’ it is always possible to paint challenges and changes as threats to identity, because ‘we will no longer be us,’ no longer the way we were or the way we ought to be to be true to our ‘identity.’

33 It should be noted that this estimate was made before the current global financial crisis.
Thus, whether migrants or rival identities are securitized depends upon whether the holders of the collective identity take a relatively closed-minded or a relatively open-minded view of how their identity is constituted and maintained (Buzan et al, 1998, 23).

The Qatari case gives an excellent example of a collective identity—Qatari society—that considers itself to be under existential threat from outside influences including Westernization and high levels of migrant labor. As chapter three will demonstrate, Qatari identity is based strictly on ethnicity (family and tribal ties), making the view of how identity is constituted and maintained to be “relatively closed-minded” to use Buzan et al’s words.

Writes Michael C. Williams:

Under the conditions of ‘existential threat’ (i.e., attempts at a securitizing speech-act by certain actors) to identities, a Schmittian logic of friends and enemies is invoked, and with it a **politics of exclusion** [ethnocracy in Qatar]. It is this very process (which may succeed or fail) that marks the difference between an identity issue (and situation) that has been securitized, and one that remains simply politicized and thus still more open to processes of negotiation, flexibility, and multiplicity (2003, 519).

Qatar’s static perception of identity leads naturally to this politics of exclusion. The state of securitization is permanent; it is not coming out of one crisis or one set of decisions; ‘politics as usual’ in this non-democratic state involves societal securitization as its very nature. Securitization theory must allow for this if it is to capture the essence of non-democracies—there is nothing inherent about securitization that makes it a temporary or transient act (be it speech-act, action, or something else).

Citizenship also takes a very peculiar significance in the Gulf context, not only because of the rights and benefits granted to citizens, *and* not only because of the persistence of tribalism. In fact, as Longva (2000, 183) has argued, when independence
to the Gulf states (from the British mandate) was granted, large numbers of expatriate laborers were already living and working there. As Qataris, Kuwaitis, and Emiratis worked to forge a new identity, it was naturally formed in opposition to resident aliens. The fact that Qataris (or in Longva’s chapter, Kuwaitis) see themselves as a group (Self) relies on the presence of Other, non-nationals, leading to a politics of exclusion. Identity is intersubjectively constructed, where groups are separated according to ethnicity. The conditions for the securitization of migrants are perfect.

At Qatar’s level of almost 80 percent (by several measures), it seems almost inevitable that migrants would be considered an existential threat to Qatari identity. After all, multiple studies on societal securitization as a result of migration in Europe and the United States demonstrate that the politics of “existential threat” are activated at much lower levels of migration (see for example Huysmans 1995; Buzan et al 1998; Bigo 2002; Adamson 2006). But the opposite is also imaginable: were Qatari identity open and all-inclusive, were citizenship easily granted, the influx of migrants could be seen as bolstering a small population and increasing Qatari society’s global influence.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, there is a strong urge to protect Qatari culture and citizens from the “dangerous” influence of foreigners (Nagy 2006). Furthermore, due to oil wealth, citizens are assured some of the highest incomes and benefits of citizenship in the world (such as land grants and interest-free loans for building dream homes) (Nagy 2006, 130). This provides strong material incentives for closely guarding the granting of citizenship. But human labor is necessary for the construction of those homes, the infrastructure connecting them, and the schools educating Qatari children.
Without the 80% of the population making this happen, the Qatari state could not function. Yet unskilled and semi-skilled migrant laborers, who make up the vast majority of expatriates, are subject to draconian labor laws. The most sweeping and arguably the most damaging of these laws is the sponsorship system (known regionally as the *kafala* system), which Gardner (2010) refers to as producing a system of “structural violence.” Under this system, the employer (sponsor) recruits individuals internationally (most often from India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and the Philippines). These individuals sign contracts binding them to a particular employer. They then immigrate to Qatar under the complete control of their sponsors—their passports are surrendered, they live in company-provided “labor camps”, and in extreme cases, even their activities on days off are regulated by their employer (Nagy 2006, 124). It is not uncommon for employers to withhold payment for six months or more. All residents in Qatar must have “exit permits” to leave the country, which are awarded at the discretion of the sponsor, and often not awarded at all until the termination of one’s contract. The employer can terminate a contract at any time, which would force the employee to leave the country or stay illegally. The employee can also terminate a contract—but would then be forced to

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34 Longva 1999 provides an excellent, concise overview of the *kafala* system.
35 This information comes from a series of anonymous interviews with the workers themselves, as well as an interview with the founder of the NGO “India First.”
36 This affects everyone, not only low-paid migrant workers. For example, my sponsor is Qatar Foundation, and I am able to exit and enter Qatar because they have added a “multiple exit permit” into my passport upon my request and after a waiting period. My friend’s husband, on the other hand, is sponsored by her—so he cannot leave the country legally without her accompaniment. In practice, as a white, Western man, he is free to come and go as he chooses; his passport is not checked. However, fellow U.S. citizens of Asian or (especially) South Asian descent have been subject to the standard exit visa procedures. Female Qatari citizens are effectively “sponsored” by their fathers or husbands, and cannot leave without their permission.
finance his trip home, crippling the families who had borrowed to send him to the Gulf in the first place.

Because the sponsorship system is run via private international recruiting agencies, the various governments of the Gulf (especially Qatar and Dubai) claim that they have no power to reform it. The *kafala* system is perhaps the most stark (though not the only) manifestation of the laissez faire autocracy at work. As the fifth chapter of this dissertation will discuss at length, the devolution of sponsorship rights to the merchant class allows the political regime to shirk direct accusations of human rights violations by Western states and NGOs, and to avoid domestic unrest since laborers’ frustrations tend to be directed elsewhere. Despite increasing calls for a nationalized, standardized sponsorship program, there have been no apparent moves in that direction.

### 2.5 Methodology

Until very recently (less than a year before the submission of this dissertation), there were no book-length treatments of securitization theory in the non-Western context. The application of a theory dependent on speech, in regions where speech are not easily studied, has ramifications for the type of useful information available. In addition, as Claire Wilkinson points out in her groundbreaking application of Copenhagen School theory in Kyrgyzstan (2009, 66-67):

Securitization theory focuses on successful outcomes – i.e. completed securitizations – not process. Consequently, analysis of a situation and application of the framework cannot be undertaken until a securitization move is
completed, so that the relevant actors, referent object and threat narrative can be identified.

As Wilkinson points out, it is difficult to identify an incident of securitization until after it has occurred.

It is even more difficult when securitization does not rely on the speech act, but rather is enacted through practice, because Copenhagen School-style theorizing cannot account for this: “Securitization is currently unable to describe such a sequence of events without ‘cleaning up’ the order of events to fit the need for the speech-act to have chronological precedence” (2009, 65). This dissertation, like Wilkinson’s, relies therefore not on newspaper articles, but on the practices about which those articles were written. Where I have used articles from the English and Arabic-language newspapers, more often than not, I have contacted the reporters directly or verified information with related embassies, government officials, or other relevant people. Because (as this section will show) the media is severely restricted in Qatar and tends to refer only obliquely to important events happening in-country, more often than not it is no more than a starting point. A paragraph in the English-language media, which referred to an Arabic-language television show discussing the trend of boyya/boyat (butch lesbians in Qatar) was not interesting in itself—but when I asked questions about the article in one focus group and three hour-long interviews, I was able to gather vast amounts of information.

By now it is hopefully clear to the reader that the Qatari state and Qatari society (or societies) are quite private, closed, and inaccessible to the outside researcher. Because of this, I have decided on a multi-sited ethnography in the tradition of Carol
Cohn. This is a “transdisciplinary approach and a composite methodology that combines cultural analysis and qualitative, ethnographic methods” (Cohn 2007, 92). Cohn’s 1987 study of U.S. national security discourse during the Cold War involved a close examination of

fieldwork with national security elites and military personnel, as well as upon textual analysis of Department of Defense official reports, military documents, transcripts of Congressional hearings, news media accounts (including print media, radio, and television), and popular film, to explore the ways in which national security policies and practices are deeply shaped, limited, and distorted by gender (Cohn 2007, 92).

Because my analysis focuses on Qatar, where written discourse is limited, I will cast my net even wider to incorporate verbal and visual forms of information.

In simplest terms, a multi-sited ethnography allows me to make use of all possible sources of information on the securitization of migrant labor in Qatar, including published discourse (government statements, newspaper articles, and independent web pages), interviews and other forms of verbal communication, and notes taken at conferences, symposia, and debates. Data is collected using a *purposive sampling* technique, whereby “any documents that make conceptual sense for including in the study” are analyzed and their inclusion is considered (Stage and Manning 2003, 88). In addition, this dissertation seeks to chart new territory and test the possibilities for a visual method in political science, using cameras in order to document and analyze unwritten and unspoken phenomena.

The fieldwork for this dissertation took place over a twenty-eight month period from August 2007 through December 2009, of which I was in-country for twenty-one months. During that time, I read and catalogued over 500 newspaper articles, which
formed the starting point for much of my fieldwork. I befriended two reporters in the English-language press, who were invaluable sources of information (though they both wish to remain unnamed). I conducted countless informal interviews with Qataris and expatriates in-country.

I found subjects for interviews and surveys from two main sources: within Education City (mostly Georgetown and Texas A&M Universities) and online. The first group, perhaps unsurprisingly, tends to come from families who are open to Western education and who speak a certain level of English. However, the differences between students from the two schools is often striking—while Georgetown is populated with Al Thani and other powerful families from Qatar and around the region, Texas A&M tends to draw students for whom the lure of an engineering career is in large part due to the increased reputation such a career would bring on the family—in other words, students tend to come from non-founding families and have considerably less *wasta* (social status) and money on average. Therefore, students at Texas A&M tend to be first-generation university students, and they tend to be more conservative—for example, and unlike Georgetown, men and women almost without exception seat themselves on separate sides of the classroom at Texas A&M, and female Qatari students tend to be much more reserved than their Georgetown counterparts.

A high proportion of female students at Texas A&M refuse to be photographed, either due to their or their parents’ wishes—although I have not surveyed on this question, it seems that this proportion is much higher at Texas A&M than at Georgetown. Indeed, amongst Education City undergraduates, Texas A&M students have a reputation
for being the most conservative, while Virginia Commonwealth, Georgetown, and Carnegie Mellon have all been named in interviews with me as the more Westernized student bodies.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that all Education City students are likely from families who consent to their attendance of American, co-educational universities—so by definition they are not from the most conservative families. These families are almost inaccessible to the outsider—the next best option being students at Qatar University. Via striking up friendships online with QU students, and with the help of Andrew Gardner who assigned portions of this dissertation for anonymous review by his students, I was able to gain many insights from this demographic, as well. I have had extended online conversations with three QU graduates (one female, and two males), and the relationship with the female has turned into a genuine friendship—albeit telephone-only; her religiously-conservative husband and his family will not allow her to leave the family compound unaccompanied, and so there is little chance of us ever meeting in person.

In all, then, I conducted three hour-long focus group sessions with two separate focus groups at Texas A&M; each of which were composed of three Qatari females from varying Qatari positions within society (Bedouin, Hawla, etc). I collected data from over 60 surveys at Georgetown University, twenty-two of which were from Qatari citizens. I determined these surveys to be largely inadequate for my needs, because many of the answers seemed insincere; I ultimately decided on a more ethnographic/anthropological approach due to the problems with data collection when one relies solely on survey and/or media data in the Gulf region. In the end, personal relationships (such as those
formed through repeated interaction with Western journalists, certain ambassadors, my students at both Texas A&M and Georgetown, and friendships forged online) yielded much more information than other sources.

I conducted countless informal interviews in my several years’ worth of fieldwork, but I was conscious to interview (at the very least) two individuals from every group differentiated in this dissertation (Hawla, ‘Abd, non-Gulf Arab migrant, skilled Asian migrant, unskilled Asian migrant, Western expatriate, etc). I interviewed ambassadors or representatives from four embassies (including India and the United States), from the National Human Rights Committee, and the Qatar Foundation for Combating Human Trafficking (many of whom asked to be interviewed off the record). I also interviewed NGO leaders, recruitment agents and academics on migration in Kerala and Doha, and newspaper reporters in Qatar.

However, the majority of fieldwork for this dissertation was accomplished via observation. In order to map social interaction patterns, I sat at the Starbucks in Landmark Mall to count and categorize over 600 people, to see who socialized with whom based on ethno-religious dress markers. I spent countless Fridays sitting in my car in parking lots at the Villaggio and City Center shopping malls in Doha, to observe who was banned from entering on Family Day. I followed up on newspaper reports of protests, or conferences, or public debates, in order to attend as many as possible and fact-check for myself. As the following two sections will demonstrate, I am confident that these methods of observation signal the beginning stages of a new type of methodology based on its counterparts in the field of sociology and anthropology: “visual
political science.” This methodology has vast utility beyond the study of securitization; it is also necessary to develop the methodology if we are to continue to test the utility of securitization theory outside regions where robust public discourse exists.

2.5a Discourse and its difficulties

In her 1997 volume *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, Lene Hansen outlined several models of discourse analysis in international relations (p. 64; table 4.2). These range from an analysis of official political discourse (Model 1 in Hansen’s scheme) to incorporating media and analysts’ responses (Model 2) to popular culture (Model 3A) and marginalized critical voices such as illegal associations and social movements (Model 3B). To the extent that it is possible, this dissertation strives for the most inclusive “Model 3B” category, including official government statements, media stories (mostly from Qatari newspapers), academic/expert analysis, and the internet (namely, the popular site Qatar Living). However, two significant challenges must be addressed.

Firstly, press freedom in Qatar is severely limited and often local papers are nothing more than mouthpieces for the state. This results in a dearth of written texts that are analytical or critical toward everyday politics and decisions. The limited amount of academic literature focusing on Qatar admittedly has more freedom, but there is a very long lag time before publishing, and topics tend to be broad. In addition, many scholars writing on the Gulf tend to be supported at least in part by Gulf money, and a level of self-censorship is reported both in the classroom and with regards to publications.
Press freedom has been a topic of heated debate in recent months, even within members of the press themselves. This can be illustrated by discussing just one recent example of tensions between the various media outlets. The publishing in a Danish newspaper (the *Jyllands-Posten*) of cartoons thought to be offensive to the Prophet Mohamed has inspired an initiative in many Muslim states to ratify an international treaty condemning the defamation of religions. This sparked a row in Qatar after the Doha Center for Media Freedom’s director, Robert Ménard, invited an editor from the Danish *Jyllands-Posten* to an international conference on media freedom held in Qatar last year.

Ménard has been outspoken on many issues and forthcoming on what he perceives as the Qatari state’s failure to live up to their promises of supporting the Center, but Ménard’s invitation of the Danish editor was the issue that attracted perhaps the most sustained negative attention from the Qatari press itself. Ahmad Ali, Editor-in-Chief of *Al Watan* (a leading Arabic-language daily) wrote that “Ménard should know that there is a red line to media freedom and you cannot cross that border. We cannot accept any media freedom that insults our dear Prophet” (Ali 2009). The Huffington Post reports that Jaber Al Harmi, editor of *Al Watan*’s rival *Al Sharq*, wrote an editorial with the headline “Ménard lives in five-star style and insults Qatar” (Abu-Fadil 2009). Indeed, it seems the most fashionable thing for editors of Qatari papers to do is to bash Ménard. In late June 2009, after a little over one year, Robert Ménard resigned his post, his team resigned with him, and the Doha Center for Media Freedom folded.

But reverberations continue. Perhaps at least partially as a response to Ménard’s invite of the Danish editor, the Advisory Council (*majlis al-shura*, which advises and
consults the emir on policy) argued for increased restrictions on media freedom, specifically with regards to “Qatar-based journalists who write against the ruler, national security, religion and the Constitution,” according to Khalid Al Sayed, the Editor-in-Chief of the English-language Peninsula. Sayed opposes the Advisory Council ruling—precisely because (according to him) no local newspaper “has ever written anything objectionable against the four subjects referred to in the Advisory Council debate” (Al Sayed 2009). While this may not be 100% accurate (this dissertation’s discussion of Family Day will highlight this), writing “nothing objectionable” seems to be the goal—publicly stated or not—of the majority of Qatari newspaper editors.  

While a private source (who spoke on condition of anonymity) has intonated that government-sanctioned censorship and detainment of reporters does indeed take place, it is widely accepted and acknowledged that self-censorship (by reporters and academics) does occur on a regular basis. In this environment, the gap between government officials’ statements and the newspaper media is very small…and there is a vast ocean between those sources of discourse, and that of critical or anonymous outlets (such as the Qatar Living website and the now-defunct Doha Center for Media Freedom). In between lie the majority of social interactions (and social learning) in Qatar: personal interaction and verbal communication.

Especially with regards to the very sensitive situation of migrant labor (and a minority citizenry) in Qatar, neither the government/media nor independent online groups

37 A newspaper reporter told me (not for attribution) that while his paper had always prided itself on its critical perspective (within Qatari parameters), the current Editor-in-Chief “pushes for more positive stories on Qatar” and those are the only ones allowed to be published.
contribute to public opinion nearly as much as everyday talk. As Teun A. van Dijk has noted, “the information sources about ethnic groups are predominantly discursive” and are more likely to come from the dinner table than from media outlets or formal education (1987, 31). In addition to making use of published statements (government, media, or websites), much of my primary source material comes from interviews, informal discussions, and conversations. I have used audio recording devices in some instances, but more often than not, subjects have been reluctant to be taped, so I am relying on my written notes. In the case of fruitful but unplanned conversations, I have had to make due with recalling and writing down information after the fact—on scraps of paper in my car, by running up to my office, or dictating messages to myself into my mobile phone.

The limitations of press freedom is only one of two major issues confronting the researcher in Qatar. The second issue is the state’s polyglot character due to its multinational population. No one or two languages are hegemonic in the discourse—even fluent English and Arabic will not enable the researcher complete access. Although most government statements and newspapers are written in English and/or Arabic,38 for reasons previously mentioned, these sources are insufficient if the goal is to interpret the meaning and experience of “societal securitization” for various ethnic groups within

38 Government documents are published in both languages. The major Arabic-language newspapers have English-language “sister papers.” Although the Arabic press tends to focus more on pan-Arab issues, religious (Islamic) debates, and the Qatari perspective, English-language papers are directed in part toward the large Indian population, and are arguably a richer source of information on migrant labor. At any rate, knowledge of English or Arabic, plus Hindi or Bengali would be ideal (but not practical) for this project.
Qatar. For example, many Filipinos communicate on the mostly-English medium Qatar Living website, but they often write in Tagalog. In addition, unskilled South Asian laborers (who make up the majority of Qatar’s population) largely do not have regular access to government statements, media outlets, or the internet. Their unwritten conversations and every-day experiences, taking place in Urdu, Bengali, Hindi, Malayalam, and countless other languages, are entirely inaccessible through discourse analytic methods. It is clear that another, complimentary approach is needed.

2.5b Toward a “Visual Political Science?”

Visual methods in political science are rare, though not unheard of. As published in International Studies Quarterly, Roland Bleiker and Amy Kay (2007) distributed cameras to children affected by HIV/AIDS in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and asked them to document their daily lives and experiences. Bleiker and Kay then compared this mode of representation (which they dub pluralist photography) with humanist photography (which seeks to evoke Western sympathies through the use of iconic and tragic figures) and naturalist photography (which assumes that visual images are neutral and value-free). They conclude that pluralist photographic methods are likely to be a greater source of information than either humanist or naturalist methods. The field of anthropology is decades ahead of political science when it comes to visual methods, and I have profited from a reading of early works in the field. The first widely acknowledged work of visual anthropology was Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead’s Balinese Character (1942), which organized hundreds of photographs into thematic plates which tell more about
family, celebrations, and child-rearing in an indigenous culture than thousands of typed pages could express.

John Collier, Jr. and Malcolm Collier (1986) provide a very useful manual for those interested in visual methods, breaking down the use of photographs into three stages in the research process. First, photographs can be used upon arrival to a new place, in order to quickly assimilate large amounts of information and to guide the researcher on where to look next. The simple act of taking photographs gives the researcher an easily-understood “purpose” and allows locals to acclimate themselves to your presence. Secondly, photographs can be used actively in the ethnographic interview process, by showing photographs and asking follow-up questions. Photographs tend to deflect attention away from questions asked, so that interviewees have shifted from reluctantly and divulging private information, and towards providing illuminating context for the visual records. Finally, photographs may be used in the final stages of research, to make clear or demonstrate a point in the same way that written and verbal information may be used. It is important, however, that the photos are not assumed to “speak for themselves” and are incorporated into the analysis just as other sources would be—otherwise, they become mere illustrations.

I have used cameras and photography in each of the three ways mentioned by Collier and Collier. Upon arrival in Doha, I took many photos that reflect my experience as a Western expatriate. At the time, many of these photos were taken in order to give family and friends an idea of daily life in Qatar—but they have become valuable sources of information in their own right. Much like the pluralist photographic methods used by
Bleiker and Kay, these photographs provide a window into my daily experiences as a privileged Western expat: in a sense, this is a very reflexive project where I (as researcher) am interpreting my own sense of Qatari society and security (as resident). In the chapter focused on Qatari society’s relationship with the West, these photographs will play a large role.

Perhaps Collier and Collier’s most exciting and informative ideas about incorporating photographic methods are in the second way in which photos can be used: as part of the interview process. This seems closest to the methods employed by Bleiker and Kay themselves: by allowing Ethiopian children to take photographs and then interpret their importance back to the researchers, the children are allowed to speak for themselves. To that end, I have asked Qataris to photograph important items in their homes, and used these photographs to elicit much more information about daily life and Qatari traditions than I had previously been able to attain. In perhaps the most exciting piece of fieldwork, I enlisted two South Asian field partners, both of whom live in labor camps in the Industrial Area of Doha. Their photographs and explanations will play a large role in the upcoming chapter focused on the relationship between Qatari society and South Asians. As their photos and captions have made clear to me, their home country’s traditions, languages, religion, and ceremonies play a central role in their life in Qatar, however marginalized that lifestyle is in written discourse (government, media, and internet).

Because photography is a sensitive area for many Qataris (whose religious and traditional beliefs prohibit many forms of photography) and also for South Asians (who
may be targets of punishment for exposing their work and living conditions to a broader audience), I will make very spare use of photographs in the published dissertation (recalling Collier and Collier’s third use of visual methods). The photographs I will use will be mainly those taken by me or other Western expats (who face no cultural and less legal dangers than others involved in this project).

2.5c Unobtrusive Methods

In addition to analysis of written documents (official and unofficial), interviews and conversations, and photography, I am also utilizing unobtrusive methods including observation of social patterns. To take a hypothetical example, an Egyptian student (in an attempt to impress me, or convey himself in a positive light, or for some other unknown reason) may tell me that he has many Indian and Qatari friends, both male and female. However, by observing student interactions in the classroom, the cafeteria and student lounge, I may come to a different conclusion. Likewise, by conducting observations in and around busy shopping malls and on city streets, I have been able to document the social patterns that are actually taking place. In one instance I recorded almost 600 individuals (over 250 groups of people) as they walked past the Starbuck’s at Landmark Mall, and was able to quantify the frequency of groups with mixed or homogenous gender, nationality, or religiosity.39

39 These categorizations will be discussed in an upcoming chapter, but briefly, I designated nationality imperfectly but roughly, based on dress: Qatari nationals almost exclusively stick to traditional thobes and abayas; and religiosity, in Muslim females, based on how they cover their hair and/or face.
Stage and Manning (2003) discuss the advantages and disadvantages of unobtrusive methods. They include document (discourse) analysis under this umbrella, and posit that written texts tend to be precise (containing names and dates), easily accessible, and provide information about things that cannot otherwise be observed (the male half of a Qatari wedding comes to mind, given that no females are allowed). However, as they argue, some texts have an unknown meaning that cannot be checked unless the author is known. In addition, documents are “possibly unrepresentative, lacking in objectivity, of unknown validity, and possibly either deliberately deceiving or self-deceptive” as well as “ privilege certain preserved viewpoints over those not preserved” (2003, 87). Given that in the Qatari case, the latter set of arguments are far more persuasive (as the following three chapters will demonstrate), other unobtrusive methods—especially observation—have been vital to this project.

Perhaps the largest objection to unobtrusive methods including observation is an ethical one. Especially in the very private Qatari society, does observation violate a right to privacy? I would argue strongly that while there is a danger of crossing this line, I have been vigilant about adhering to sage advice by Webb et al (1981; cited in Stage and Manning 2003, 76). It is possible to visualize the right to privacy on a continuum between public behavior in public spaces, to private behavior in private places. All observations I have undertaken have occurred in public spaces. While observing social interactions in a shopping mall, any individual being formally observed would also expect other shoppers to look at him or her (informal observation). To take a counter

40 Post-structuralists would argue that the text exists independently of the writer’s motives or intent; this discussion while interesting is outside the scope of this section.
example (Stage & Manning 2003, 77), “observations in public…restrooms might be considered an invasion of privacy because [people] enter such restrooms with the expectation ‘that their behavior will be studiously ignored’ even though they are in ‘public’ places” (citing Webb et al 2000). For this reason, I have avoided observing social patterns around mosque entrances, for example, because the issue of who prays where may be slightly more sensitive, although a mosque and the street surrounding it is technically open to the public.

To date, my observation periods have been documented only with pen and paper, as fast as I could write, and then later entered into a spreadsheet. In the future, I hope to utilize a video camera in order to have the ability to pause, rewind, and fast forward—this comes with its own set of ethical questions which thankfully do not need to be addressed here, but which I am considering for future research.

2.5d Multi-sited Ethnography

While it may seem as though this project is plagued with data overload, through a careful screening of data and a culling of the most relevant facts (whether or not they support my hypotheses), I believe that the advantages of multi-sited ethnography far outweigh the disadvantages. Most importantly, this method allows for a “triangulation of results” so that any one theoretical or case-based insight may be confirmed in multiple ways (Stage & Manning 2003, 74). For example, while certain Qatari tribes are listed as “founding families” of the Qatari state in the extant literature, and while it would be perfectly appropriate to cite these peer-reviewed sources and leave it at that, through
internet, written feedback, and (most importantly) many conversations, I have been able to tweak and add to that list. I am able to tell which tribes are considered by all parties to be “founding families,” and which are disagreed on. For much more sensitive topics such as intermarriage between Qatari tribes of different lineage, “triangulation of results” has been the best method of obtaining accurate information, especially if one’s own lineage and family changes his or her perspective on the matter.

There have been unsuccessful attempts to gather information in this project. I wrote and distributed an open-ended survey to 62 university students in the spring of 2008, but it was obvious after reading the answers that the respondents were very guarded about putting their thoughts down on paper, and many of them seemed to “play to my expectations” or attempt to counter some stereotypes they must have assumed I held. Of course, attempts could have been made to tweak the survey, but I decided to cut my losses. After that experience, I learned that informal interviews and conversations were much more likely to yield fruitful, honest information.

I have also found that in teaching World Politics and American Government for Texas A&M University at Qatar in the past three semesters that my position of authority sometimes hurts my ability to establish personal relationships, especially with Qatari students. On wondering about this out loud one day to another (non-Gulf Arab) student of mine, he replied to me simply that “it’s because you don’t take our side enough.” He went on to tell me that my attempts to be impartial, non-partisan, and generally fair to all sides in a conflict—namely the U.S. invasion of Iraq, and the Israeli-Gaza conflict in the winter of 2008-2009—have led some (but by no means all) of my Arab students to be
suspicious about my loyalties and motives. Suffice it to say here that, while disappointing, I do not intend to change my teaching style (which is purposely and insistently non-partisan) in order to gain the trust of some students. As an American-trained academic, I adhere strongly to the principle that students should be given both sides of an argument, and allowed to make up their own minds.

In some instances, my American-ness has actually been an asset: one woman I befriended online, from an extremely traditional and religious Qatari family, has opened up to me “because I’m American.” If I were Qatari, she fears, I would be able to gossip about her, but because American and Qatari social circles almost never mix, there is little danger of this happening.

I also attempted unsuccessfully to procure an invitation into a Qatari house, in order to observe what goes on “behind the walls” first-hand. I have heard dramatically varying stories on the ease of getting an invitation: one 23-year-old female, of Asian descent but born and raised in Qatar, has never been inside a Qatari house. On the other hand, a political officer at the American embassy was a regular at one majlis in his neighborhood after only four months in town. It seems that a combination of luck and wasта (social currency) is needed. I can say I am making progress: I have been invited to the wedding of a former student, a Qatari female from a high-ranking tribe. Perhaps eventually I will see her home—but for now the information gathered in other ways will more than suffice.

I utilized one more method in this project that I have not mentioned yet: written feedback from Qatari students on a section of this very chapter. A generous colleague at
Qatar University agreed to assign the next chapter’s section on tribalism in Qatar to his class (removing my name and all identifying details) along with several other published essays from established scholars. He then required his students to write reflection papers on the topic. Many of the insights I gained about the modern incarnation of the tribal system in Qatar were honed thanks to the thoughtful written feedback of these university students, unknown to me and vice versa. This information will be useful in the next chapter, which focuses on the innermost “concentric circles” of Qatari life: relations within and between Qatari families, between Qataris and other Gulf citizens, and between Qataris and non-Gulf Arabs.
CHAPTER THREE:

QATARI, GULF, AND ARAB RELATIONS

In this chapter, the innermost circles of social relations will be discussed, specifically the relations of Qatari with other Qataris, and the relationship between Qatari and other nationalities, starting with Gulf Arabs and non-Gulf Arabs. I seek to demonstrate that tribalism remains the most important organizing factor in Qatar, and all social relations stem from its continued dominance. Tribalism’s persistence helps us to understand why Qatari society is securitized, and why that securitization is institutionalized. This institutionalization is not surprising, given our prior description of Qatar as a plural society: “In…a plural society based on an ideology of ethnic differentiation and ruled by a cultural minority that perceives itself to be threatened, integration is, by definition, a non-topic” (Longva 1997, 234, emphasis added). This chapter will demonstrate that primarily due to the historical institutions of tribalism, and modern-day persistence of a plural society, Qatari society is securitized, or considered to be under existential threat.

The above sentence is awkward because it contains a contradiction: I have been discussing Qatar’s “plural society” (which would include all ethnicities within the sovereign borders) as well as “Qatari society” (which can be understood as relations between and among Qatari citizens, most of which are closed off from the expatriate majority). Experts disagree on which terminology to use: for example, while Longva (1997) includes all individuals living in Kuwait as part of “Kuwaiti society,” and sub-
divides from there, Kapiszewski (2001) problematizes this. Because these groups generally do not interact in any meaningful way outside of economic transactions, Kapiszewski writes, it is difficult to conceptualize the population within any Gulf state as making up a “society.”

This is an interesting problem in light of criticisms to the Copenhagen School, as well, because the idea of “security sectors” was developed with the idea that security was not necessarily state-centric; financial systems, the ozone layer, and societies could also be securitized. But later works by the core group of scholars (e.g. Buzan et al 2003) continued to focus on state-level responses to securitized threats, whether they were in the political, military, societal, economic, or environmental sectors. As my analysis of Qatar as a laissez faire autocratic state points out, responses to securitized threats do not always happen through state-governed mechanisms, but can be present in society more broadly.

At the same time, in Qatar, a large portion of the official state apparatus is set up to serve the minority “Qatari society” almost exclusively. Although “Qatari society” (if we define this to be made up of nationals only) makes up less than 15% of the state population, interestingly, the level of state-society overlap is relatively high. The institutions of the state serve to protect and promote Qatari society narrowly defined. Therefore, this chapter will focus on the first and third theoretical advances from Chapter One—namely, a problematization of Western concepts such as “society,” “sovereignty,” and “the state” in the Copenhagen School, and the institutionalization of a security threat,
whereby “extraordinary measures” (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998, 21) are replaced by everyday practices of securitization.

This chapter is divided into three major sections. The first starts with a look at intra-Qatari relations, and the divisions within society. But as this chapter will demonstrate, the most salient social division in the Gulf is along the distinction “national/expatriate.” Therefore, the second section of this chapter will focus on the development of a Qatari national identity, using Benedict Anderson’s categories of census, map, and museum (1999). By looking at intra-Qatari relations, and the development of Qatari identity, we will be able to determine the primary factors behind societal securitization. Third and finally, this chapter will also look at the concentric circles of “Gulf Arab” and “non-Gulf Arab” as lines of demarcation.

But first, a note on religion as a source of identity and social differentiation: casual observers of the Gulf often comment on the Islamic character of society, but as this dissertation will demonstrate, ethnic distinctions are far more salient in everyday life than designation as “Muslim” or another religion. The lack of a “Muslim/non-Muslim” concentric circle will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five, in the context of Muslim South Asian migrants. As Michael Slackman wrote for a New York Times piece about Qatar’s neighbor Dubai, where the demographics are similar, “Religion has become more of a personal choice and Islam less of a common bond than national identity.”

observation seems to hold. My research and other regional experts suggest that being Muslim, especially a non-Arab Muslim, provides few if any distinct advantages in Qatari society.\textsuperscript{43}

Ganesh Seshan, Assistant Professor of Economics at Georgetown’s School of Foreign Service in Qatar, is conducting a quarter-million dollar research project focused on remittances from Qatar to Kerala, India. Kerala is a relatively diverse state in Indian terms; its Muslim and Christian populations outnumber Hindus. Seshan’s research suggests that religion plays little to no factor in recruitment or salary, especially compared to one’s country of origin and education level.\textsuperscript{44} Uday Rosario, Co-Founder and Adviser of Mangalore-based NGO India First, asserts that Indian cultural norms would cause men from a certain religion and area to “recruit” one another, which might lead to patterns of employment whereby North Indian Muslims (for example) may dominate one sector, but that upon arrival to Qatar, Muslim migrants are generally treated

\textsuperscript{43} In a string of email correspondences, A Muslim-American former colleague, of Pakistani descent, told me that she feels her wearing of the \textit{hijab} helped the Qatari students at Georgetown’s Doha campus to feel as though she’s “one of them;” they were “friendly if not sisterly towards me at all times” although “they didn’t make a lot of effort to get to know me.” I smiled when I read: “If I were a blonde American for example, I would be so foreign and ‘exciting’ to them that they would make a lot of effort to get to know me” because (as a blonde American) this was not my experience at all, and I thought the \textit{hijab} would have granted my friend more access. In the end, it doesn’t seem as though there was a significant amount of difference between my \textit{hijab}-wearing friend’s interactions with the students, and my own. For example, both of us developed a friendship of sorts with one or two students per semester, in the same way we did as teaching assistants on the main campus.

\textsuperscript{44} Email correspondence, 21 July 2009. Seshan cites S. Irudayajan of the Center for Development Studies in Trivandram, Kerala, whose work supports this thesis.

no differently by their sponsors than their Christian or Hindu counterparts. Instead, the major lines of social organization are ethnic, and the most important distinction by far is “Qatari/expatriate.” While the concentric circles of Qatari society are not always fixed (for example, intermarriage between certain tribes of Qataris and other Gulf Arabs is relatively common), as this chapter will discuss, it does appear that closeness based on Islam does not extend beyond the Gulf.

3.1 Intra-Qatari Relations

Tribes form intact social and political units, with a clear hierarchy where the sheikh acts as “father of the tribe.” Each generation is further separated into its own hierarchy, as in a family tree:

\[\text{Maximal Lineage}\]

http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/anthropology/tutor/descent/unilineal/segments.html

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45 Email correspondence, 28 May 2008.
Although an ideal-type version of segmentary lineage societies would make it appear as though each branch at every level were equal, critics including Clifford Geertz have pointed out that there are significant differences in resources between the branches, with the result that some groups may claim seniority over others (Ahmed and Hart 1984, 3-4). A segmentary lineage system looks like an extended family tree, but each in-group’s loyalties are more absolute under the segmentary (tribal) system. These groups are not fixed (at times “Islam” is more powerfully used in constructing a shared identity than “Arab” for example). In an instance of attack on one tribe by another, all members of each tribe are expected to come to the aid of their fellow tribespeople. In modern times, this would most often occur after some slur against the family or perceived defamation of family honor were at stake.

Similarly, members of one’s own immediate family are expected to protect one another against attacks or slurs that may happen within the tribe (between rival families, for instance). Although a set of brothers may be rivals, their alliance is uncontested when it comes to a challenge from a cousin or more distant relative. In this way, the “concentric circles” metaphor I have utilized for the past two chapters can be understood as one individual’s cross-section of the larger segmentary lineage picture: loyalty first to immediate family, then distant relatives, then tribe, then nation, region, and so on. According to Ahmed and Hart, this leads to a system where “none of these superimposed

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46 For more on segmentary lineage societies in anthropology, see for example the chapter “What is a Tribe?” in (Eickelman 2002); for a useful online interactive tutorial, see (Schwimmer 2003).
groupings, from an individual’s viewpoint, ever cuts across one another and thus ideally they give no rise to conflicting obligations” (1984, 25).

Although there are many historical accounts of the proliferation and movement of ancient tribes across the Arabian Peninsula, precious few academics have discussed how tribes are organized, ordered, and split into smaller families. The clearest source I have found on the subject is over 90 years old. Samuel Barrett Miles writes that Arab genealogists classify tribes into twelve different sub-categories for which we have no English words. In addition, the genealogists differ widely on these categorizations, both in their names and their ranks (Miles 1919 [2005], 420).

In modern Qatar, the lines between “tribe” and “family” are often crossed linguistically; although some anthropologists and scholarly texts differentiate, no Qataris I questioned recognize a formal difference. For example, the al-Thani family derives from the al-Maadeed tribe, which itself derives from the Banu Tamim tribe (which includes millions of people from Egypt to Afghanistan). But there are also many people who take the “family name” al-Maadeed, and many other family names that claim al-Maadeed and/or Banu Tamim as their ancestors. In addition, most laypeople would not object to classifying the al-Thani as either a tribe or a family.

Tribal sheikhs and other elders are often weekly stops in a Qatari man’s majlis schedule. They are also visited when something is needed (a favor, a loan, or being moved up on some bureaucratic waiting list such as for allotment of a land grant). Tribes form the fabric of the modern Gulf state, and intra-tribe relations are also hierarchical: in Qatar, for example, the ruling family Al-Thani holds most clout and power. Other
powerful families include the Al-Mannai and Al-Kuwari, to take two examples. These families are considered to be among the “founding families” of Qatar, and many members of these families believe that they should receive disproportionate oil and gas revenues by virtue of their family’s position as founders.

At a unit level within the tribe, the children and grandchildren of one patriarch often live within the same walled compound (although this tradition is waning in recent years). These properties generally contain a house for each married couple and their children, and a family majlis for the men of the family to meet for nightly tea, sheesha (flavored tobacco), and discussion (Nagy 2006). The fact that much of daily life occurs behind these walls—this innermost ring—supports the very strong impulse towards the

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47 An anonymous reviewer of this section, a student at Qatar University, refers to Ibrahim Jar-Allah’s book Al-Maadeed and Qatar: History, Lineage and Culture to list the founding families as Al-Maadeed (including the present day al-Thani), al-Kuwari, al-Sulaiti, al-Muhannadi, al-Naimi, and al-Mannai. Another student wrote that the founding families are “al-Thani, al-Kuwari, and al-Atiya;” it is clear here and elsewhere that there is no widespread agreement on any founding families except definitely the al-Thani and perhaps al-Kuwari (I have faced no objection to the al-Kuwari as a founding family in my many discussions with various groups of Qataris).

48 One of 24 Qatari students anonymously surveyed at Georgetown University’s Doha campus in April 2008 wrote in response to the question, “Do you believe families in Qatar should receive special rights or protections? If so, which?": “Original families should receive special rights because they were here longer and highly contributed to the building of Qatar.” The view does not seem to be universal; as another wrote, “Yes, it is our home country and we are its people…every country wishes to provide its citizens with the best.” Yet another Qatari wrote that “underprivileged” families should receive government aid; another asserted that “those that are purely ‘Arab’ living in Qatar for so long and still don’t have the passport” should receive special protection. (IRB #08-024).

49 This topic will be addressed in depth in the next chapter.

50 One recent trend seems to be the addition of a second majlis to a family compound: the first, traditional one remains where the elders sit, while a second, sometimes with more Western furnishings, contains a large-screen television, video gaming equipment, and all sorts of electronics for the younger generation. Teens and twenty-somethings visit the elders’ majlises as expected throughout the week, and then retire to their own (or their friends’) most nights for more casual socializing.
protection of family life (ibid). In a private discussion with a Qatari woman, she stressed that her ties and responsibilities to her family are “stronger than gold,” declaring that there are no circumstances under which she would not come to the aid of her sister and brothers.

In addition to tribalism, Islam has an incredibly important influence on Qatari life (although as mentioned it is not generally seen as a primary factor in social organization). Patricia Crone (1987) wrote that at the advent of Islam, Arabia was organized around tribes, each with their own ancestral deities. According to Crone (1987, 41-2), the Prophet Mohammed’s contribution of monotheism served to unite the tribes, who had formerly been split and worshiped many gods. In other words, the spread of Islam happened via a “fusion of tribal society, not by its disintegration” (246-7). The tribal structure predates the Islamic religion.

Under the umbrella of Islam, the Prophet Mohammed united believers from all tribes into the umma (worldwide Muslim community, derived from the Arabic umm, or mother). In a later work, Crone (2004, 145) stresses Islam’s incredibly important role in most Arab society.51 But as one Qatar University student suggested, it may be telling that Qatar’s system of patrilineal relations comes from tribalism—it is the father (ab) and not the mother (umm) whose family line is followed.52 In the modern Qatari state, tribalism

51 In her work, Crone focuses on Muslim Arabs (while being clear that not all Arabs are Muslim, and vice versa). I should also mention that Crone makes the above point by arguing that tribalism has diminished as a major organizing principle; at least in the context of the Gulf states, I respectfully disagree. In the Gulf states, which are largely more traditional than their counterparts in the Levant, family life remains central to daily existence, as much if not more so than other regions within the Middle East.

52 In an anonymous review of a draft excerpt of this chapter.
(supported by Islam) remains the most important factor in national organization and identity.

Whereas the Qatari state was not granted independence until 1971, it established its first rules on nationality in 1961. From that point on, and especially as oil revenues have grown, citizenship has come to dwarf other modes of social differentiation. From the outside, it can seem as though Qatari society is a unified whole. This is reinforced by the fact that, as a practice, Qatariis do not speak about their internal tensions and divisions with outsiders, and (I argue, due to tribal traditions of dealing with matters in the smallest possible concentric circle) do not tend to “air their dirty laundry.” Nevertheless, obvious patterns of differentiation do exist once one delves into the topic.

Qatari tribes, families, and citizens can generally be divided into four (or five) groups: the Bedouin (Bedu), Hadar, Hawla, ’Ajam, and ‘Abd. The categorizations are confusing and often “who goes where” often changes depending on the standpoint of the particular Qatari informant. The Bedouin are the largest, best-known, and probably the most clearly-defined of these groups; their ancestors were nomads all over the Arabian peninsula including throughout Saudi Arabia and Jordan. Most modern Bedouin in Qatar come from tribes that are also found in large numbers in Saudi Arabia (such as the al-Naimi). They are almost all Sunni and Arab.

Hadar, from the same Arabic root as Hadara (civilization), are families including the al-Attiya and al-Kuwari, who were (mostly) originally Bedouin, but settled long ago

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53 Nagy (2006) separates into three categories: Arab, ’Ajam, and ‘Abd, but my research shows that there are significant distinctions made between Bedouin and Hadar Arabs, and that ’Ajam should not be conflated with Hawla.
so that their traditions have changed and are considered to be “townsfolk” rather than traditionally nomads. There is some overlap between Hadar and Hawla, and Nagy (2006) treats them as part of the same loosely organized group (though at times the distinction remains an important one). It seems that while most Hadar and Hawla are Arabs, their historical connections with Iran plays a role in their identity as constructed by self and other Qataris (although these social differentiations are all but invisible to the non-Qatari). For example, Hadar may have engaged in the sea trade as settled “townsfolk” and had relations and perhaps intermarriages with Iranian traders.

Hawla (from the Arabic tawahil—to transform or switch) are peoples whose roots trace to Sunni Arabs who historically populated areas of southern Iran, but who moved back to Qatar long ago and now consider themselves to be Qatari. Centuries (or at least many generations) ago, these native-Arabic-speaking seafaring people re-settled from Iran to the Qatari coast and throughout the Gulf. For example, there are Kuwaiti, Bahraini, and Qatari members of the Hawla al-Bishri family, which still owns property in Iran. The Hawla dominated the pearling industry and together with the ‘Ajam form the basis of the merchant class throughout the Gulf. Some powerful merchant families in Qatar are the al-Mani and Darwish (Crystal 1989, 430) as well as the al-Jaidah and al-Fardan.

The ‘Ajam Qataris are of Persian and not Arab descent, including the al-Emadi family. Although they are officially citizens with equal rights to the other groups, their grandparents may have relocated from Iran prior to 1930, a date that “grandfathered” them into citizenship. Some ‘Ajam families still speak Farsi in addition to Arabic, and
may be Shi’a (whereas the vast majority of Qataris are Sunni). Both the Hawla and ‘Ajam peoples are considered by some Bedouin and Hadar to be “Iranian-Qataris” and do not hold the same social status as the first two groups. But as members of the Hawla and ‘Ajam groups are quick to point out, it was the merchant class who provided the financing for the first round of national infrastructure building in the mid-20th century, and their contributions should earn them full respect alongside the Bedouin and Hadar “founding families.” This view was reiterated in the two focus groups and multiple interviews I have conducted on the subject. As written by Qatar University student in her anonymous review of my work:

Yes al-Thani holds most clout and power but we can’t forget the amazing help and power from our fellow Iranians families such as al-Emadi, Ali Bin Ali and Al Fardan that came to Qatar and [saw] potential in our country and invested on it so for all the help they did on rising our economy they have the right of being Qataris and to hold a lot of power in Qatar.54

However, Hawla and ‘Ajam are often barred from sensitive positions such as the Special Forces units of the Qatari police, in part out of the mostly unfounded fear that their loyalties may lie with Iran.

The fifth and most questionable classification is the ‘Abd. From the Arabic Al-abd, which means slaves or servants, these are Qataris of east African descent whose ancestors, and recent relatives up to the 1950s, were slaves of other families (Bedouin, Hawla, etc) and have adopted those last names. The ‘Abd are visibly darker skinned but

54 Because Qatar University is segregated into male and female campuses, and this course was taught on the female side, I know that the anonymous reviewer is a woman. It should be noted that Qatar University students speak and write English as a foreign language, and although the grammar can often be imperfect, the ideas presented here are highly relevant. I considered correcting the grammar but ultimately decided to let the student speak for herself.
share the same full citizenship rights as any other group. In addition, they are tied by culture and tradition to the family in which their relatives were enslaved. Some of the older generation of ‘Abd would include the title in their last name (as in Abid al-Bishri), but the al-Bishri themselves, and the younger generation of ‘Abd generally consider it unseemly to use this designation. All of the above groups, from Bedouin to ‘Abd, would address one another as “brother” or “sister,” but this is perhaps better translated as brother or sister “of the world” (dineer) as opposed to blood relations.

In addition, there are a small amount of naturalized Qatari citizens, who can be separated into two main groups. The first are mostly Arab Muslims, for example Palestinians, whose families have been in Qatar since the 1950s and have been granted citizenship somewhere along the way. Because citizenship is treated on a case-by-case basis, influenced largely by a family’s perceived contributions to the Qatari state, there is no set rule on this. The second set of naturalized citizens are athletes such as Sudanese runners and footballers, and Bulgarian weightlifters, who are granted citizenship so that they can compete for Qatar internationally. Both of these groups are treated as “not fully Qatari” by other citizens and in many cases they are not granted the financial and social benefits offered to native Qataris. Nagy (2006, 123) tells of attending the wedding of a Qatari woman of Palestinian descent. Other Qataris declared it “not a real Qatari wedding” although the woman had been born in Qatar, schooled in public schools, and belonged to a group of Qatari friends. Other than these two groups, it seems that naturalized citizenship is quite hard to come by.
Tribal or group loyalties are arguably most apparent when it comes to marriage, which is arranged by the families in the vast majority of instances. I know of only one instance of a Qatari “love marriage,” a Bedouin sister-in-law of one of my Hadar sources; she was disowned by her family because she fell in love and married an ‘Ajam (“Iranian”) man (for generations a Qatari family but in my source’s words, “not originally Qatari” with the telling family name Hamadi). Because her father did not consent to the wedding, the couple had to take the matter to court to be granted permission; as this chapter will discuss later, this judicial process is infinitely more difficult if a non-Gulf Arab is involved. When it comes to marriage, some Bedouins from well-known families tend to categorize the social divide as “Bedouin and everyone else.” Others consider all “founding families,” including the al-Kuwari (who are Hadar or Hawla, depending who you ask), to be on equal grounds and equally marriageable.

By some accounts, it is possible for Hadar and Bedouin people to intermarry, but most agree that neither would likely marry with Hawla or ‘Ajam. It is interesting to note that all three Hawla women with whom I conducted extensive and multiple interviews told me that they did/would definitely marry someone who is not their first cousin, although in Bedouin tradition it is most favorable to marry your father’s brother’s son. According to Islamic principles, “milk brothers” and “milk sisters” are not allowed to marry—and since many of these young Hawla women were nursed by their aunts as well as their mothers, their first cousins are de facto siblings to them, and therefore not eligible for marriage. My Hawla informants told me that unlike the Bedouins, it is common in

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55 The Hadar woman had married into a Bedouin family.
their families for first cousins to grow up together and to remain as close as siblings into adulthood, to the extent that they may even appear unveiled in front of them at Ramadan dinners and Eid celebrations in the home. (In our conversations, each of them separately and without any prompting from me referred to their male cousins as “like my brothers!”)

In contrast, the two Bedouin women with whom I discussed marriage at length both expressed a preference for marrying inside their tribe, with their first cousins if possible (and best of all with to the son of her father’s brother); cousins are not often “milk brothers and sisters” and retain a formal distance especially once they reach puberty. However, some “founding family” Bedouins certainly marry outside their pool of cousins—I am attending one such wedding this fall.

As the previous chapter discussed, 1995 was a significant year for Qatar, because the new emir has significantly opened and developed the state, and natural gas wealth is being more widely distributed. As the first generation who grew up in this “new Qatar” comes of age, it is likely that many changes will occur. One 23-year-old Qatari woman named Aisha with whom I have talked at length tells me that while she still would not think of driving or showing her face in public, “We [my family] are very traditional—not everyone is like us. It is changing a lot, we are changing a lot. I wouldn’t dream of talking to men at work, going shopping alone, before.” But yet Aisha has entered the civil service (as a Ministry translator), and even has a male boss with whom she has a professional yet very formal relationship.

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56 Telephone Interview #2, 13 June 2009.
With regards to marriage, although Aisha says she “doesn’t care at all” about tribal origin, her husband does. In a focus group with three female Qatari students at Texas A&M University’s Doha campus, there were widely differing opinions on the likelihood of Bedouin and Hadar families marrying Hawla or ‘Ajam. One student said that it is becoming much more socially acceptable to marry into these families, “especially the Darwish because they financially supported Qatar at its founding.”57 For others, it is a family’s current bank account that may be the deciding factor: according to Aisha, “Nowadays things are changing, which is good actually, they care about money (always the [“Iranian”] Emadi is loaded) so maybe now families will agree on it, though it’s not that common.”58 As with most phenomena in closed Qatari society, it will take time for us to observe whether real change has been made, but it does seem as though the younger generation discusses the possibility more openly than in years past.

The Qatari state seems to want to prop up its national identity in part by breaking down the differences between various groups and tribes. According to the recommendations of the Supreme Council on Family Affairs, from a summary statement of a 2004 conference on contemporary challenges to the Qatari family, the goal is

…building a society that stands on inclusion, interaction through establishing mixed areas of all Qatari families and tribes to decrease the isolation and the non interaction between the individuals that increase the creation of social distance which causes no forgiveness and separation. This in turn will leads to producing secondary cultures and difference in the national identity.

But this social integration is not the responsibility of the state:

57 Focus group, Texas A&M at Qatar, 13 June 2009.
58 Interview #1, 11 June 2009.
It is the *family's* major responsibility of achieving the social equality and justice between tribes because this will decrease the tension instead of having the conflict and competition that occur for the sake of reaching the political and social positions.\(^59\)

This lack of responsibility-taking fits well with my description of the laissez-faire autocracy.

### 3.2 The Making of the Qatari Identity

It is interesting that divisions along the Qatari/expatriate binary are so institutionalized, given that Qatar achieved independence in 1971. This is an example of a highly-successful nation-building project. In Chapter Ten of his oft-cited book *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson described three “institutions of power” utilized by new states during the nation-building period. These institutions were the census, the map, and the museum. To summarize Anderson’s argument, the census is used to determine individual status and social structure; the map delineates the reaches of state power; the museum institutionalizes and in some case creates a national heritage. My discussion of Qatari society in this chapter will be structured around Anderson’s three institutions. Because “societal securitization” is my area of interest, the bulk of my focus will be on census broadly understood as the social organization of different groups within Qatari society. Second will be a discussion of map and Qatari institutions promoting the protection of society. And finally, with museum, I will discuss some of the

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ways in which Qatari identity, heritage, and culture—which is perceived to be under existential threat—is protected and even invented. Following this three-fold discussion of Qatari society, the remainder of the chapter will look at the relationship between Qatari society and other Gulf Arabs, and Qatari society’s relation with non-Gulf Arabs.

3.2a Census

The general inside/outside dynamic nascent in intra-Qatari relations contributes to a politics of exclusion at the level of citizenship and membership in Qatari society. These intra-Qatari divisions are most often superceded by the ever-important national/expatriate divide, and the politics of exclusion along lines of citizenship in Qatar is much more apparent to the casual observer. Longva (1997, 43-44) writes that there are three necessary conditions in order for a politics of exclusion to evolve: first, there must be internal identification and an external threat; second, there must be an apparatus such as the state “with the capacity to provide both the ideological and the administrative means to implement and reproduce exclusion,” and finally, there must be a cultural tradition (such as tribalism) which is “favorable to the idea of exclusion.” In the case of Kuwait, Longva continues:

It was this concern for their own cultural survival, rather than the fear of the migrants’ encroaching upon their newly gained material benefits, that has guided the Kuwaitis’ treatment of the question of labor migration throughout the years. As a result non-integration, rather than integration, was viewed as the basis of social stability. In carrying out this politics of exclusion the Kuwaitis consistently played on the diacritical differences between the migrants and themselves, maintaining, reinforcing, and, when necessary, inventing such differences (1997, 44, underlines added).
Whereas the conceptualization of society-as-concentric circles receives its logical basis in the system of tribalism, *citizenship* (as a Kuwaiti, a Qatari, an Emirati) has become the most important and entrenched of these circles as these small Gulf cultures feared annihilation due to foreign influence.

### 3.2a1 Qataris as Citizens

Back in 1979, Birks and Sinclair wrote about the Gulf:

> On a general level, there is a nascent but rapidly growing and crystallizing concern over the broader implications of hosting an expatriate population many times greater than the indigenous community. At present this fear relates principally to the impact of the expatriate community on the culture and identity of the local people. An aim...is to preserve a distinctive national culture and identity (p.93).

As the remainder of this chapter, and the following two will demonstrate, the preservation of national culture and identity has become a matter of societal security, and is fully institutionalized into the fabric of the Qatari state. As Gardner (2008) has remarked about Bahrain, “even the lowliest citizen holds distinct power over the educated and successful transmigrant.” As mentioned in the previous chapter, this “master-slave” *habitus* in the Gulf reportedly comes from different cultural sources, including the pearling industry’s indentured servitude (present in Kuwait and Bahrain but absent in Qatar), tribal Bedouin traditions allowing slavery, the more modern discovery of oil, and a sense of citizen-ownership of the Qatari state leads to a situation whereby citizens “see themselves as entitled to a position of authority and command over foreigners at work in the Gulf states” (Gardner 2008, 63).

Post-colonial scholars are increasingly coming to recognize that the concept of “citizen,” much like the concept of the sovereign state, is an exported Western idea
 Whereas American citizenship was initially granted to all European immigrants and has retained this integrative character, the Gulf has historically been home both to nomadic tribes and a distinct, settled merchant class, both of which were clearly delineated along ethnic and not territorial lines. Therefore, it is natural than when “citizenship” became important at the time of independence, it was conceptualized along ethnic lines which are by definition exclusionary. Writes Longva (1997, 46):

> Seen from the viewpoint of the local population, citizenship was a classificatory principle alien to their way of conceptualizing social relations. The most meaningful social categories, for marriage purposes for example, were still drawn up along other lines—extended families for urban Kuwaitis and tribes for settled nomads. Tribal ties, especially, spread across the modern borders, mostly over to Saudi Arabia but also to Iraq and the Lower Gulf.

In Qatar, this is also largely accurate. Many Bedouin Qatari families intermarry freely with their Saudi or Emirati counterparts, whereas *Hawla* Kuwaitis, Bahrainis, and Qataris are considered appropriate matches for one another in marriage. Rather than replacing these traditional social structures of organization, citizenship provided another level of identification, desirable initially because of the material benefits it secures. Eventually, social identity along lines of citizenship was seen as under threat by external forces, and the identity became constructed in more and more securitized forms.

The main contradiction in citizenship can be characterized in the following way:

> We thus have a paradoxical situation where citizenship as a classificatory principle was at one and the same time *insignificant*, because it arbitrarily cut across older and more deep-seated patterns of identification along the lines of tribes and extended families, and *crucial*, because of its vast instrumentality in bringing about social differences measurable in terms of material and, particularly, political and social advantages (Longva 1997, 52).
This paradox is highly significant. Longva’s fieldwork on Kuwait highlights the fact that the Kuwaiti state was formed at around the same time as the oil industry was founded. In the 1950s, schools, roads, houses, hospitals, and desalinization plants were built with oil revenues. There were a sizeable number of migrant laborers present at the time of independence in 1961, which provided “a strong contrast that help[ed] elicit national consciousness among the citizens” based on the desire to keep material advantages in the hands of Kuwaiti natives, with the result of producing a Kuwaiti identity based on exclusion (1997); (2000 p.183). Kapiszewski writes that this is generally true throughout the Gulf: “the policy of exclusion applied to foreign residents constitutes the basis of national ideology of these states” (Kapiszewski 2001, 20).

This exclusionary conception of citizenship is strengthened still further by tribalism, which cements the ethnic basis for citizenship and severely circumscribes who could be potential citizens in the future. As commented by Mohamed Jadallah, a senior official in Qatar’s National Human Rights Committee, Qatari law entitles an abandoned child to automatic citizenship, but the child of a Qatari woman and non-Qatari male is not considered a citizen. A non-national woman who marries a Qatari man receives full citizenship after five years of marriage, but if they divorce or the husband dies it is automatically rescinded (though the children will likely remain Qatari citizens). In addition, Jadallah reports that both naturalized and born Qatari citizens can lose their

citizenship and be deported if convicted of certain crimes—though it is unclear what would happen to a born Qatari citizen with no other nationality to default to, the threat is enfranchised in law, further securitizing the “national/expatriate” distinction at the individual level. According to the U.S. State Department:

Qatari authorities have confiscated the passports of U.S. citizens who acquired Qatari citizenship through marriage to a Qatari national or by virtue of birth in the U.S. In several cases, Qatari authorities informed U.S. citizens that their U.S. citizenship had been revoked and was no longer valid. However, foreign governments have no authority to revoke the citizenship of a U.S. citizen.61

It is clear that the Qatari state, while it cedes authority to the merchant class in many other modes of governance, maximizes its power on citizenship issues. This seems to stem from the fact that citizenship is such a closely guarded political status in the oil-rich Gulf, where leaders are seen to be paternalistic. Longva points out that “The practice of citizenship in any society reflects the way the members of this society conceive of the political actors (state and citizen) and the ties binding them” (2000p. 180). Because oil wealth was discovered as the state was being created, many Kuwaitis naturally expected their state to provide for them, to distribute this wealth:

To the majority of Kuwaitis, the state-citizen relationship is therefore not a confrontational relationship but one that comes closer to a kinship or, at least, a patron-client relationship. The state is at best generous, at worst passive and inefficient, but is seldom viewed as violent and repressive (2000p. 180).

So although the oil- and gas-rich Gulf states have always had rentier characteristics, extending social and material benefits, “the majority [of citizens] did not apprehend them as privileges but as dues” (Longva 1997, 47, emphasis added).

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There is very little about the case of Qatar that strikes me as much different from Kuwait other than the later timing of independence and slower pace of development. In Qatar, independence did not come until 1971, and gas wealth did not begin to be fully exploited until the present Emir Sheikh Hamad took power in 1995. Part of the reason for Sheikh Hamad’s successful coup was a general feeling in the citizenry that his father the Emir Sheikh Khalifa was not adequately sharing the wealth that rightly belonged to all Qataris. If anything, because of the example of Kuwait and the somewhat slower pace of development, Qatari notions of citizenship were able to cement even further than elsewhere in the Gulf.

3.2a2 Qatari as Sponsors

Perhaps more than anything else, the *kafala* (sponsorship) system institutionalizes Qatari citizens’ place as dominant in the power hierarchy of the state. As Chapter Five will describe in detail, the *kafala* system results in a process whereby individual or corporate Qatari “sponsors” are responsible for the well-being and behavior of the expatriate workers under the sponsor’s control. For example, my sponsor is the Qatar Foundation, the umbrella organization housing six American university campuses including Georgetown and Texas A&M.

In the Arabic language, there are many three-letter “roots” that are shared by similar words. For example, the root *k-t-b* is present in the Arabic words for write, inscribe, book, author, library, bookstore, and office. The words *kafala* and *kafeel* come from the root *k-f-l*, which relates to obligations, adoption or guardianship, and
responsibility. *Kafala* is translated as “sponsorship;” *kafeel* is the individual Qatari sponsor.

The *kafala* system has cultural and historical roots. Gulf Arabs often discuss the generosity that has been a hallmark of Bedouin life. If a stranger were to be traveling across the desert and happen on your family’s camp, it would be customary to take him in, feed him and his animals, and allow him to stay on as he wishes. This tradition is the source of much pride for Qatars: writes one Qatari male under the pseudonym Khalid the Tiger, “Generosity is…reflected here in Qatar, any guest should receive at least good dinner.”\(^{62}\) Indeed, those I know who have secured that coveted invitation into a Qatari house say that tea and snacks are given in abundance. Beagué 1986 (cited in Longva 1997, 78) suggests that the *kafala* system comes from the Bedouin custom of temporarily granting strangers protection and even affiliation into the tribe for specific purposes.

We should not forget that until 1952, slavery was legal and commonly practiced in Qatar.\(^{63}\) The modern concept of debt bondage as developed by Kevin Bales (2006), where workers are *de facto* slaves via indentured servitude, does not have negative connotations in the Gulf, where the pearling industry created such a system in Kuwait (Crystal 1989). According to Longva (1997, 106), the debt bondage system ensured that the wealthy strata of Kuwaiti society would take responsibility for the poorer classes—a clear precursor to the modern *kafala* system. Although workers are no longer Kuwaiti citizens but expatriates instead, the *kafala* system is simply viewed as “normal” (Longva


\(^{63}\) Qatar was actually one of the first states on the Arabian Peninsula to formally outlaw slavery, with Oman lagging as far behind as 1970.
1997, 107). As Finnemore (1993) and others have pointed out, bureaucratic apparatuses tend to be reproduced; throughout the Gulf, the *kafala* system exists until now.

In addition to the *kafala* system, all business ventures in Qatar must have at least 51% Qatari ownership, most often in the form of silent partners who do little more than sign the paperwork. Often all of the funding for entrepreneurial ventures comes from the foreign partner. The system is very similar in the UAE and Kuwait, where on top of providing no funding, Karen Leonard posits, citizen-sponsors often take annual commissions from foreigners in many instances but without participation in daily business operations (Leonard 2003, 138). About this, Anh Longva writes,

> the Kuwaiti citizens’ right of access to expatriate capital and profit in the private sector was viewed as perfectly legitimate because the amount claimed by the Kuwaiti sponsor/partner was *perceived as a tax* collected on the foreigners’ profit-making activities carried out on Kuwaiti territory. That makes the situation singular here was that these “taxes” were not paid into the state’s coffers but directly into the bank accounts of private citizens.

This situation, where individual citizens are able to act legitimately as tax collectors, suggests that Kuwait shares with Qatar the characteristics of the laissez faire autocracy as I develop it here.

In her discussion of power in Gulf labor relations, Longva relies on Steven Lukes’ “three faces of power:” power over behavior and decision-making, power over agenda-setting, and the power to manipulate interests through ideology (Lukes 1974). Longva (1997, 102-3) points out that while from the outside, it appears as though all forms of power is in the hands of the *kafeel* (sponsor), from the sponsor’s perspective, the *kafala* system is inadequate and burdensome: “to bring from abroad a totally unknown stranger entrusted with a job in one’s company, one’s shop, or even worse, one’s own home, was
always a problematic and worrisome decision.” Because there are so few citizens, and so many migrant laborers, practices such as confiscating passports and threatening deportation serve to enhance the diminished security of the citizens, who have “a constant feeling of being under siege. Perceiving migrant workers first and foremost as a threat against their own stability, security, and cultural identity,” citizens seek only to protect themselves (Longva 1997, 103). But the bottom line is, under the *kafala* system, “the fate of the guestworker remains in the hands of the individual who might most profit from his abuse” (Gardner forthcoming, 22). The constant threat of deportation is “a principle fulcrum in the systemic abuse and exploitation” of migrant labor in the Gulf (Gardner forthcoming, 5).

3.2a3 *Qatari Workers and the State*

Around the Gulf, the trend of increasing nationals in the workforce is established policy of many companies. In Kuwait there is Kuwaitization, in Saudi Arabia it is Saudization, and so on. In Qatar, companies such as the government-owned transport company Mowasalat (which owns all the buses and metered taxis in Doha) explicitly encourage Qatariization, actively recruiting nationals and providing extra training for them to qualify for positions.64 Qatariization can be seen as part of the “census-taking” of Qatari identity because it clearly delineates the allotment of jobs; of who is allowed to work where. For example, several government ministries are actively pursuing 100% Qatariization policies;

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once completed, Qatari workers will effectively be separated (socially and spatially) from their expatriate counterparts.

The purpose of Qatarization serves not only a purpose of keeping Qatars employed; it also serves to spread the state’s wealth through the provision of civil service jobs. At the Ministry of Justice, for example, the (all female) department of Qatari translators have a regular work day of 7:45am-1:15 pm, and are given at least 45 vacation days per year. The salaries are not as high as may be found in the private sector, but many women work there because their traditional families would not approve of them working in a mixed gender environment. The skills of individual Qatari translators are sometimes dubious: according to my anonymous source, “Most of the girls here, it’s all about Google Translator.”65 According to other commentators, “The basic obligations of nationals remain loyalty to the ruler and the observance of social mores—those values that have been the core of the traditional order—but not work.” (Kapiszewski 2001, 5).

Texas A&M University at Qatar has been experiencing the repercussions of Qatarization within its undergraduate student body. Texas A&M awards degrees in four fields of engineering (petroleum, chemical, mechanical, and electrical). It is standard for engineering undergraduates worldwide to intern in the summer following their third year of college; this internship is often expected to translate into full-time employment upon graduation. Because major employers of engineers in Qatar tend to be in industries with sizeable state control (such as gas, oil, and chemical companies), and state control

65 Phone Interview, 13 June 2009.
translates to Qatarization policies, non-Qatari students have had an increasingly difficult time securing internships in their field.\footnote{Interview with the Dean and CEO of Texas A&M at Qatar, Dr. Mark Weichold, and confirmed by all of the non-Qatari students I questioned on this point.}

This policy of Qatarization is seen as one way to limit the threat to Qatari society posed by a large expatriate workforce. Stated Dr. Ibrahim Ibrahim, Secretary General of Qatar’s General Secretariat for Development Planning, “We need to reconcile between two difficult objectives, namely the requirements of development and maintaining the national identity of the society. We need to recruit a highly skilled workforce and make sure that nationals control their own destiny.”

The unspoken tension in the policy of Qatarization is that while unskilled labor is officially regarded to be the major threat to Qatari society (as in the Vision 2030 document), Qatars themselves are unlikely to fill those positions. Qatarization tends to occur at the level of skilled employees, such as in the public/bureaucratic sector, and the executive and administrative levels of the private sphere.

Of course, all three of Anderson’s mechanisms (census, map, and museum) work together. With regard to census and map, it seems clear that limiting and defining citizens is intertwined with determining the borders of the sovereign state. If Gulf Arabs do have special access to Qatari society (in terms of intermarriage) but not to the material benefits of the Qatari state, it may be at least partly that formal censuses and maps are not often drawn in Qatar. In fact, the border between Qatar and Saudi Arabia only became
finalized in December 2008;\(^6\) in recent history, the UAE and Qatar shared a small border, too. Without a map, it is difficult to determine once and for all which groups to include:

For the new map served firmly to break off the infinite series [of ethnic groups]...that the formal apparatus of the census conjured up, by delimiting territorially where, for political purposes, they ended. Conversely, by a sort of demographic triangulation, the census filled in politically the formal topography of the map (Anderson 1999, 174).

3.2b Map

3.2b1 Tribes and the State

Anderson wrote that in Siam (present-day Thailand), “one can see unusually clearly the emergence of a new state-mind within a ‘traditional’ structure of political power” (Anderson 1999, 171). Throughout the Gulf, traditional tribal/family structures have been incorporated into—and not replaced by—a state apparatus. In a classic study of several Gulf states including Qatar, Sadik and Snavely (1972, 117-21) cite three factors that shape regional political development: British colonial heritage, tribalism, and the impact of oil discoveries. In fact, all three of these factors reinforce the hypothesis that tribalism is perhaps the defining element of Gulf politics, reinforcing the plural nature of Gulf societies (Furnivall 1948).

Under the British colonial system, treaties were made not between two sovereign entities, but between Britain and various tribal leaders. These treaties made certain tribal leaders more powerful as a result. Britain helped the ruling families to establish themselves, “reinforc[ing] the separate identity of each of these tiny communities” (Sadik and Snavely, 119). Because it was British policy not to interfere in the Gulf states—who were officially “protectorates” and not “colonies”—future emirs were left alone to consolidate and strengthen their rule (Zahlan 1998, 22). The colonial legacy is one reason that the small emirates remained separated, rather than fully joining (the seven United Arab Emirates still remain relatively independent from one another, each with its own hereditary tribal ruler; Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar are now fully sovereign entities). Thus, even into the modern era, the tribal system lives on.

The impact of oil discoveries also seemed to reinforce these patterns of tribal organization. According to Sadik and Snavely, oil contracts were signed with the sheikhs of the most powerful tribes of each area, who eventually became emirs (kings). In turn, citizens of each state “believe that were it not for the ruler's fatherly attitude and dedication, such benefits would not be forthcoming” (1972, 123). From both the inside (traditional tribal organizing practices) and the outside (British and oil companies’ treaty and contract making with future emirs), the tribal system was institutionalized into the modern Gulf states. According to Gause (1994, 158), “even while the socioeconomic bases of Gulf tribalism have changed markedly…these regimes have successfully subordinated tribal autonomy to state control.” But by looking at the family names of those in Ministry positions (the vast majority of whom are Al-Thani), it seems clear
instead that Western-style institutions have, if anything, strengthened tribal alliances, and serve as a way to dole out reward, provide “golden parachutes” to members of the former emir’s inner circle, and secure the current Emir Sheikh Hamad’s bloodline.\(^{68}\)

As the vestiges of colonial rule have faded, and the modern skylines emerge at a mind-blowing pace, the continued import of tribal organization in Gulf politics remains clear. In a 2008 analysis of the Middle East, anthropologist Philip Carl Salzman argues that tribal identities in the Middle East predate Islamic culture and values, and the tribal organization patterns are much older and more inscribed than those of religion (137-8). He posits that tribal organization was seen as a preferable alternative to states, because “the traditional state is…understood as a center of power controlled by warlords, robber barons, and their coercive thugs, tax collectors, and priests,” whereas tribal structures provide “autonomy, freedom, equality, strength, and honor, and avoid the weakness, oppression, inequality, and dishonor suffered by the peasant” (Salzman 2008, 54-5). In fact, like citizenship, sovereignty has been imported to the Gulf quite recently.

Until quite recently, the concept of sovereign territoriality (and with it the drawing of formal borders) has not been of much consequence in the Gulf states. According to Zahlan, “The desert law that governed society was not concerned with such a foreign concept…boundaries fluctuated according to pastoral and political conditions, and were never expected to achieve any degree of permanence” (1998, 24). But of course, the discovery of oil (and its usefulness) made every square meter of land more significant. In 1933, when Saudi Arabia signed an agreement with an American oil

\(^{68}\) For a related discussion of Yemeni politics, see (Longley 2007).
company allowing them access to drill, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, and Oman—all contiguous to Saudi Arabia—disputed the proposed border. In 1965 an agreement between Qatar and Saudi Arabia was drawn up but never ratified, and in 1992 tensions came to a peak when Qatar accused Saudi forces of raiding a fort, killing two border guards, and capturing a third. For its part, Saudi Arabia denied any involvement and blamed the violence on rival Bedouin tribes, returning the captured Qatari soldier. After mediation by Kuwait and Egypt, both Qatar and Saudi Arabia agreed to formally determine a border. The final border agreement was reached in December 2008 and signed as an international agreement at the United Nations in March of 2009.

Qatar also endured a longtime dispute with Bahrain over the Hawar Islands, (and ostensibly the oil and gas under its territory), which lie close to the western Qatari coast but have more historical ties with Bahrain. The disagreement almost escalated to armed conflict in 1986 but for Saudi diplomatic intervention. In 1991, Qatar lodged a complaint with the International Court of Justice, claiming that Bahrain’s sovereignty over the islands (uninhabited other than a Bahraini military presence) was hastily and unfairly decided by Britain in 1939. Finally, in 2001, the ICJ ruled in Bahrain’s favor, but handed down an official maritime border that appeased both parties (Winkler 2007, 157).

3.2c Museum

“Museums, and the museumizing imagination, are both profoundly political” (Anderson 1999, 178). In Qatar, the creation of a national identity and heritage has been actively promoted in state and society alike. This section will discuss various ways that the Qatari national identity is created, promoted, and protected through the use of
national branding, dress, the creation of historical legends, and focus on Qatari families to promote this identity.

3.2c1 Branding the State

Part of the development of a “flag-waving” identity involves making a name for oneself on the world stage. The small Gulf states have each carved out a “niche” by which they are known to the broader world. Kuwait was formerly known for gold importing and exporting; Bahrain is known for its commercial and financial services sector and as a holiday destination; and Dubai is known for being a free trade zone and tourism center (Peterson 2006, 741). As one foreign Ambassador told me, Qatar is becoming the “Dubai of diplomacy.”

This “branding” as a diplomatic powerhouse includes securing the Doha Round of WTO negotiations, hosting the 2003 OIC summit, and serving from 2005-2007 on the UN Security Council (Peterson 2006, 746-7). It also involves the emir’s stepping in to mediate peace talks in Lebanon in 2008 and hosting the Arab summit meetings in 2009. In addition, Qatar Airways (“The World’s Five-Star Airline”) has brought attention—and many travelers on layover—to Qatar, and the aforementioned granting of citizenship to star athletes means that Qatar has qualified to compete in international events such as the Olympics and the World Cup (soccer/football). The newly-opened Museum of Islamic

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69 Not for named attribution.

70 In the summer of 2008, according to sources I met in Beirut while on a trip to Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan in December 2008-January 2009, it was common to see billboards in Beirut with the picture of Qatar’s emir and the words “Thank you, Sheikh Hamad!”
Art, a magnificent building designed by I.M. Pei, earned Qatar the *New York Times*’ designation of “Cultural Destination of the Year” for 2009.

### 3.2c2 Visual markers of identity

The Qatari flag has been promoted by the state as a marker of Qatari identity, and its omnipresence is obvious. The newly-designated Qatar National Day (December 18) saw a massive amount of flags flying along most major boulevards in Doha. Free decals were widely distributed in a 2008 giveaway, and a vast number of cars and SUVs sport some version of the Qatari flag.

![Car with Qatari flag](image)

Probably the most important visual marker of Qatari identity is in the dress code. The vast majority of Qatari women wear the dress typical for Gulf Arabs: the black *abaya*, a long cloak, and *shayla*, head covering. Although many Muslim women choose to take the *hijab* (covering their hair and neck), the *shayla* is rather a thin piece of black fabric, adorned to match the *abaya*, and completing the “look.” The *abaya* and *shayla*
are by all accounts cultural and not religious items. As Khalid the Tiger, a Qatari man, writes on Qatar Living, “One Italian friend…asked me why gulf women do not wear the same as European women and I told him if they do so, the gulf women will loose their identity (sic.).” Indeed, the abaya helps women to conform to the requirement of modesty, but many non-Gulf Muslim women choose instead to wear long skirts and long sleeves, which is equally sufficient. Some non-Gulf Muslim women wear black abayas with a colored or white hijab, but most stick to the colorful clothing they would wear in their own native countries.

A small minority of non-Gulf Muslim women choose to wear the abaya and shayla, reportedly because it eases social movement, but this is scorned by many Qataris as trying to “pass,” and is not looked on favorably as an attempt to adopt Qatari customs. In the words of Hala, a Syrian working at a high-level position in the Qatari government, “It’s better not to wear the abaya…foreigners are not respected by doing this.”

Wearing of traditional dress by a non-Gulf citizen is seen as attempting to “pass,” “an activity that was normatively reprehensible” (Longva 1997, 119; using Goffman’s (1959) definition of ‘passing’). Nevertheless, “passing” does happen, as one of my non-Gulf Arab students has shared with me: he occasionally wears the thobe, especially to weddings and in order to meet Qatari girls. He is able to “pass” because he was born and raised in Qatar, and has perfected the Qatari dialect and accent. Ironically, he reports that although Qatari girls would only agree to dating Qatari men—and in his estimation “only

72 Interview, 16 September 2008.
1%” of Qatari women would secretly date a man with whom they are not already engaged—when he reveals that he is actually not Qatari after their first date, most girls are relieved, because there is less of a chance that stories of their illicit dating will get back to their families.

Compare this phenomenon with a country with more inclusive views on citizenship such as the United States. A Qatari woman living in Texas may be praised, not scorned, for wearing cowboy boots and a large belt buckle to a barbecue. At a Texas A&M-Qatar barbecue in September 2008, most of the male and female students in traditional dress also donned cowboy hats (the men, in place of their standard headdresses; the women, atop their hijab). But a Texan who wanted to dress in Qatari garb—which many including myself believe is quite beautiful—would be viewed unfavorably (most often, this criticism happens not to one’s face, but behind her back.) This possessiveness of the cultural markers that make one a Qatari, a member of the in-group, are manifestations of a citizenship that is highly securitized.

3.2c3 “Museumizing” Qatar

As a response to the fear of societal and cultural annihilation, Qatar (like most Gulf states) created in 1998 a ministerial-level National Council for Culture, Arts, and Heritage. According to Article 3 of the Council’s mandate\(^3\), the goals include:

- Developing cultural heritage and enhancement and enriching of intellectual output.

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Making available the right atmosphere to promote the artistic and literary output and diversification its sources.

Safeguarding the national heritage and highlighting its characteristics in addition to deeply researching it.

Encouraging beaux arts, publication of its prototypes and working for its developing.

Safekeeping national heritage and architects.

These goals tell us that, as in the case of Kuwait, Qatar is interested in developing, promoting, diversifying, and encouraging arts and literature in line with a national heritage—in Longva’s words, “inventing” a national identity (1997, 44). In addition, the Council is concerned with safeguarding and safekeeping an identity that is feared to be on the brink of disappearing. In other words, the Qatari state is actively involved in the creation and promotion of a unique Qatari identity, in the face of a threat to society, which is a powerful “mobilizing effect” (Longva 1997, 139).

Ironically, the state is involved in almost schizophrenically constructing an identity in order to protect that same identity—a task that reflects high levels of societal securitization. This invention of a national identity also serves to keep the laissez-faire state apparatus intact:

[A] response to the problem of control has been a renewed stress on normative socialization, directing state revenues to the development of new civic myths, manipulating turath (heritage) in order to restrict or monopolize the loyalty options of the nationals. These myths are aimed at redefining the nation, legitimizing the regime, and reconciling the monarchist and tribalist ideologies (of the ruler) with capitalist ideologies (for the merchants) and welfarist ideologies (for the people). (Crystal 1989, 440).

For example, consider the prominence of the pearling industry in Qatar’s national heritage and identity. In these stories, young Qatari boys were taught the trade by the elder generations. In the days before oil and migrants, so the legend goes, everyone was
poor but social relations were very close, as Qatars (and only Qatars) bonded together to survive. This national narrative reinforces the ideas of Qatari nationalism (Bedouin identify with this story as much as merchant families), monarchism and welfarism (before the good emir shared oil revenues, pearling was the sole source of wealth, and Qatars worked together to bring income), all told in a story that reinforces the place of the merchant class in Qatar’s history.

A similar trend is taking place in the United Arab Emirates, where the Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Community Development has posted a “Strategy of National Identity” that includes on the list of an ideal citizen a “pride in the national uniform and flag, national anthem and its culture and achievements.” On the free-to-air television network Dubai One, a new series entitled “Emirati” takes viewers through elements of Emirati culture on a weekly basis, including pearling, bargaining at souqs, and sword dancing. These elements of Emirati culture also dominate the Qatari imaginary.

3.2c4 Family and the State

One need look no further than the Qatari Constitution to see the importance of traditional modes of social organization:

The family is the basis of society and its constituents are religion, morality and love of country. The law provides the necessary means to protect the family and support it as an entity, strengthening its ties and bonding, helping and supporting motherhood, childhood and the elderly under its umbrella. —Qatari Constitution, Article 21

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The family—and the extended tribal family—make up the fabric of Qatari society, and have done for years. Traditionally, until state infrastructures were developed, the family was responsible for “education, socialization, training, defense, welfare, securing jobs, and religious upbringing” (Barakat 2005, 146). It remains “at the center of social organization in all three Arab patterns of living (Bedouin, rural, and urban)” (ibid.). Like tribalism, the tenets of Islam strongly support the idea of the family as society’s basic organizing principle.

In Qatar as in many Arab states, the family unit is central to the state’s identity. This family, it seems, is under increasing threat and with it, all of Qatari society. On the official website of HH Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser (the emir’s preferred wife), it reads:

The family is the most important unit in any Arab culture, as derived from the Islamic faith. It extends to include not only blood relations but also neighbors, friends and work colleagues, and provides a model of comprehensive care and support which benefits the whole society. In a rapidly changing world, however, the family is undergoing threatening changes to its existence.  

As Longva (1997, 187) points out, the focus on the preservation of the family serves the function of reproducing society both biologically and culturally.

In Qatar, the idea of protecting and promoting family life is manifested most clearly in the Supreme Council on Family Affairs, of which Sheikha Mozah is President. The stated goal of the Supreme Council is “preserving the family unit as a structure by working for the development of its capabilities and protecting its members,” especially “women, children, youth, the elderly, and those with special needs.” According to the state-run Qatar News Agency, “the Council aims to form strong, stable, healthy and

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75 http://www.mozahbintnasser.qa/output/page18.asp
independent families that are proud of their culture and Arab-Islamic heritage” and engages in activities such as publishing traditional children’s books.77

Women, children, and the elderly are seen as increasingly vulnerable parts of the family unit, as women enter the workforce and children enter schools. The tradition of extended family cohabitation seems to be waning, and the daily care of the elderly is a newer concern. Increasingly, young marrieds leave the family compound within a couple of years of being married, after the Qatari state grants them free land and an interest-free home loan. (However, weekly or bi-weekly gatherings at the grandparents’ houses remain absolutely mandatory.) Structural changes that come with modernization, including “expanding economics, industrialization, and urbanization” have begun to “undermine traditional relationships, roles, and value orientations within the Arab family” in the broad sense (Alsharekh 2007, 149). In Chapter Four, the effects of Westernization and globalization on the Qatari household and neighborhood will be discussed.

Whereas some scholars posit that “the tribal system of settling disputes has been replaced by the judicial courts” (Kapiszwaski 2001, 159), it is exceedingly rare to read about a trial involving Qatari plaintiffs and defendants, while one does hear of families dealing internally with embarrassing matters such drunk driving or spousal abuse. It is more likely that the courts, as is said about the National Human Rights Commission, are

“for the foreigners only.”

Instead, the immediate family retains power that is more often found in the hands of the state in the West.

3.3 Relations between Qataris and Other Arabs

3.3a Qatari-Gulf Arab Relations

I have utilized the metaphor of concentric circles several times in the past few chapters; the situation of Gulf Arabs in Qatar will make it clear that these circles are not necessarily static, but are better understood as “categorical and situational” (Longva 1997, 45). For example, while Saudi citizens may be more likely to intermarry with certain Qataris (of the same or historically allied tribes), they would be entirely barred from enjoying the material benefits of Qatari citizenship. In other words, the lines of demarcation between Qataris and other Gulf Arabs are blurred along social lines, but fixed politically.

To the casual observer, it is hard to distinguish between Qataris and other Gulf Arabs at a glance, because their national dress is quite similar. While men wear their gutras (headdresses) in different ways, often based on nationality, these differences can be quite subtle to the foreign eye. Most Gulf women adhere to the abaya and shayla, with variation in style along the lines of religiosity and not nationality, making their

78 An employee of the NHRC (who wishes to remain anonymous) says that most citizens complain about the organization. Interview, 16 September 2008.
nationality even more difficult to ascertain from a distance. Upon observing almost 600 people as they walked past the Starbucks at Landmark Mall in Doha on June 18, 2009, I counted 34 single-sex female groups, and 54 male groups. In the male groups, different ways of wearing the gutra proliferated, and all seemed to intermingle freely. Interestingly, groups overwhelmingly were made up of all thobe and/or abaya wearers, or all people wearing Western clothes. Not counting families with maids, of these 88 groups, there were only two female and one male set with mixed forms of dress (traditional and Western). All three of these mixed groups were pairs, and all appeared to be teenagers. Otherwise, it is clear that those who dress like Gulf Arabs simply do not socialize (at least not in public) with non-Gulf Arabs, but many (if not all) Gulf Arabs will socialize with one another.

While several (Longva 1997) (Kapiszewski 2001) have suggested that the distinction of Muslim/non-Muslim is a hypothetical yet largely unrealized dividing line in Qatari society, few have provided substantial reasoning as to why. Longva suggests that it is because anyone may convert to Islam; it is not an exclusionary form of identity and therefore does not conform to a tribalistic politics of exclusion (Longva 1997, 57). However, I would locate the main reason even more centrally in the concept of plural society, at the concentric circle of “Gulf Arab”: the brand of Wahhabi Islam practiced by Gulf Arabs is more conservative—and perceived by those on the inside to be more pious—than non-Gulf Muslims. Whereas some Egyptian and many Lebanese Muslim women do not wear hijab, and Muslim men in Syria and Jordan will order a drink with dinner, Gulf Arabs almost universally adhere to the strictest form of Islam—in public, at
least. The traditional dress of Gulf Arabs, although not a religious symbol, does demarcate a separate culture that is in part informed by a stricter version of Islam. The common culture of Gulf Arabs, then, does have a religious component—which I suggest is why the broader dichotomy of “Muslim/non-Muslim” has less import.

In fact, even within the mosque, social dividing lines are apparent. Waleed El-Sayed, an Egyptian student at Georgetown’s Qatar campus, has prayed in mosques in Egypt, India, and Qatar. In Egypt and India, he reports, all nationalities and classes of men intermingle freely and pray together. (In India, he was even invited to juice after prayers by an Indian man who was working at the hotel where Waleed was staying.) On the other hand, in one of Waleed’s first visits to a Doha mosque, he took his normal position in a row about one third of the way back. As he finished his initial prayers and was waiting for the Friday sermon, he was approached, interrupted, and instructed to move to the back because “this place is reserved for others.” Presently a group of men in thobes came to take Waleed’s spot. It seems apparent that even another Arab Muslim—but one lacking the marker of traditional Gulf dress—is not fully welcomed in the mosque in this highly exclusionary society.

The fact that Gulf Arabs are generally welcomed into Qatari social life is perhaps made easier by the fact that, unlike other Qataris who have been naturalized (or whose prior generations were naturalized), Qatari citizens with Kuwaiti, Emirati, or Saudi bloodlines are likely to retain that ethnic identity. It took me until my third or fourth hour

79 I have heard from several sources that many Gulf men in particular tend to be as liberal as their Levantine and North African counterparts when they can be absolutely assured of their privacy, but within the public realm, behavior such as drinking alcohol is absolutely taboo.
of informal interview with one student, who always self-identified to me as “Kuwaiti,” for me to realize that she actually holds a Qatari passport. By Kuwaiti, she meant simply that her tribe originated there and the majority still lives there, including most of her extended family. As for herself, she had been born a Qatari citizen and raised in Qatar all her life, and only visited Kuwait on holidays.

It seems that among Gulf citizens, nationality (or ethnicity) is a matter of identity and is not always used to exclude. However, certain intra-Gulf stereotypes persist, as in when one of my Qatari students stated that “Kuwaitis can be very selfish” or another that “Saudi girls are very materialistic.” At the same time, as previously stated, even many Qatari passport holders self-identify as a member of another state. A Qatari Al-Naimi, for example, may refer to herself as “Saudi” because the Al-Naimi tribe is of Saudi/Bedouin origin, and they hold positions of power in Saudi Arabia. Much of the time, when stating one’s ethnicity or origin within the Gulf, my interviewees rushed to include in the same breath that “it doesn’t matter; we are all from connected tribes.” According to van Dijk (1987) in his book *Communicating Racism*, the discursive act of stating an ethnicity or nationality and then immediately saying it doesn’t matter serves a performative function, as in “other people may notice that she is Kuwaiti, but of course I would not be that prejudiced.”

As an interviewee from an extremely traditional Qatari family told me, although she does not care about family origin or nationality, tribal identity continues to play a large role in intermarriage patterns. According to Aisha:

It’s okay for a man to marry a woman who’s not a pure Qatari, but not the other way around. ‘Pure’ matters most, if the Qatari is not pure they would prefer a
pure Saudi. I find this very ridiculous and stupid and I’m so against it, and always talking about hating that with family and friends.

During our extended conversation, it became apparent that by “pure,” Aisha was referring to “pure Arab”—meaning that there was no trace of Iranian or ‘Ajam in the bloodline. Speaking of a prospective spouse for her sister-in-law, Aisha relayed the family conversation: “The guy’s mother is not from a pure tribe, and the family said no, even though he was cute and educated. ‘He’s not pure—no way!’” She continued, “They have this idea that if he’s not from a pure Arabian tribe he will be ungrateful, and stab in the back in any situation.” In the rare instance of “love marriage” (as opposed to arranged marriages), “after they get married and they’re both not pure, they fight about this; it leads to divorce sometimes. If she makes any mistake, it will be ‘of course, you’re not from a good tribe.’ He will say, ‘I made a mistake, and my father was right’”.

We see then that issues of intermingling and intermarriage in the Gulf Arab context do not seem to be dominated by citizenship (again, a Western notion) but rather by tribal/ethnic ties and lineage. However, once we move beyond the concentric circle of “the Gulf,” national identity becomes the primary marker of an individual, as the following pages and next two chapters will elaborate.

3.3b Qatari-Non Gulf Arab Relations

It can be generally said that relations with non-Gulf Arabs is one of “cultural closeness and social distance” (Longva 1997, 56). Whereas many Gulf Arabs living in Qatar intermarry or at least intermingle with Qataris themselves, as members of the same
tribes and/or families, those who come from outside the GCC (such as Yemeni, Palestinian, Lebanese, and Egyptians) generally do not intermarry, and migrate mainly for economic or political reasons. As for all migrants to the Gulf from everywhere in the world, non-Gulf Arab migrants share “major preoccupations and projects…centered around life improvement, while for [Gulf citizens] they were centered around nation-building” (Longva 1997, 7). These processes worked in tandem with one another, so that the presence of migrants shaped national identities, and vice versa.

In a BBC News report, “Trying to lift the veil on Qatar,” Katya Adler talked with several non-Gulf Arabs including Mazan, a Palestinian who declares that he has never been invited into a Qatari home: “In two decades here [in Doha] I have never met the wives or children of my Qatari colleagues. Foreigners don’t, can’t rent properties in Qatari compounds. However long I live here, I can’t get Qatari citizenship.” In the same article, Lebanese schoolteacher Naima, who has lived together with her Lebanese husband Jamil in Doha for 16 years, says “It’s wrong to say Qataris are born with a silver spoon in their mouths. It’s a gold spoon, encrusted with diamonds.” As these statements and countless others suggest, any shared Arab affinities are distinctly overshadowed by separateness, however long an Arab expatriate may stay in the emirate.

According to Birks and Sinclair (1980, 116), “Many GCC nationals feel a detachment from Palestinians and Jordanians, a lack of respect for Yemenis, and mistrust and dislike of Egyptians.” Mohammed Al-Fahim, a leading UAE businessman, presents the attitudes of nationals towards non-Gulf Arabs in the following way:

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80 4 April 2009, accessed online 1 June 2009.
Because we had a common religion and for the most part, a common language, we felt we were dealing with friends not foes. In the case of our neighbours, we shared the same Arab perspective on life and the world. Or so we believed. Unfortunately, we found to our dismay that it took more than such commonalties to build a solid foundation for trustworthy relationships (Al-Fahim, 1995, p. 160).81

As the population and prosperity of Qatar rises, attitudes towards non-Gulf Arabs have seemed to decline. According to Kapiszewski (200611):

[Arab expatriates] have felt the nationals have often acted out of prejudice and discriminated against them both in the labor market and in their attempts to establish business enterprises or purchase real estate (Alessa, 1981, pp. 44-50). Non-Gulf Arabs have also been frustrated that the nationals’ attitudes towards them were not more positive than toward non-Arab or non-Muslim expatriates. They “naturally expect to be better treated and somehow more naturally welcomed in the Gulf than [let us say] Indians or Koreans,” and when their expectations are not met, they sometimes “repeat tales of ‘arrogance,’ ‘greed,’ ‘exploitation,’ and ‘discrimination’ encountered in the Gulf” (Salame, 1988, p.242).

There was a time when all Arabs were given preference in employment.82 Section 10 of Qatar’s 1962 labor law reads:

Employers shall give the priority in hiring, to the highest extent possible to nationals first, then to other Arab nationals next, whenever such workers are available.

If the number of workers becomes too high for the work needed, the non-Arab employees must be released before the national or the Arab workers, as long as the nationals or the Arabs can do the job.

Section 12 continues:

Employers are not permitted to employ non-citizens or non-Arabs without making sure that no qualified nationals or Arabs are available and registered as unemployed in the employment office.

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81 Cited in Kapiszewski 2006.
82 Chapter Five will discuss the trend toward an increasingly Asian (and decreasingly Arab) workforce.
But when the labor law was overhauled in 2004, there were only provisions for protecting the employment of Qatari nationals; any preference for Arab nationals (or Gulf or GCC citizens) is now completely absent. Preferential treatment in employment of Qatari nationals is outlined and assured in Articles 12, 18, 20, 21, 23, 25, 26, 27, 50, and 116, making clear that Qatarization is now the official policy of the state.

Long before the material benefits of citizenship were realized in the mid 1990s, Qataris were able to see the benefits accrued by other Gulf citizens (namely in Kuwait) and therefore had reason to guard the right to citizenship even more closely. Perhaps for this reason, intermarriage between Qataris and non-Gulf Arabs (especially between Qatari females and non-Gulf males) is so rare and bureaucratically difficult that it is practically forbidden. As one of my male Egyptian students told me (confirming Kapiszewski 2001), “when one window opens, the door always closes.” Even if the law states that intermarriage is possible, any individual petition for a license will likely be denied in the judicial system.

We see a system where intermarriage is *de facto* impossible, even though it may be officially legal. As Longva (1997, 205) writes, “the smaller the ruling population in relation to the popular masses, the more important it is for it to pursue an aggressively natalist policy.” Combine this reasoning with traditional Islamic rules of patrilineage and it makes sense that Qatari women are formally discouraged from marrying non-Qataris (in inheritance law and in the courts) to the point of it being practically forbidden. Qatari women are effectively the “gatekeepers” of Qatari society. Likewise, there is a
fear that if a Qatari man marries a non-Qatari woman, “she would not be able to know all the traditions, know what it takes to ‘make it’ in a Qatari family.” 83

Dr. Amal Almalki, the only Qatari Assistant Professor at Carnegie Mellon University’s Doha campus, writes in her blog, “among Arabs, origins and tribal roots play a vital role in determining who is more or less of an Arab and thus worthy of our respect! Early in our lives, we are taught about ‘Us’ and define the ‘Others’ as the opposites, highlighting our positive qualities by degrading them.” 84 A sense of superiority seems to pervade relations between Gulf and non-Gulf Arabs, even though official declarations and demonstrations of Arab unity are repeated *ad nauseum* (for example, Qatar hosted the Arab Summit in spring 2009, welcoming Sudanese President al-Bashir in the name of Arab unity although the ICC has issued an arrest warrant for war crimes).

To be fair, this sense of superiority goes both ways. In the early days of oil, according to Longva (199725), citing Ibn Khaldun (1967), “even the prospect of high wages could not tempt qualified workers viewed by sedentary Arabs as the heartland of ‘uncivilized nomadism.’” It was not until the creation of the Israeli state that Palestinians began to move to the Gulf, ostensibly out of necessity, not free will. This sense that Gulf Arabs are less civilized than the Levant still seems to predominate. In my travels in Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan, when I said I was living and working in Qatar, more often than not the reply was something along the lines of “you poor thing.” Many times, it was

83 Interview with TAMUQ student, June 2009.
pointed out that the garish home décor items placed in the front window of many shops were “for the Gulf Arabs, who have no taste and flock to shiny things.” Even to the outsider, sometimes the salespeople’s pandering to Gulf Arabs is obvious: on a narrow side street in Damascus, Syria, in December 2008, as I passed a mosaic shop, I saw for sale a huge and very expensive mosaic of Qatar’s Emir, Sheikh Hamad. It was the only mosaic in the store that was not purely decorative and abstract (as Islam would require).

It is often remarked that, no matter where you are from or your station in life, the most important descriptor of all people in the Gulf is their nationality. As Chapter Five will demonstrate, it is not uncommon to see job vacancies posted under titles such as “Indian driver wanted” or “Pakistani engineer needed.” The practice of stereotyping by nationality is also widespread, so that one hears for example that “Filipinos are good for service jobs because they are always smiling” or “Sudanese drivers are very lazy” or “Sudanese shari’a lawyers are the best.”85 But it seems that Egyptians are the Arab ethnicity treated with more diverse attitudes than any other in the Gulf.

Political and social attitudes towards Egypt and Egyptians can be divergent at times. Kapiszewski notes that Egyptians are praised for helping the GCC develop its education and administrative systems in the mid-20th century, when many Egyptian experts came to the Gulf. According to Kapiszewski (2006): “Another dimension of the Arab presence in the GCC states which worried many nationals was the supposed “Egyptianization” of the local dialects and culture that were believed to have resulted from the predominance of Egyptians in the field of education (Graz, 1992, pp. 220-221).”

85 All three of these were said to me in one average day in June 2009.
Egypt was recognized for balancing Iran and Iraq in later decades, but simultaneously was treated with suspicion for spreading “unwelcome pan-Arab nationalist and socialist ideas” (Kapiszweski 2001, 141).86

Soon after the failed 1996 counter-coup, Qatar’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim Al-Thani accused Egyptian authorities of participating in the attempt. In addition, Qatar’s increased diplomatic presence in the region, and its establishment a trade relationship with Israel, has led to a rivalry with Egypt that has been quite heated at times. Egypt boycotted the MENA conference in 1996 (after Sheikh Hamad took power), and Qatar deported hundreds of Egyptian workers in its Ministries of Interior, Public Employees and Affairs, and Foreign Affairs.87 In late 1997, Saudi diplomats mediated a truce between Egypt and Qatar, but their relationship remains strained. According to Mehran Kamrava, Interim Dean of SFS-Qatar, “Al Jazeera, increased oil wealth, the vision of the emir of Qatar, have all prompted Qatar to act in ways that make inroads into what is usually considered Egyptian turf.”88 The tension is both political and social, and it cuts both ways; the parents of one of my Egyptian students would strongly prefer he avoided Gulf women and allow his cousins back in Egypt to find him a suitable wife.

86 Unlike Kapiszweski, I have never heard anyone accuse Egyptians of spreading pan-Arabism; in fact, Gamel Abdel Nasser’s own grandson was a student of mine at SFS-Q, and the subject rarely came up even with him in our several conversations.


It is definitely not only Egyptians who are treated differently from Gulf Arabs. As Kapiszewski writes, “The presence of Palestinians, which pushed the GCC states into an involvement in politics related to the Arab-Israeli conflict, was also considered a problem” (2006). The wife and children of former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein live in exile in Qatar, and the fact that their driver wears a thobe (a marker of Gulf identity) was the source of some discussion in my classroom. Exclaimed one Qatari, “I would never want a Qatari driving around an Iraqi!” (When she asked for support from her colleagues, they all appeared embarrassed and put their heads down—a signal not necessarily of disagreement, but that our classroom’s mixed ethnic company was not the proper arena for such remarks.) When I pointed out that my Yemeni friend Omar, an employee at Georgetown’s Qatar campus whose job involves driving around high-level officials, wears a thobe when he is working, she appeared visibly calmed.

Like all ethnic groups, non-Gulf Arab migrants to Qatar tend to occupy certain positions of employment. They are generally found in a wide array of occupations, but “usually at a level superior to Asians” (Longva 1997, 31). For example, both branches of the Doha restaurant Le Nôtre has an almost exclusively Filipino wait staff, and Lebanese management. Many mid-level and low-level managers in Industrial Area construction companies are Egyptian or Palestinian, while the unskilled laborers immediately below them may be Nepalese or Bangladeshi. Like other non-Gulf nationals, “in most cases, it did not take long before the Arabs reconstituted their social universe in the emirate” (Longva 1997, 34). As with Asian, European, and American expatriates, it is common for non-Gulf Arabs to socialize with others of their nationality and status.
Although knowledge of English may be necessary for certain positions, if a Nepalese person holds the job, he (almost always he\textsuperscript{89}) is likely to be ranked and paid lower than an Arab performing a similar job, even if the Arab cannot speak English. The practice of pay based on nationality is widespread, institutionalized, and almost always openly discussed as a perfectly logical rationale. This will be expanded on in the fifth chapter of this dissertation—for now, suffice it to say that Arabs tend to be better paid and occupy better positions than similarly-qualified Asians in the Gulf.

3.4 Conclusion

The sense that national identity is under existential threat is common throughout the Gulf, from Kuwait down to the Emirates. Each society reacts to the threat differently, as this worthwhile excerpt from Longva (1997, 124-5) suggests:

In 1981, after nearly a decade of frenzied and erratic development accompanied by the staggering influx of migrant workers from outside the Arab world, the Kuwaitis’ capacity for cultural absorption seemed to have reached a point of saturation. Drowning in the midst of aliens from East and West, the small native population was desperately looking for ways to shield itself and to preserve a sense of cultural identity. As an elderly Kuwaiti put it, ‘Imagine seeing strangers everywhere around you, including in your own homes (i.e., the servants). We used to know all the Kuwaitis, and to trust each other. In the old days, when someone made a promise, you knew he would keep it. We were like a big family. Now, everyone is a stranger. You don’t know whom to trust anymore.’ Also the younger generation experienced a sense of being under a cultural siege, as the following statement by a woman in her early thirties shows: ‘You have been to Abu Dhabi and Dubai, haven’t you? How many local people did you meet in the streets there? One? Two? They are so few compared to the expatriates that they have surrendered the streets to them. Sometimes, I think we should do that too,

\textsuperscript{89} Nepalese men are much more likely to work abroad than Nepalese women, because of local (Nepalese) norms and customs.
withdraw to a ghetto where we would be only amongst ourselves. It would have been easier, less tiring. But we are more numerous than the Emiratis. And we are not shy like them. We want to retain our streets, to keep them Kuwaiti. We want to hear Kuwaiti spoken out there, see Kuwaiti people and Kuwaiti manners around us. This is our home. We don’t want to lose it. We want to be able to live here in our own way."

This phenomenon of a culture continually under threat is an excellent example of societal securitization. At the same time, the evidence from this chapter pushes the concept of securitization further in two directions. First, Western notions of “society,” “sovereignty,” and “citizen” taken for granted by the original Copenhagen School architects of the theory simply do not apply here. Second, this is a clear case of institutionalized securitization, and therefore cannot be identified, as Buzan et al (1998, 21) would originally require, by the adoption of “extraordinary practices” on the part of the state apparatus. The sixth and final chapter will elaborate on these theoretical advances, as well as the other two introduced in Chapter One.
CHAPTER FOUR:

“WESTERN” THREATS TO QATARI SOCIETY

I speak of being afflicted with “Westitis” the way I would speak of being afflicted with cholera. If this is not palatable let us say that it is something akin to being stricken by heat or by cold. But it is not that either. It is something more on the order of being attacked by tongue worm. Have you ever seen how wheat rots? From within. The husk remains whole, but it is only an empty shell like the discarded chrysalis of a butterfly hanging from a tree. In any case, we are dealing with a sickness, a disease imported from abroad, and developed in an environment receptive to it.

--Al-e Ahmad, Plagued by the West (1981, 3).

This fourth chapter will deal with the ways in which particular influences from “The West” are securitized in Qatari society. First, I must state that Qatar’s relationship with the West is not an altogether adversarial one; my ability to conduct research in the various American universities that populate Education City serves as just one example of the ways in which the Qatari regime has engaged and promoted certain types of Western influence in the state.

The quote above was chosen for its literary merit, and not as a general reflection of Qatari perceptions of the West. It was penned in 1962 by Al-e Ahmad, an Iranian author (translated to English in 1981); he was commenting on the phenomenon of “Westoxication” or “Weststruckedness” (Gharbzadeh in the original Farsi) in Iran. When discussing the relationship between Qatar and the West for the past two and a half years with my Qatari students, friends and colleagues, their opinions are decidedly mixed. In the interest of advancing the thesis that Qatari society is securitized, this
chapter will discuss five instances where Western influence has been deemed a threat.

After a brief introduction, I will write on each of the following phenomena:

1. Spatial separation in housing and education
2. English language
3. Alcohol
4. Technology: mobile phones and satellite television
5. Boyya trend

For the purposes of this chapter, “The West” should be understood as it is understood within the Gulf. This definition may be unusual for those unversed in the region, as it includes not only the United States, Canada, Europe, and other Western societies such as Australia and South Africa, but also most non-Arab and/or non-Muslim societies comprising the higher socioeconomic levels of the expatriate population in Qatar. Interestingly, as Longva (1997, 137) notes about Kuwait:

Activities designated as ‘Western’ were ‘Western’ and not simply ‘non-Kuwaiti’ precisely because they could not be identified with the general population of ordinary [unskilled, low-paid] migrants. To many, especially expatriates from the Philippines and Goa, drinking, dancing, and mixing between men and women were no more Western than any other social activities. Yet the working-class migrants could not indulge in them because, in Kuwait, such activities took place in private or exclusive settings that were the preserve of the middle class. Thus ‘Western’ in this context was the particular feature of a social class rather than any national or regional culture.

In Qatar as in Kuwait, “Western” is attached to people who are relatively educated, well-paid, and move within middle- and upper-class social circles.

As the first chapter of this dissertation discusses at length, Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde define securitization as having “three components (or steps): existential threats, emergency action, and effects on interunit relations by breaking free of rules” (1998, 26), cited in (Williams 2003). In all five instances above (spatial separation, English
language, alcohol, technology, and boyat), the designation of the issue as an existential threat to Qatari society has occurred; however, each case varies in its levels of emergency response and “breaking free of rules.” I ordered the sections of this chapter according to the degree of institutionalization of societal securitization in Qatar (from high to low).

Buzan et al. do concede that securitization can be institutionalized, or a part of normal operations (1998, 27), but elaborate no further on any examples or instances of institutionalization. This is where the first few sections of this chapter come in.

In the final two sections of this chapter, I will be delving into the securitizing practices that “break free of rules” in response to the less-institutionalized security threats of boyat (as will be discussed, this term refers to butch lesbians) and technology in Qatar. Both boyat and technology are seen as relatively new or recent threats to Qatari society, and so action taken against their spread is generally more dramatic and drastic. However, this makes the institutionalized threats no less pervasive; in fact, factors such as the spatial separation of neighborhoods affects all residents, all the time, while the less-institutionalized threats affect a subset of the population.

This phenomenon of “the West” as a threat to societal security in the Gulf has been noticed by other scholars on the region, but never before has it been discussed in terms of critical security studies (namely, societal securitization). “The negative influence of Westernization on national cultures, on identities and values as well as on social structures, remains a big concern” (Kapiszewski 2001, 7). Authorities are worried about cultural threats including expatriate teachers, foreign media, foreign women married to nationals, and Western military presence. In response, Kapiszewski posits, authorities
maintain tight control, make immigrants feel insecure, reward nationals and maintain separation, and stress the importance of Islamic values and Arab identity (ibid).

The tension between Westward-looking elites and powerful religious conservatives in Qatar has a long and complicated history; many of the sources of conflict are addressed in this chapter. Chief among them are English-medium education, the regulations controlling alcohol distribution and consumption, and open access to technology (internet and satellite television. As I ordered the sections of this dissertation, it should be apparent that these three categories fit into the “middle ground” where securitization is neither highly institutionalized, nor is it treated with short-term emergency measures.

Indeed, if the emir caters to religious conservatives within Qatar, it is directed more at his citizens and not at a religious elite that would pose a potential political threat. After all, “an indigenous class of local clerics and religious leaders has not developed in Qatar” (Kamrava 2009, 409). Kamrava reports that “by all accounts, the state’s careful management of religion has so far effectively neutralized Qatari Islam as a potential source of political opposition or even a source of constraint upon state agendas” (Kamrava 2009, 411). However, Kamrava refers exclusively to the institutional factors that would bar a political opposition led by religious clerics to form; this is accurate, but it also discounts the fact that the emir, like all unelected heads of state, is forced either to maintain rule by popular consensus, or to impose it via authoritarian measures. To use the terminology of the Copenhagen School, whereas Kamrava is focused on security in the political sector, this dissertation concerns itself with societal security. The political
and societal security sectors have differently-constructed referent objects, and different conditions that would be considered “threatening.”

So, while the Islamic clerics have not mounted a considerable political challenge to the emir, conservative elements do have considerable authority with the majority of the religious Qatari society. The ruling family at times has made concessions, or spoken out on issues that are deemed to threaten Islamic values. Two such examples that will be discussed in this chapter are Sheikha Mozah’s speech against “immoral” satellite television programming, and her addressing of the boyya trend and establishment of a “rehabilitation center” for homosexuals and cross-dressers. Whether or not Sheikha Mozah and the emir believe that satellite television and cross-dressing pose an existential threat to Qatari society is almost irrelevant; these speeches serve to strengthen the ties between the ruling family and its subjects.

In the following sections, I will elaborate on the methods of control, insecurity, and separation, based on a conscious dichotomization of “Qatari” (pious Muslim; Gulf Arab) and “Westerner.” This is not the only line of differentiation in Qatari society (as the previous chapter should have made clear), but it will be the focus of this chapter. These otherwise-fluid identities become reified when they are securitized (Williams 2003, 519). This chapter discusses how both Western expatriates and Western ideas are securitized in Qatar, starting with the most basic lived experience: the household and neighborhood settlement patterns.
4.1 Spatial separation

4.1a Residence patterns

Intriguingly, anthropologists discussing plural societies often use the metaphor of walls between social and ethnic groups; for example: “Walls are not built to shut off interactions but to regulate them” (Longva 1997, 71). Recall from chapter one of this dissertation that Furnivall defines plural society in this way:

It is in the strictest sense a medley, for [people] mix but do not combine. Each group holds by its own religion, its own culture and language, its own ideals and ways. As individuals, they meet, but only in the marketplace, in buying and selling...Even in the economic sphere there is a division of labor along racial lines (1948, 304; cited in (Longva 1997, 3)).

In the Gulf, the metaphor of the wall is a physical reality, causing the separation between social groups to be experienced viscerally. The Qatari state or societal elders need take no action for this highly institutionalized form of securitization to be effective—it comprises the layout of the city of Doha itself.

Sharon Nagy (2006) writes extensively about spatial separation in urban Qatar (namely Doha). She notes that while Qataris enjoy land and building grants, including interest-free loans for home construction, non-citizens are banned from owning property except for in “a few high-end development projects aimed at attracting foreign investment” (Nagy 2006, 124). This land grant program reinforces spatial separation, because whereas neighborhoods remain predominantly Qatari, Western (read: highly-skilled) expatriates are generally housed in walled compounds and high-rise apartment buildings.
In addition, Nagy notes that street layouts in Doha also serve to separate nationals from expatriates: Qatari neighborhoods contain primary, secondary, and tertiary roads, which get respectively more narrow and private. “Because only residents and their guests have any reason to enter the tertiary roads, access and exposure are limited, providing a closed, relatively private street space” (Nagy 2006, 124-125). The majority of Western-populated compounds are clustered together in the outskirts of Doha, linked by a network of busy roads without easy pedestrian access, so Westerners rarely have a reason to walk outside the compound in which they live.

Indeed, my own experiences strongly reinforce this. I rely on these experiences because while “there are almost no studies on the social, cultural, or psychological problems that nationals experience in their rapidly changing countries…” there are no works at all that are “devoted to the experience of Western expatriates” (Kapiszewski 2001, 17, emphasis added). In addition, my experiences have provided ample variety because I have lived in two parts of Doha, in two very different neighborhoods.

From August 2007-February 2009, I lived in a Georgetown-provided compound in the outskirts of town. Lavish accommodations are the norm inside these compounds; intended to lure Western expatriates to the Gulf. These compounds are smaller versions of the ones built by ARAMCO in Saudi Arabia (see Vitalis 2006). Inside the compound walls, a wide palm-tree lined boulevard circled around the large kidney-shaped three-level apartment complex. In the center was a large building containing the management offices, a restaurant and juice bar, a computer room, gym, showers and sauna, a snooker room, large sitting areas with both Western and Bedouin furnishings, and even an
elaborately decorated Christmas tree in December. Outside the central building was a pool, hot tub, playground, and tennis courts. Every day with few exceptions, I walked my dog inside the compound, because to go outside would mean navigating along a small sandy strip next to a busy road, behind the walls of the neighboring Rugby Club (which will be discussed in this chapter), and around the walls of yet another compound—hardly an interesting (or safe, because of the traffic) walk.

In February 2009, I was transferred to a villa provided by Texas A&M University which happens to be inside an older compound (at about seven years old, one of the oldest in Doha), and adjacent to a Qatari neighborhood. This compound, while very well-maintained and full of similar amenities, is much smaller with less grassy areas than my previous compound, so I leave its guarded gates every day to walk my dog. The lack of traffic on the tertiary roads in my neighborhood mean that we can wander freely, pausing only for the occasional SUV; more often, we stop so the local boys who play in the street can squeal and dare one another to pet my dog (not a typical family pet in this part of the world, and considered by most locals to be vicious and dirty).

Apart from constant curious stares, I feel very comfortable walking around the luxurious neighborhood. Although all the homes are walled off, the walls themselves and the visible levels of the houses within are mostly beautifully and elaborately built, and every day is a new adventure as we explore the many small streets in the area. Although I have never been inside a Qatari home, a focus group of three female students at Texas

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90 I was once invited, to attend a wake following the death in the family of a Qatari co-worker, but I was regrettably out of country. I have hinted, suggested, and outright asked to be invited into the homes of many of my Qatari friends, colleagues, and students, but
A&M University informed me that most new houses have pools and elevators, or room for them in the plans. Female maids/drivers often have their own level within the house, while male drivers and groundskeepers live in outbuildings within or just outside the villa walls.

Unfortunately, my habit of walking through this Qatari neighborhood is probably unwelcome by many. As written by Kapiszewski:

governments [in the Gulf] have been trying to limit the undesirable social and cultural effects of exposure to the West and to the expatriates’ presence…the policy of segregating expatriate communities in the interest of social stability—one which was adopted by all the GCC states—stemmed mainly from nationals’ concern for their own cultural survival (2001, 164-165).

According to Nagy, Qatari sources often complained to her that the influx of foreigners to a neighborhood is a top consideration when their families decided to relocate (2006, 126). Nagy cited as an example a Qatari family who moved because their American neighbor had complained to authorities about a cow they had kept on their property for milk (in my neighborhood there are several homes with chicken coops for eggs).

However, in practice, Westerners are a slim minority in these neighborhoods; most “foreigners” are South Asian drivers employed by Qatari families. Indeed, the “curious stares” I endure while walking my dog every day are almost all from these South Asian men, who congregate on street corners and make-shift benches outside the villa walls while waiting to drive their Qatari charges to the next destination.

to no avail. This regrettable fact can be attributed much more to the closed nature of Qatari society and families (and my lack of was ta or social power) than it can to any lack of effort on my part.
Some of these low-skilled workers have “invaded” Qatari neighborhoods as residents, since employers increasingly choose to rent single-family villas and fill them with 40 to 50 laborers. Indeed, this is practiced by the security company whose guards man the heavy gates of my compound, and it is frowned on by many Qataris. In a Peninsula newspaper article entitled “Citizens want issue of single workers in residential areas resolved soon,” Mohammed Saeed writes, citing a local official:

“Qatari society did not accept single people mingling with families in residential areas…it is not only causing a culture shock to locals, but is also posing a security threat because Qataris do not usually lock their main entrance doors” according to Ahmed Jassem Al Muftah, formerly with the Central Municipal Council (CMC). “Our traditions do not allow even fellow Qatari single people to live alone in areas inhabited largely by families,” Al Muftah said (Saeed 2009).

In its “A Question of Culture” series, the Gulf Times paper asks random respondents in Doha to reflect on traditions in their home state. In response to the question “How important are neighbours to you?” in the June 20, 2009, edition, Mohamed al-Hawl, a Qatari answers:

There is an Arab proverbial advice saying: ‘Buy a neighbor before buying a house.’ I remember that before we decided to buy our house, we first inquired about the nature of our neighbours. According to our Gulf traditions and Islam, neighbourly relations are of utmost importance. One cannot live isolated from his neighbours. If a house is located in a good place, but the neighbours are not good, then it is rejected...before the oil surge, when a housewife gives birth, all her women neighbours were volunteering to do her housework until she gets healthy again (no author, emphasis added).

This trend seems to be in serious decline, as women often do not leave the home to make visits on foot—indeed, from February through November 2009, I have not seen one woman walking down a street in my neighborhood. Although Nagy’s sources attribute this change to the unwelcome influx of foreigners (2006, 126), every person I questioned
on the subject said instead that “people are just too busy nowadays”\textsuperscript{91} and discussed the pressures of daily life that come with modernization and technology—not particular ethnic groups invading the neighborhoods.\textsuperscript{92}

\textbf{4.1b Education City (segregation of American education)}

As the second chapter of this dissertation discusses, the emir of Qatar is relatively outward-thinking compared to the citizenry over which he rules. Indeed, the concept of Education City (and its parent Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development) was imagined by the emir and his wife HH Sheikha Mozah, and not all Qataris are keen on the perceived American influence. Waleed Al-Shobakky, a science writer and student at Georgetown University’s School of Foreign Service in Qatar (SFS-Q), published an article in \textit{The New Atlantis} that points to the spatial separation between the American universities of Education City and the surrounding city of Doha.

“If you look at the experiments in the Gulf, one thing that gives you a pause is the degree to which they have had to be created in boundaries,” says [former SFS-Q Dean] Reardon-Anderson. “[Qatar’s] Education City has a boundary around it. King Abdullah College [in Jordan] has even more boundaries.” And so does KAUST, the campus of which is built on the remote shore of the Red Sea, and which will even have its own airport. The boundaries around the new projects

\textsuperscript{91} See for example Interview #2 with Aisha.
\textsuperscript{92} It may be apparent to the reader that the discussion of spatial separation of neighborhoods is not a perfect fit with the topic of this chapter (western influences), because one of the changes to Qatari neighborhoods since the oil surge includes the addition of South Asian drivers to neighborhood streets. However, because Nagy and Kapiszewski’s fieldwork both suggest that initial steps to segregate neighborhoods were made to separate citizens from westerners, and because modernization and technology is now acknowledged to play a role in the breakdown of neighborly relations, I have chosen to locate this discussion here, rather than in the next chapter (which will address South Asian migrant labor).
may shield the larger society from a potential culture shock. But they also block what could be a fruitful interaction between the new centers of education and science and the host society and its institutions. Thus the exchange of ideas and the engagement in debates remain largely locked up within the boundaries of the new projects instead of flowing out into the broader society (Al-Shobakky 2008, 18-19).

On Qatar Foundation’s FAQ web page, the first question is “How do the joint ventures Qatar Foundation is involved with benefit the community at large?” (The answer is a short one, focusing on partnering with international businesses to bring new services and opportunities.) The second question is “How do Qatar Foundation’s efforts in community development reconcile promoting modernity with maintaining Qatari culture and identity?”

I asked both former Dean James Reardon-Anderson (SFS-Qatar) and Dean and CEO Mark Weichold (Texas A&M University-Qatar) about this question from the Qatar Foundation website, and both stated that they have never felt it was a focus of Education City universities to promote, maintain, or otherwise engage with issues of Qatari culture and identity. However, there are several organizations under the Qatar Foundation umbrella that do serve the Qatari population as a whole, and promote Qatari values: for example, the Doha Institute for Family Studies and Development, the Cultural Development Center, and the Social Development Center. None of these are housed within the walls of Education City. In the upcoming section on the securitization of language in Qatar, I will discuss Gulf society’s varied reaction to the spread of English-medium education such as that found in Education City.

4.2 English language

Under the guidance of the emir and Sheikha Mozah, the Qatari education system is moving towards the English medium at all levels. All universities in Qatar teach in English, except for Arabic and Islamic Studies courses, including the state-run Qatar University, though it retains traditional Islamic values (separate male and female campuses, curfews for dormitory residents). The majority of universities, however, are branch campuses of American universities, such as Cornell, Georgetown, and Texas A&M. The Emir and his Supreme Education Council are moving towards making all primary and secondary schools teach in English, as well. “That vision is the worst nightmare of many conservative Muslim leaders in the region: Americans not only occupying military bases, but also influencing classrooms in the homeland of Islam” (Glasser 2003). Kuwaiti religious leader Abdul Razak Shuyji objects: “A curriculum should present our own identity, our own history, our own religion. It’s not for others to come and try to change it” (Glasser 2003). English-medium education, promoted by the current emir’s regime, is one point of conflict with religious conservatives in Qatar who lament the teaching of English at the expense of Islamic Studies and Arabic.

The question of the relative merits and cultural threats posed by the spread of English in Gulf education has been on the agenda for at least ten years. Kapiszewski (2001, 162) cites an exchange in the Emirati Gulf News daily newspaper in the spring of 1998. One editorial read in part, “The UAE’s culture is strong enough to welcome and benefit from the wide use of English…and will not lose itself in the process…It is a mistake to hide behind the argument that the UAE culture depends on nationals only
using Arabic.” Soon thereafter, Abdullah Mograby of the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research countered, “It is becoming virtually difficult or rather painful for a UAE national to obtain basic services...if he or she cannot speak English or Hindi or Urdu...as a consequence the country’s national identity is now seriously under threat.” Mograby’s interpretation of the English language as a threat to Emirati identity indicates that, in at least some circles, societal securitization has taken place. Recall that according to the Copenhagen School, all instances of securitization require a referent object—in the case of societal security, the referent object is the identity of the society in question.

In a joint study at Qatar University and Carnegie Mellon University-Qatar, Mohanalakshmi Rajakumar and Silvia Pessoa surveyed and interviewed students from both universities. 50 were given surveys, 6 individual interviews, and 3 focus groups with 20 total students. According to Rajakumar and Pessoa, the students had “mixed feelings” about the English language’s impact on their culture and identity, but most agreed that English has not impacted their religion or religiosity. While 80% desire to send their future children to English-medium schools, it seems to be for professional reasons: according to one focus group respondent, “Now there’s no work in Qatar that requires any Arabic; it’s very limited; everything has become English now.” Most students report that their English skills (written and spoken) are now better than their Arabic skills (Rajakumar and Pessoa March 29, 2008).

In a later grant proposal, Pessoa writes about the data collected at Qatar University and Carnegie Mellon Univerisity-Qatar, “The students surveyed revealed that
the values associated with English education, Western values, were often seen as threatening to their Muslim identities” (Pessoa 2008, 5). Pessoa continues:

Almost 72% of the people admitted that learning English has changed their way of thinking somehow. […] A number of girls discussed that they way they talk to people from the opposite sex is very different now from what it was when they used to only speak Arabic…because they feel more comfortable talking to English speakers in a “Western manner.” This includes the topics they would discuss, the way they talk, their accent, and also their points of views (Pessoa 2008, 8).

Although native Arabic speakers fear losing their Arabic skills, recent standardized testing results suggest that both English and Arabic skills do not meet national standards. According to the Supreme Education Council’s 2008 findings, only between five and ten percent of Qatari primary and secondary school children meet grade standards in either English or Arabic.

Arabic skills seem to suffer not just at the hands of English education, but also because of the proliferation of foreign nannies taking over primary childcare responsibilities in Qatari households. According to Kapiszewski, “an increasing number of [GCC] children entering schools have problems with the Arabic language since they are being brought up by Asian nannies” (2001, 162). Because female domestic workers (maids and nannies) are not addressed by Qatari labor laws, they lie outside the scope of the next chapter, which focuses on South Asian migrant labor. In the final chapter of this dissertation, however, I will briefly discuss the place of nannies in Qatari households; for the purposes of this chapter, the most relevant fact is that nannies are seen to (and probably do) hinder early childhood development of Arabic skills, since most nannies are not Arabic speakers.
Dr. Marzook Basher Binmarzook, the Editor in Chief of the *Gulf Times* and member of the Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Heritage, spoke at a Doha press conference on February 14, 2009, to introduce a seminar entitled “Language and Identity” which ran from February 15-17, 2009. Stated Binmarzook, “Language is the key issue for societies’ identities.” The *Gulf Times* article reporting on the event, entitled “Arabic ‘under threat in Gulf states,’” continues, “GCC countries were facing a great danger in this regard, due to the non-Arabic speaking majority” (including ostensibly both English speakers, and speakers of languages other than Arabic and English) (Hussein 2009). However, Hussein remarks, “The expert [Binmarzook] noted that although Arabs should spar a war to protect their original language, this did not mean an appeal for a closed identity. ‘The Arab identity is always open to other cultures,’ he said while calling for an interactive Arab identity that provided the world a cultural model (Hussein 2009).”

In light of securitization theory, this last statement is especially intriguing, because (recalling the first chapter of this dissertation) “it is when identities are *securitized* that their negotiability and flexibility are challenged, denied, or suppressed” (Williams 2003, 519). If Binmarzook is correct, there appears to be potential for desecuritization by reorienting Qatari identity around the idea that “the Arab identity is always open to other cultures.” The prospects for desecuritization of Qatari society will be discussed in chapter six.

Perceived threats to the Arabic language come mostly via the substitution of English as the medium of education, but other languages such as Urdu, Hindi, and Tagalog are also spoken by a large segment of Qatar’s population. Therefore, the societal
security threat to the Arabic language is not wholly due to “Western” influence. In the next section, however, I will discuss alcohol in Qatar. Alcohol was introduced to the region by Western expatriates and is seen as a wholly Western threat, although in practice, recent crackdowns have occurred as a result of population increase in general.

4.3 Alcohol

Unlike Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the emirate of Sharjah (within the UAE), alcohol is legally permitted in Qatar. Regulations are strict, however: there are only a few locations in Doha where one can drink, and one Qatari-owned liquor store for purchases to be consumed at home. By all accounts, the laws surrounding alcohol in Qatar have changed dramatically in the past thirty years, but not in one direction: at times, there has been relatively more leeway, and at other times the state authorities have cracked down on establishments serving alcohol. Although it is very hard to permeate the inner workings of the Qatari state, as chapter two discusses, it is clear that the emir is much less conservative, and more outward-looking, than many if not most of his subjects. However, as the subsections following a brief historical background on liquor laws in Qatar will demonstrate, recent crackdowns on institutions serving alcohol suggest that the threat of this Western influence is acute at present.

Past laws regulating alcohol in Qatar are very difficult to research, as they seem to have been undocumented and ad-hoc in the years surrounding independence (1971), when the population was much smaller and more homogenous. Although no formal records were kept, in the late 1960s the population of Qatar was estimated to be around
70,000, including citizens and guest workers (Encyclopedia of the Nations 2009). By 1986, there were 370,000 residents of Qatar; this population increased all the way to 744,000 by 2004 (Embassy of Qatar in Washington, DC 2005). According to the Ministry of Interior and as reported by the government-run Qatar News Agency, in June 2009 the population of Qatar had reached 1.9 million (Qatar News Agency 2009). As may be expected, this dramatic increase—almost 2800% in 40 years—has brought with it dramatically different necessities of population governance.

One longtime expatriate who wishes to remain anonymous relayed to me that on his arrival to Qatar in 1982, there were three outlets for purchasing alcohol in Qatar. The first, operated by Cable & Wireless (a telecommunications service provider) on behalf of the British Embassy, allowed residents with Embassy-administered liquor licenses to purchase alcohol at cost, out of the House on the Hill liquor store. The facility was later operated by a British engineering company when Cable & Wireless left Qatar. Two other liquor stores were controlled and operated by the Qatar General Petroleum Corporation (QGPC, now Qatar Petroleum or QP) allowing license holders, who were all employees of QGPC, to shop at their two stores (in Doha and Dukhan, on the west coast of Qatar). All three of these operations were clearly established in order to serve the (mainly British) population who worked in the oil and gas fields. Then as now, the amount one was able to spend per month was based on one’s monthly salary, but prices were cheap by British standards.

In 1982, the only licensed bar in Doha was the Open Arms Bar in the Falcon Club, which was operated solely for the senior staff of Qatar General Petroleum
Corporation and their guests. In the Falcon Club, “Qataris were permitted to buy and drink alcohol in the bar, in national dress and there were rarely any instances of drunkenness” (anonymous 2009). The Falcon Club was closed following pressure from the notoriously conservative Sharia CID (Criminal Investigation Department)—Qatar’s (less strict) counterpart to the religious police in Saudi Arabia. According to my source, the bar closed “due to CID falsely reporting to their bosses that Qataris using the bar were speaking against the Emir and the government. Many of the guest members were influential Qataris” (anonymous 2009). It seems that during this period, voices of the religious elements in society were able to exert considerable power, both via the CID and more broadly.

From their original opening until QDC began operations, the QGPC/QP liquor stores stayed open, but for about a decade starting in 1983, there were no bars in Qatar. There was some discussion in 1986 about allowing the three major hotels in town to serve alcohol, but in the words of my best source on the subject, “It all fell apart when the religious got the upper hand and the exercise was stopped” (anonymous 2009). In 1993 or 1994, the Ramada started serving alcohol, and soon after, other Western-managed hotels followed suit. While the current emir (Sheikh Hamad) did not take over from his father (Sheikh Khalifa) until 1995, he was generally considered to be “running the show” in the later years of his father’s rule, so it is possible (though unverifiable) that Sheikh Hamad supported this change, either tacitly or actively.

In the late 1990s, Qatar Airways-owned Qatar Distribution Centre took over all operations for issuing liquor licenses and selling alcohol for home use. There is now only
one liquor store in the country—the Qatar Distribution Centre on the outskirts of Doha—and prices have skyrocketed. Several long-time expatriates have told me that whereas prices were low in the 1980s, now it is not uncommon to pay upwards of three to four times the market value on wine, spirits, and beer at the QDC. What had once been a non-profit service run by the British Embassy and a British company (allowing the small population of British expatriates and some of their Qatari colleagues to purchase alcohol) has become a major profit-making enterprise for Qatar Airways (which is privately owned by an individual Qatari).

At present, penalties against intoxication and driving under the influence are understandably quite strict in Qatar. According to a 2008 U.S. government report, “Public intoxication and/or driving while under the influence of alcohol or other substances are not tolerated by Qatari authorizes. Offenders will be detained, arrested and, at a minimum, have to pay heavy civil and/or criminal fines and other penalties; this could include expulsion from the country” (U.S. Overseas Security Advisory Council). As indicated by The Peninsula, “A Muslim found drinking is normally sentenced to 40 lashes. The punishment for drink driving [sic] and causing an accident is more severe: a fine ranging from QR10,000 to QR50,000 [approximately $2750-$14000] and a jail term from a month to three years or either of them” (Trouble brewing 2008).

In the weekly “Court Roundup” column in Gulf Times, there was at least one alcohol-related offense in the six weeks I surveyed (between 29 September and 7 November 2009). In one example, a Pakistani man was sentenced to one month imprisonment, and QR10,000 for driving under the influence, and 40 lashes for drinking
(meaning he must be Muslim) (6 October 2009). In another case, a Somali man was deported for drinking and then leaving the scene of a minor accident (7 November 2009). (As the next chapter will discuss, it is commonplace for individuals to be identified by their nationality in Qatari newspaper stories, police reports, and even on “help wanted” ads.)

The Qatari population at large responds quite negatively to such reports. In the fall of 2008, a set of photographs of Western instructors from the Foundations Program at Qatar University made its way into student email boxes. The photographs were taken at a bar in downtown Doha, on a typical night on the town. As one Qatari student named Aisha told me, the email “has pictures of teachers drunk and half nude, wearing nothing, dressed like sluts.” She continues, “Now students are so mad, it’s in the newspaper. Qataris see this as really immoral.” Aisha considered translating the newspaper article and posting it on Qatar Living (the popular expatriate website), but didn’t because “it’s our business.” This belief in keeping quiet about problems (what happens at Qatar University stays at Qatar University) is in line with the general dynamics of a segmentary lineage society, as discussed in chapters two and three.

In 2009, residents of Qatar have witnessed another change in the tides, as authorities are increasingly cracking down on establishments serving alcohol and their patrons. In October 2009, a Western female staff member at Texas A&M University at Qatar was deported after an Education City security guard smelled alcohol on her breath the morning after a night out. She was given a blood test and quickly dismissed and
deported. According to confidential sources, many security guards around Doha are given a “finder’s fee” for reporting such instances in recent months.

Before the recent toughening of law enforcement on alcohol-related issues, the rules were already quite strict; alcohol still is only served in some Western-owned hotel bars, and these are all quite expensive (the Four Seasons and the W are two examples). There had been two exceptions to the hotel rule, both “grandfathered” in from pre-boom times: Garvey’s European Family Club, and the Doha Rugby Football Centre (known as the Rugby Club). The following three subsections will discuss securitizing moves at Garvey’s, the Rugby Club, and hotel bars.

4.3a Garvey’s European Family Club

The establishment currently called Garvey’s has been in operation under different names in Qatar since the early 1980s; it was one of the first locations in Doha where alcohol was available, and its history interweaves with the history of liquor laws in Qatar. Although the establishment did not have a liquor license in the 1990s (as the Falcon Club did before it closed in 1983), members were allowed to bring in alcohol for their personal use. Sometime in the early 2000s, Garvey’s started serving alcohol of its own (though it is unclear whether they obtained a permit to do so), and by the time I relocated to Qatar in 2007, Garvey’s had been well-established as a bar in its own right for years.

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94 The quasi-racist “European Family Club” part of the name is a remnant from the 1970s, when the only significant groups in Qatar were Qataris and European oil/gas workers. The landlord required the club not to allow Muslims (due to the availability of alcohol) and reportedly mandated the name to stay the same when the Garvey family took over.
On December 31, 2008 (New Year’s Eve), at about 11:00 pm, the CID raided Garvey’s, kicked out all patrons, and arrested 22 people including the owners and members of the staff. The newspapers in Qatar were mostly silent (mentioning only briefly that it had been closed temporarily due to a violation in their licensing). The most readily-available information on the shutting of Garvey’s and subsequent trial can be found on the Qatar Living website (Qatar Living 2009). Of course, on an anonymous website one must sift through stacks of biased and incorrect information in order to arrive at a credible version of the story. It appears that as of March 2009 Garvey’s had not re-opened, but they had been renovating under the assumption that they would eventually be able to re-open in some form.

In Fall 2009, a refurbished and strictly alcohol-free Garvey’s opened for business. Part of their new persona ironically is connected to another CID crackdown, this one on Doha’s only yoga studio. On October 29, 2009, the owners of Pepka Yoga, were instructed by Qatari authorities (effective immediately) that men would no longer be allowed on the premises (most classes had previously been mixed-gender). In the year prior, members of the Pepka Yoga email list (including myself) got periodical reminders to dress modestly (covering shoulders and knees) on the streets outside the studio, as it neighbors a mosque. But in October, Pepka was forced to restructure entirely, and eventually relocated to the new space at Garvey’s, where they are moving in and hoping to re-open before the start of 2010.

4.3b The Rugby Club
The Doha Rugby Football Centre (known to all simply as “the Rugby Club”) has recently faced its own set of difficulties with Qatari authorities. Although the clubhouse/bar is surrounded by a large Western compound (which coincidentally houses some Georgetown employees, including myself in 2007-2008), the American School of Doha, the massive rugby pitch, and a busy road, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) started posting policemen a few hundred feet from the club’s entrance in early 2009, citing Qatari neighbors complaining of noise. These policemen have been known to stop people entering and exiting the Rugby Club, so that since my return in August after a summer away, members of the club have been instructed to remain quiet (if not totally silent) and not to congregate in any areas outside the main gatehouse. Through May 2009, the Rugby Club held an outdoor “Party on the Pitch” including several live bands at least twice a year. But this fall’s party was quietly cancelled—a November 20, 2009 event was advertised on the Rugby Club’s website, but when I enquired on the 19th, I was told that the party had been cancelled due to CID orders.

4.3c Hotel Bars

Many hotel nightclubs, lounges, and bars have started enforcing dress codes including keeping shoulders covered, even while inside the nightclub (while previously it was common for women to wear shawls or cardigans, and removing them upon entering a given nightclub). Membership has also become mandatory at most if not all hotel bars—the cost is minimal, but one must show a passport and valid Qatari ID in order to become a member. The reason behind this policy change is mysterious, but according to one newspaper source (who consented to be named only as “a representative from one
hotel bar”), “I think they brought in the rules to prevent people who are living here illegally from drinking in the bars, and also to stop Qatari ladies from entering any drinking establishments” (Townson 2009). Townson writes, “Government officials were unable to comment, except to confirm that new rules had recently been introduced to all establishments serving alcohol in the country.” It appears that religious elements are exercising power with regard to the liquor laws again.

One obvious way in which Qatar has opened itself to other cultures is via technological advances such as the internet and satellite television. But, looking a bit more closely, internet traffic is heavily monitored by Qatari authorities, and many sites deemed immoral are blocked. There has also been a backlash against “Western” television programs—including Turkish soap operas, which have been the subject of recent debate amongst Qatari citizens. The following section will take up the role played by technology in the securitization of Qatari society.

4.4 Technology

Levon Melikian writes:

When cultural pressures are strong and prolonged and come from a culture that is technologically superior, they could represent a threat to national and individual identities…The Arabs of the Gulf were sucked into the vortex of industrial and technological progress (quoted in (Kapiszewski 2001, 144)).

The following section will address the securitizing effects of two types of technology on Qatari culture: mobile phones and television.
4.4a Mobile Phones

Numbers vary, but by all accounts mobile phone penetration in Qatar is over 100%, and even as high at 150% (meaning there are more mobile phones than there are people living in Qatar). The popularity of mobile phones has had many cultural ramifications in Qatar. Most dramatically, mobile phones have allowed young Qataris to talk to one another clandestinely. In the past ten years, strategies for flirting included males throwing their phone numbers at females while waiting at stop lights or passing them along in shopping malls. They could then talk on the phone, send flirty messages (usually of undying love, full of overly-sentimental poetry and emoticons), and even send photos.

But with the advent of Bluetooth technology, teens and young adults are able to flirt with even less risk of being caught. Bluetooth-enabled phones allow for two people to chat via message over a radio-transmitted signal that is not picked up by the phone company. Now, the boys will sit or stand in groups at the mall, or drive down the street, and send their phone numbers via Bluetooth to girls they like. Relationships often develop in this way.

The Associated Press reports from Saudi Arabia:

For the most part, the messages are innocent. But for this conservative society, it is pretty bold stuff. Many images feature babies — some blowing kisses — perhaps because women consider them cute. Animated cartoons doing belly dances, dreamy Arabic songs and sappy, sentimental messages are also popular.

“Last night I sent an angel to watch over you, but he came back soon,” said one message. “I asked him why, and he answered, ‘Am not allowed to watch over other angels’” (Associated Press 2005).
There are ways other than Bluetooth that mobile phones have enabled dating in Qatar. Young women may also see an ad in an Arabic newspaper for a person who sells special mobile phone numbers (to take two very expensive examples, 555-5555 or 123-4567). She may call such a businessman not to buy a number, but because she knows it will most likely be a young Arab man with whom she can talk under the cover of “shopping for numbers.” My source, a salesman of such phone numbers, has met two girlfriends in this way, but he also stressed that the proportion of Qatari women who date is still relatively small compared to the conservative majority who would not consider it.

4.4b Television

While the majority of free-to-air television programming in Qatar is in Arabic, most Arabic-language television shows are not fictional comedies or dramas, but instead are programs on Islam (including several live feeds from Mecca and Riyadh), current events, or music/home shopping channels. On the other hand, American programming including “The Simpsons,” “Mad Men,” and “Notes from the Underbelly” are also available, and most local students are conversant in the recently aired episodes of “Oprah” and “Friends.” All of these shows are subtitled in Arabic. Perhaps surprisingly, the two forms of television deemed most offensive in Qatar are in the Arabic language, and indigenous to the Middle East: the development of interactive TV channels, and Turkish soap operas; this subsection will address them in turn.

Interactive television (known as iTV worldwide) includes three broad categories which vary in popularity around the world. At its most general, interactive television
allows for the broadcaster and the viewer to communicate with one another. First, interactive TV includes services familiar to American viewers, such as digital video recording (which allows for pausing and rewinding of live broadcasts). Second, interactive TV allows for pay-per-view purchases of particular television programs or films. Third, interactive TV allows for viewers to vote or cast opinions, such as live voting in a news poll. It is this third type of interactive TV programming which has caused a stir in the Gulf, as a genre of television stations have appeared which broadcast flirtatious SMS messages on television (Tech-FAQ 2009). “Just as Arab regimes have come under political pressure thanks to the emergence of Pan-Arab all-news networks, conservative elements of Arab society are now under threat from a lucrative new broadcasting model known as interactive television” (Battah 2006). Indeed, the politics of existential threat to Gulf societies are often invoked by officials when discussing interactive television, signifying that it is highly securitized.

Interactive TV works in much the same way as Bluetooth technology, allowing segregated young males and females to exchange flirtatious messages. The following two images were captured off my home television for illustrative purposes on November 27, 2009:
At Zayed University in the UAE in April 2007, an awareness event entitled “Negative Media Threaten National Security” convened, and many Emirati leaders spoke out against interactive TV. Reported the Gulf News, “Our traditions and values are under threat. These vulgar television channels enter our homes and bring us nothing but obscenities. Its owners want nothing but to make profit,” said Lieutenant General Dahi Khalfan Tamim, Dubai Police Chief and Chairman of the Juvenile Welfare Association (Saffarini 2007). In another Gulf News article, entitled “Vulgar TV channels ‘spreading corruption among youth,’” featured Lieutenant General Tamim calling such channels “electronic pimps.” The article continues:

The police chief warned that if they are not stopped, “every house will lose a son, every mother will lose a daughter, and every house will lose stability. Media ministers and Arab rulers must take up the issue of interactive TV channels.”

**Destruction**
He said there is a “psychological error” in the minds of the group of people who run such channels, as they do not mind spreading corruption in the society with the aim of destroying it. He said anyone who sells his beliefs, religion, reputation, family and himself, finds it easy to sell his country (Al Theeb 2007).

Interactive television has many critics, to be sure. But the television shows attracting the most controversy and deemed a threat to Islamic morals and society in Qatar and around the Middle East are a new spate of Turkish soap operas, led by the highly-rated “Noor.” According to a New York Times article:

“You can’t put the consumer back in the box, and the authorities find that threatening,” said one Arab television executive, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of repercussions. “A generation is growing up, and they watch this stuff and care about it; they upload the characters’ faces onto their cellphones” (Worth 2008).

The characters on “Noor” drink wine with dinner, are never shown praying, engage in premarital sex, and one secondary character even had an abortion (Worth 2008). ArabianBusiness.com, a respected news site throughout the Gulf, reported in late 2008 that “The show became a socio-cultural phenomenon as three to four million people [in Saudi Arabia] tuned in to Noor every night, making it the highest rated show ever in recent Arab television history” (Sambidge 2008). Indeed, the Saudi-owned MBC network expanded its Turkish soap opera repertoire, and now plays at least four similar programs on a nightly basis on two networks (MBC1 and MBC4). When I returned to Doha in Fall 2009 after spending July and August back in the U.S., I returned to a greatly reduced set of English-language options on free-to-air television; “Noor” and its spinoffs now dominate nighttime programming.

“Noor” is dubbed from Turkish to colloquial Syrian Arabic (rather than the formal classical Arabic of Islamic and news programming), and is not available in English
versions (dubbed or subtitled). From an essay written by one of my Qatari students at Texas A&M University (citing an article from the syllabus):

One of the most recent examples of destructive media is the influx of Turkish series, which recently shows inappropriate life styles that contradict Islamic teachings. Particularly, the Turkish series, Noor, penetrates the social fabric and people name their newborn children after the characters and shops have been selling shirts with their pictures. Turkish movies similar to Hollywood, impacts society because of high technology, nice natural views and movies are more relevant to general features of human conditions (Cowen, 2008).

The threat to Qatari society posed by television shows including interactive TV and Turkish soaps led Sheikha Mozah to headline a two-day forum convened in Qatar by the Supreme Council on Family Affairs in November 2008. The forum was entitled (albeit somewhat awkwardly translated from Arabic) ―Satellite television channels and the ethical and moral challenges facing Gulf youth.” Without being specific as to the types of television deemed immoral and vulgar, Sheikha Mozah supported “a general Arab public opinion that rejects immorality and vulgarity in the media…[and] called on media establishments to sieve through everything they receive for material that represents a violation to general taste.” Maryam Al-Khater, Director of the Doha Center for Media Freedom,95 announced the launch of a website, fadakom.com, that would serve as a forum for Gulf youth to share their opinions on “the dangers of these offensive channels on our values” (Hussein 2008).

The “threat” of technology is often blamed for premarital dating and flirting, but technology such as the internet, television, and mobile phones is also collectively blamed

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95 This is the same Doha Center for Media Freedom discussed in chapter two, which former Director Robert Ménard left in the summer of 2009; the dramatic change in the Center’s tone and mission will be addressed in the next chapter in the context of media suppression in Qatar.
for the trend of *boyat* (butch lesbians) in the Gulf. The final section of this chapter will expand on this most controversial of topics.

### 4.5 The *Boyya* trend

I would like to note at the outset that of all the topics in this chapter, this is by far the one seen by many Qataris as the most scandalous, and definitely as the most sensitive and securitized issue. Public discourse on the *boyya* trend is severely curtailed, especially in the English-language media—as I have discussed in chapters one and two (and will pick up in chapter six), in the Gulf region, a *lack of public discourse* itself points to the securitization of an issue, which is seen to pose such an existential threat to Qatari society that it should not be spoken about publicly. At Qatar University and in local schools, a new and extremely controversial trend has caught on in recent years—(uncloseted) homosexuality, cross-dressing, and “butch” women. Qatari opinions on this vary widely, from the minority of women and men engaging (and thus ostensibly in support of) such behaviors, to audience members on a local television show calling for the death penalty for those involved. Others on local radio and newspapers have been calling for co-education because the problem is so significant, but this is quite unlikely as it goes against the majority will, which is to rehabilitate and/or punish those involved.\(^96\)

With few exceptions, the topic has scarcely been present in the English-language press,

\(^96\) Aisha, Interview #3, 15 June 2009.
and some of my Qatari students and friends, when I mentioned my knowledge of the topic, seemed deeply concerned that the phenomenon was known to me, an outsider.

The trend causing the most concern is that of “manly” or butch women at the sex-segregated Qatar University, engaging in sexual and emotional relationships with other women. This has been “commonplace” since at least 2005, when anthropologist Alexis Lay described the phenomenon (188). These “manly” women are known colloquially as “boyai” (singular “boyya”)—an Arabicization of the English “boy.” According to Lay, “Deviant sexual preference is symbolized by a simple transgression in the standard dress code such as a short hair cut and a baseball cap turned backwards. These social deviants masculinize their appearance while still abiding by the University dress code (which requires them to wear long skirts)” (2005, 188). Other “masculinizations” include wearing men’s watches, shoes, and cologne. (According to information Lay admittedly gleaned second-hand, many of these women hide their short haircuts at home by wearing the hijab at all times) (2005, 189). Most often a boyya would pair with a traditionally “feminine” Qatari woman. These couples are relatively rare off-campus, but I have witnessed one such brave couple, at Landmark shopping mall in June 2009. The boyya even went so far as to eschew the long skirt in favor of baggy jeans, while her companion’s abaya was adorned with elaborate, ultra-feminine hot pink embellishments.

According to Lay, “homosexuality is very much accepted for both men and the women in Qatar and could be likened to ‘prison romances’ for girls who may not otherwise engage in this behavior” (2005, 189). I fear that Lay’s characterization of homosexuality as “very much accepted” is quite an overstatement, but characterization of
the “prison romance” aspect of homosexuality in single-sex schools and universities is apt. However, in many instances these relationships continue after marriage (especially when the marriages themselves, most often arranged by the families, sour). According to one anonymous source at Qatar University, often “the other woman” is taken as a lover by both husband and wife. So long as these relationships remain secret and do not affect the family’s honor, they are accepted, but of course it is impossible to measure the frequency of such arrangements.

In the early spring of 2009 (the timing of which remains a mystery to me), the issue of homosexuality—especially female homosexuality in the universities—entered the Qatari media. The reluctance to discuss this topic openly is well-demonstrated in the following opening lines from an article in Al-Arab, an Arabic-language Qatari newspaper:

Homosexuality among women remains one of the most sensitive subjects in Arab society, and always remains in the silent space; it should not be talked about openly, but only in the corners and tight spaces of the household. But with the increase of the diversity and complexity of social life in the modern era, perhaps we should open this thorny, sensitive, and confidential file, and jump gradually towards interaction and discussion, research, survey, and study.97

The article goes on to place blame on “television, internet, and telephone” and improper family guidance.

The problem is widespread throughout the Gulf: Kuwait has recently passed laws banning cross-dressing, and the Emirati government launched an ad campaign in March

97 (Alsrrari 2009), translated from Arabic by myself with the help of Google Translate. The original article is available online at http://www.alarab.com.qa/details.php?docId=76929&issueNo=456&secId=16 (accessed 26 November 2009). I would have preferred to hire an Arabic translator, but the subject is far too sensitive and I feared the possible consequences.
2009 to encourage women to embrace their femininity. In July 2008, Dubai arrested 40 people for cross-dressing in local shopping malls; Dubai’s police chief Lieutenant General Dahi Khalfan Tamim says the arrests are part of a campaign against ‘cross dressers’ which was launched in May 2007. “This is against the UAE’s traditions and social values,” Tamim said, and anyone who cross-dresses “will be questioned and legal action will be taken against him or her” (Peninsula 2008).

It seems that as the Arabic-language news media picked up on the story, the Qatar government had little choice but to stage a public awareness campaign due to the inferences made that outside (“globalizing”) forces are responsible—the very forces which the forward-thinking emir has fostered in Qatar.

According to an April 2009 article in the Gulf Times, cross dressing is seen as a “serious menace to society” brought about from exposure to outside cultures (Elshamy 2009). The article recaps an Arabic-language television program from the night before:

Speaking in the monthly Lakom Al Karar [“The Decision is Yours”]…Dr. Saif al-Hajari, the deputy chairperson of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, described the emerging trend of ‘manly women’ and ‘womanly men’ as a ‘foreign trend’ which, he said, had invaded the Qatari and Gulf communities as part of the ‘globalisation winds.’”

Of course, the societal resistance to boyat, homosexuality, and adultery is extremely strong amongst the traditional majority, some of whom blame “invading behaviours” of globalization for the trend (Elshamy 2009). In the weeks prior to the Lakom al Karar episode, “clerics, educationists and sociologists cautioned against the new trend” of boyat, and they blame the Qatari government for failing to correct the problem. “On the motion ‘This house believes that the concerned institutions and ministries are performing
their duties to correct the behavioural deviations,’ 100% of the audience voted that these institutions had failed to do their duties in this regard” (Elshamy 2009). According to one of my students, the Qatari government took action in 2009 with a campaign similar to its Emirati predecessor, aimed at Qatari university-aged women and encouraging them to “protect their femininity.”

Interestingly, the boyya trend is popular at single-sex Qatar University, but (in my experience) non-existent in co-ed Education City, which is populated by American universities. Those who blame the trend on “the West” understand this, and point not to the Western expatriate population in Qatar but rather to the mass media and the internet, especially social networking sites among young Arab women, who most often share stories and tips in Arabic (not in English). Nevertheless, preachers at mosques continue to blame Western influence for the trend. According to an April 2009 “news brief” in the *Gulf Times*:

> Preachers at mosques focused their attention during the Friday sermon on the strange phenomenon of girls dressed as boys in Arab robes and headgear and roaming in public parks in Doha, according to reports published in the local Arabic press. They have also been noticed smoking cigarettes and hubble-bubble. This is a sign of the predominance of destructive ideas and values from the West on the minds of the youth in this country, said many of the preachers.

> They also attributed this to the prevalence of chatting on the internet, blind aping of Western lifestyles and the spread of the culture of consumerism (Briefs 2009).

Another article (Elshamy 2009) posits that Sheikha Mozah was setting up the Al Awin Social Rehabilitation Center to treat cross-dressers, which reportedly opened in May 98

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98 Boyat websites are sparse, but the majority of those I have found have been in Arabic, not English.
2009 (Gulf Times 2009). A 2007 page of the Supreme Council on Family Affairs’ website announces the creation of a “Social Rehabilitation Centre” described as such: “The centre, which is a private establishment with public utility, targets the category of people with social aberrations who have lost the ability to adapt to society psychologically or socially or educationally” (Supreme Council on Family Affairs (Qatar) 2007). The description is vague, so whether this is the same “Social Rehabilitation Centre” as announced by Sheikha Mozah two years later is unclear. Of course, in a state where homosexuality is seen as an exceedingly private issue, and media is not free, the fact that there is little discourse on the center does not mean that it does not quietly exist.

Western human rights organizations have made some noise, but little headway in this most securitized issue. Human Rights Watch (HRW) has condemned the arrests of cross-dressers in Kuwait recently (AFP Dubai 2008). The law which was passed in December 2007 reads “any person committing an indecent act in a public place, or imitating the appearance of a member of the opposite sex, shall be subject to imprisonment for a period not exceeding one year or a fine not exceeding 1,000 dinars ($3500)” (ibid.). Fourteen people were arrested in December 2007, and according to HRW, three were beaten in detention, one of whom was beaten to the point of unconsciousness. According to HRW, “It violates basic rights to privacy and free expression, and these continuing arrests show why it should be repealed.” As the last chapter of this dissertation will discuss, it is exactly this sort of disconnect between Western human rights organizations and Gulf societies—which consider themselves to be
under existential threat—which leads to an impasse on human rights. By reframing these “violations” as responses of a securitized society, Western governments and agencies will have a much greater likelihood of making positive changes.

As the previous few sections highlight, access to government decision-making processes, reliable sources who are willing to be put on the record, and well-sourced newspaper articles are few and far between in Qatar, especially when it comes to the sensitive issues on which this entire dissertation focuses. In the final chapter of this dissertation, I will be elaborating on the theoretical implications of this—namely, that securitization is often not a discursive act, but something that occurs in practice in authoritarian states. I will also discuss further my use of visual methods in the face of this utter lack of discourse.
CHAPTER FIVE:

THE “THREAT” OF SOUTH ASIAN MIGRANTS IN QATAR

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss at length the securitizing moves taken against the outermost ring of Qatari society: unskilled migrant workers from South Asia.\(^99\) According to anthropologist Andrew Gardner, “while both historic and substantial in scale, these migration flows [from Asia to the Gulf] remain some of the most understudied movements in the contemporary world” (2009, 1). The Al Jazeera documentary *Blood, Sweat, and Tears* reports that there are over ten million South Asian workers in the Gulf (2007), compared to a total citizen population of between 33 and 38 million (Al-Najjar June 2006); (Kawach 2009). In Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and (by some measures) Bahrain, the foreign population outnumbers the citizen population by large margins, as this chart from STRATFOR (2009) demonstrates:

\(^99\) There is one large group who is arguably even more marginalized: domestic workers, who are not covered under any labor laws and who can be subjected to the most horrible cases of abuse. For the purposes of advancing securitization theory, however, domestic workers are arguably less securitized than the unskilled labor class, who are constructed to be the largest potential security threat in the region. Depressingly, the reason domestic labor is not securitized is because of the almost-total domination of the sponsor over domestic help due to their lying outside any current labor laws and working entirely in the private sphere. Because of the merits of raising awareness of human rights abuses towards domestic workers in the Gulf, I will be devoting time to the domestic worker population in the future. Unfortunately, though, they lie outside the scope of this dissertation analysis.
Migration in the Gulf is assessed by native citizens to be a “zero-sum game” meaning that the more migrants there are, the greater the threat to cultural identity (Longva 1997, 7). As demonstrated in the second chapter of this dissertation, characteristics of Qatari society such as tribalism, ethnic conceptions of citizenship, and the resulting politics of exclusion converge to form a causal matrix that enables societal securitization at very high levels.

As I will demonstrate, securitization here is at its most institutionalized; the kafala (sponsorship) system has been in existence longer than the Qatari state itself, and is unlikely to change in the near future. Writes Gardner, “Sadly, throughout the Gulf…violence and abuse…have become increasingly normalized…this normalization is
a key aspect of structural violence” (2010, 344). Gardner’s characterization of abuses against migrant labor as shaped by structural forces mirrors my argument that Gulf societies are securitized against the “threat” of migrant labor. Furthermore, Gardner’s analysis supports my claim that these securitizing moves are highly institutionalized.

Most South Asian workers in Qatar are in the category of “migrant labor,” mostly in the construction sector. This title of “migrant labor” generally does not extend to skilled (elite) workers. Hannah Arendt (1958, 127; cited in Longva 1997, 59) defines “labor” as a necessary activity “for the sake of making a living” rather than as a career, vocation or calling in the Weberian sense. The native population regards the presence of migrants “as an opportunity to be exploited or a threat to be thwarted—or as both simultaneously” (Longva 1997, 2). Because expatriates make up the large majority of the population in the Gulf, “An approach that recognizes labor migration as an integral part of social life in the region is…urgently needed” (Longva 1997, 2). This is the ultimate goal of this chapter: to demonstrate how migrants and expatriates experience one another socially, and how societal security is constructed as under existential threat due to the presence of the large South Asian male population.

This chapter will proceed in four sections. First, I will trace the history of the transition from a mostly-Arab to a mostly-Asian expatriate workforce, and discuss the simultaneous development of the idea of migrant labor as societal security threat. Second, I will examine the kafala system, which governs interactions between South Asian workers and their Qatari sponsors. Third, I will look at three major areas where South Asian labor is securitized in the Gulf: on the job, in their accommodations, and in
recreational activities, and discuss these in light of the increasing belief in Qatari society that Asian laborers are responsible for the rising crime rate in Qatar. Fourth and finally, I will discuss the disconnect between discourses of threat and docility with regards to South Asian labor. In this final section, I will hypothesize on the causes of alienation and inaction in the face of such institutionalized securitization, and examine a few cases of resistance.

5.2 “Asianization” of Migrant Labor

At the time of the founding of the various Gulf states, from the 1950s to the 1970s, technocrats from Egypt and the Levant contributed greatly to infrastructure and educational development in the Gulf. But in most modern Gulf states, the Asian population now dwarfs that of the non-GCC Arabs. Kapiszewski (2006) participated in a United Nations expert group meeting on migration in the Arab region; many of his summary points will be presented in this section along with additional sources and analysis. In his contribution to the meeting proceedings, Kapiszewski wrote that Arabs were initially preferable to Asians as workers in the GCC because:

Their linguistic, cultural and religious compatibility with the local populations made them more attractive to nationals than other immigrants. The migrant Arabs set up a familiar Arab-type government administration and educational facilities, helped to develop health services, build the necessary infrastructure for these rapidly developing countries, and run the oil industries (2006, 5). Birks and Sinclair (1979, p.92) give a timely and logical account of the switch from Arab to Asian labor which started in the 1970s. At its simplest, the post-1973 boom (brought on by the Arab oil embargo and increased power of OPEC) meant many more workers
were needed in the Gulf; at the same time, Iran, Iraq, and other regional states were developing their national economies, so many Arab (and Persian) migrants headed home.

Birks and Sinclair (1979, 90) point out that because Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are both geographically more convenient for Arab migration, and developed their oil industries decades earlier than Qatar and the UAE, there were stable patterns of labor flows to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait from the Levant and North Africa. After the 1973 oil boom and through the development period of 1975, when Qatar and Abu Dhabi started recruiting labor en masse, it was easier and less expensive for them to recruit low-skilled Asians, so the demographic composition of the Qatari and Emirati workforces naturally began to shift eastward. By 1975, the pool of potential Arab migrants had diminished, because most willing migrants were already working in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, making Asian workers even more attractive.

Some argue that political factors were the primary reason for the switch from an Arab to an Asian labor force. For example, “Labor movement in the Arab region has been captive to the ups and downs of Arab politics, sometimes with devastating consequences to the welfare of embroiled migrants” (Fergany, 2001, p. 12). The pan-Arabist and socialist ideology espoused by Egypt’s Nasser and other regional leaders in the 1960s and 1970s led Gulf authorities to be suspicious of “share the wealth” schemes spreading throughout the Middle East (Kapiszewski 2006, 6-8). And, according to Kapiszewski, “The internal stability of some of the GCC countries, including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar, was also shaken by the Arab expatriate-led labor
strikes” (2006, 6). However, Longva (1997, 40 note 14) provides us with a more nuanced analysis on this point:

There is a persistent theory among experts on labor migration to the Gulf that the local governments deliberately switched from hiring Arab workers to hiring Asian workers when they realized what a political danger Egyptian, Palestinian, Syrian, and other Arab expatriates could represent for their stability. While this argument makes eminent sense, it has never been adequately proved. My contention is that **there is not one specific reason for the switch.** Rather, what made the prospect of hiring Asian workers attractive to the Kuwaitis and other Gulf employers was a combination of economic, political, and social factors (bold text added). This multi-dimensional explanation seems to explain the situation better than the political one. Even in 1975, Asian migrants (versus Arabs) were in the majority in Bahrain, Qatar, and the UAE. This sharply differs from the situation in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Libya, and suggests that the states with a more recent migrant flow looked to Asia because the Arab migrant work force had been maxed out. See the following chart, published in 1979, for a comparison of proportions of Arab and Asian migrant workers throughout the Gulf:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Arab No.</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th>Asian No.</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th>European No.</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th>Iranian, Turkish, African and others No.</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>6,699,900</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>38,000</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>20,500</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libyan Arab Jamahiriya</td>
<td>310,400</td>
<td>93.4</td>
<td>5,900</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>9,500</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>143,300</td>
<td>66.9</td>
<td>33,600</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>29,100</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahrain</td>
<td>6,700</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>16,600</td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td>4,400</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>2,800</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>62,000</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>163,500</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>21,000</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qatar</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>34,000</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,236,800</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>291,200</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>34,200</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>86,900</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table source: Birks and Sinclair 1979, 97)*
Kapiszewski (2006, p.6-7) provides several reasons for his statement that at first (in the 1970s), “Asians did not represent any threat to the Gulf nationals;” among them:

First of all, Asians were less expensive to employ, easier to lay-off, and believed to be more efficient, obedient, and manageable (Ghobash, 1986, pp. 138-142; Girgis, 2002, p. 29). Secondly, they were used to leaving their families at home, whereas Arab immigrants usually brought their families to the Gulf with the hope of settling there permanently. This possibility was not acceptable to the GCC authorities. Thirdly, in the post-1973 oil-boom, the demand for foreign workers in the GCC states outstripped the Arab countries’ ability to supply them (Chuocri, 1983). In contrast, Asian governments became often involved in the recruitment and placement of their workers, facilitating their smooth flow to the Gulf.

Another reason emphasized by Kapiszewski and several people I questioned (including a South Asian ambassador and the leader of an Indian NGO) is the long historical connection between the western Gulf states and India. Maritime trading routes connected the two regions. At the time of British influence in the Gulf, Bahrain, Qatar, and the UAE were considered trucial states under the administration of the British Empire in India. Many cultural influences from South Asia (particularly India) have been incorporated into Qatari culture. With regards to cuisine, traditional Qatari dishes such as lamb biryani retain Indian influence. As is tradition, Qatari brides have their hands decorated with henna before their engagement and wedding parties, a tradition imported from India; they choose between the “Indian” and “Qatari” artistic styles with no clear preference for Qatari style over Indian.

Many South and Southeast Asian governments both openly encourage their workforce to seek employment in the Gulf. For example, the Philippine Department of

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100 This belief that South Asians are “more obedient and manageable” will be picked up in the final section of this chapter.
Labor and Employment houses the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration; Sri Lanka has an entire ministry devoted to the task: the Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotion and Welfare.

Kapiszewski (2006, 7) writes:

Arabs were replaced not only by workers from the states already well established among the GCC workforce, as e.g. India or Pakistan, but also from such countries as the Philippines, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Indonesia. The percentage of an expatriate population represented by Arabs in the GCC countries decreased from 72 percent in 1975 to 56 percent a decade later...In turn, in 1970, non-Arabs constituted only 12 percent of all workers in the Gulf, yet by 1980 their number had grown to 41 percent, and by 1985 Asian workers had reached the figure of 63 percent of the Gulf workforce (Russel and Teitelbaum, 1992).

In time, as the Gulf populations slowly became overrun with Asian migrants, regional authorities started to question the developing demographic situation:

There was some concern about the possible social consequences of the de-Arabization of the population as a result of the Asian influence. For example, in 1982, Abd al-Rahman al-Dirham from the Qatari Ministry of Labor, noted that “The question of foreign labor is of great concern. Our social customs are threatened by foreigners. The problem is not just in Qatar but also in other Gulf countries. We prefer it if we can get suitable people from Arab countries who can live in the Gulf area without changing it” (MEED, August 1982, p. 40) (Kapiszewski 2006, 7-8).

In most cases, the early labor laws of the Gulf favored Arab labor over non-Arab labor. For example, the 1962 Qatari Labor Law gives preference to Qataris in all jobs, with secondary preference extended to other Arabs, and only if no suitable worker from those two groups could not be found, the job would be extended to foreigners. But, as Kapiszewski (2006, 8) points out, these laws were seldom enforced as a cheap and seemingly never-ending supply of Asian labor streamed into the Gulf.
In the past decade, the social consequences of this “Asianized” work force became more securitized, as this final excerpt from Kapiszewski demonstrates:

It is only recently that the GCC authorities have begun to admit publicly the negative consequences of this situation. During the October 2004 meeting of the GCC labor ministers, Majeed Al-Alawi, the Bahraini Minister of Labor and Social Affairs warned that “non-Arab foreign workers constitute a strategic threat to the region’s future” (http://www.middle-east-online.com, 12 October, 2004). Similarly, during another ministerial meeting of that kind in November 2005 Abdul Rahman Al Attiya, the GCC Secretary-General, warned about the possible consequences of the situation. “The GCC countries need to look at the massive presence of expatriates basically as a national security issue, and not merely as an economic matter… International accords are pressing for the settlement of expatriates and imposing giving them salaries equal to nationals and greater rights in the areas of education and health.” At the same time James Zogby, the president of the Arab American Institute stated that the guest workers were a “time bomb waiting to explode and unleash riots like those that [recently] rocked France” (Gulf News, 24 November, 2005) (Kapiszewski 2006, 8, emphasis added).

Kapiszewski himself does not write in terms of societal security, but the quotations he choose are telling: they repeatedly refer to the Asian population in the Gulf as a “strategic threat,” a “national security issue,” and even “a time bomb waiting to explode.” This sentiment of thinking of migrant labor as a “time bomb” is shared by others. The Bahraini Labor Minister Majeed Al Awawi claimed in 2008 that the “Asian tsunami” of migrant workers posed a bigger threat to the region than than fallout from an atomic bomb or an attack by Israel (Bahrain Center for Human Rights 2008). According to Kapiszewski (2006, 9, Table 2), the share of Arabs in the Qatari workforce declined from 33 percent in 1975 to 19 percent in 2002.

While the numbers are not officially published, the U.S. State Department estimates (2009) that the population of Qatar breaks down as follows:

- Qatari: 20%
• Other (non-Qatari) Arab: 20%
• Indian: 20%
• Filipino 10%
• Nepali 13%
• Pakistani 7%
• Sri Lankan 5%
• Other 5%

However, these numbers seem to be skewed; as STRATFOR points out, “[Qatari] government statistics are understood to be deliberate underestimates.” Recent estimates of my own put the Qatari population between 10 and 14%, and the non-Qatari Arab number at less than 20%; the above numbers also do not explicitly count Iranians, Bangladeshis, Europeans, and Americans, which all together constitute well over 5% of the total population.

These estimates demonstrate the growing Asian majority in Qatar. The current Indian ambassador puts the count of Indians in Qatar at 500,000, which is a full third of the estimated 1.5 million total population (The Peninsula 2009). In addition, the U.S. State Department reports that almost 76% of the population are male—a demographic that has dramatic effects on societal securitization, as “bachelors” are seen to threaten the traditional Qatari family unit. This will be discussed at length in the third section of this chapter, but first it is necessary to discuss the reason for these geographic “bachelors” (usually married men leaving family behind) to migrate to the Gulf without their family. The vast majority of South Asian men in Qatar and throughout the Gulf are controlled by the kafala system, to which this chapter will now turn.

5.3 The Kafala System
Writes Andrew Gardner, “In the final accounting, the labor market in the Gulf is not a free labor market, and the fate of the guest worker remains in the hands of the individual who might most profit from his abuse” (2010, 332). The word *kafala* is translated from Arabic as “sponsorship,” and the system is said to derive from two seemingly contradictory centuries-old practices: the first, the Bedouin tradition of taking in desert travelers and treating them as family for the duration of their sojourn, and second, the tradition of indentured servitude practiced until the mid-20th century throughout the Gulf. Indeed, the modern kafala system includes elements of both hospitality and structural violence, as this chapter demonstrates.

All expatriates who seek employment in Qatar (and throughout the Gulf) must obtain a citizen *kafeel* or sponsor (either an individual or a corporation). For example, all university faculty and staff in Education City are sponsored by Qatar Foundation, while the Education City security guards are sponsored by Group 4 Security. The official process for obtaining a work visa is straightforward: find a sponsor, who will pay the necessary registration fees to the Ministry of Interior. Before leaving one’s home state, a police and/or government background check must be completed. Upon arrival in Qatar, all expatriates must take HIV tests, a chest x-ray to check for tuberculosis, and other blood tests. It is also necessary to register and get fingerprinted by the local police. In a matter of weeks, a residence permit and Qatar ID card can be obtained.

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101 Bahrain has made recent changes to its sponsorship system; these will be discussed in the final chapter of this dissertation, when I will analyze the transportability of these changes to other GCC states.
Initial sponsorship periods are generally for two years; if an employee recruited by a Qatari sponsor wishes to leave Qatar before the two years are over, he or she is responsible for their airline ticket home and may be required to return certain stipends, depending on one’s contract with the sponsor. Should a worker wish to change sponsors after two years’ employment (or before), a “No Objection Certificate” (NOC) must be written and signed by the initial sponsor, stating that the employee has permission to secure work elsewhere in the country.

In practice, the kafala system is fraught with additional complications, especially for unskilled South Asian labor, who make up a majority of Qatar’s population. The bottom line for these laborers is that “the sliver of potential profit…depends on the goodwill and honor of the kafeel” (Gardner 2010, 333). In another paper Gardner writes (n.d.14):

While we might profitably discuss many other factors and forces complicit in pushing men and women from their homes to the Gulf, once they’ve arrived in the Gulf it is the kafala that orchestrates and governs their presence, their interactions with citizens, and their everyday lives.

The negative impacts of the kafala system in the Gulf have increased as the proportion of Asian migrant workers has increased. Longva (1997, 31-32) points out that while Arab labor migration “was often an individual enterprise” where the prospective worker would use personal contacts to secure employment, most Asians had no choice but to go through recruitment agencies (who often profited handsomely off the workers).

The remainder of this discussion on the kafala system will discuss the various parts of the whole: the workers, the receiving Gulf states, Qatari sponsors and their
partner multi-national corporations, and finally the sending states, to locate sources of abuse and discuss the responsibility placed on each participant.

5.3a The Workers

The vast majority of South Asian workers are single-status males—meaning that if they are married with children, they will leave those families in their home country and become designated as “bachelors” in Qatar. In addition to rules under the kafala system, many of these families make the decision to send a husband or son to the Gulf due to strong cultural norms in their home states, where the practice is normalized. For example, almost all of the forty families I helped to interview on a fieldwork trip to Kerala, India, in March 2008 told us that having a family member in the Gulf enhances the reputation of the family locally. In one typical household, a man and his wife in their fifties lived with their two daughters, one of whom was pregnant. The man had hurt his back after working in Kuwait for seven years, and rather than finding a job in his village, it was better for the family’s reputation to rely solely on the money sent home by their son in Doha. The family suffered under the weight of crushing debt, but local norms kept all family members remaining in India from finding gainful employment, as this would signal to their neighbors that their son in Doha was not an adequate breadwinner.

As Longva posits, whereas Arabs tended to migrate to the Gulf with the help of informal networks, South Asians have gone through recruitment agencies (1997, 31-32). These agencies make a handsome profit—one Nepali security guard I spoke with paid the equivalent of QR10,000 ($3650) for the “privilege” of a work visa and plane ticket to Qatar, both of which are supposed to be paid for by the sponsors. At QR1400 ($385) per
month, his salary exceeds most Nepali workers (for example, drivers for Karwa taxi service generally make around QR800 per month). Still, it took this security guard and his family eight months to pay off his debt incurred to get to Doha, before they started seeing any profit.

Undoubtedly, the security guard is one of the lucky ones. Kerala, a southern state of India, is a major sender of labor to the Gulf. Due to lack of education, corruption, and poor governance in Kerala, many men take out predatory loans with interest compounded monthly (or even daily), making it so that the debt is almost impossible to escape. Compounding the problem, there are widespread claims of withholding of pay. For example, a beverage runner at Georgetown University’s Qatar campus in 2007 told me that he had not been paid in over two months. The issue was brought to attention of then-Dean Jim Reardon-Anderson, and the beverage runner was paid shortly thereafter. Without any domestic (Qatari) mechanism of enforcement or supervision, sponsor/employers often get away with withholding pay.

Because the worker’s debt is held back in their home state and the salary problems are occurring in Qatar, migrants face additional difficulties trying to manage two bureaucratic systems without any overlap. The question of who is responsible for the most egregious offenses in labor law violation more often than not turns into a story of buck-passing: a hallmark tendency in this laissez-faire autocracy.

5.3b Gulf States

Because of lack of government oversight and accounting, it is impossible to calculate the number of accidents and deaths at worksites throughout the Gulf. Local
newspapers are occasionally dotted with individual stories, such as one in 2007 when a wall collapsed and four workers were killed in Doha. Although the Gulf governments make labor laws, they are rarely enforced. The Ministry of Labor himself told one of my journalist sources that it is not the responsibility of the Qatari government to be sure that individual companies are following regulations (interview, 4 September 2008). Mr. S. B. Atugoda, former Sri Lankan Ambassador to Qatar says, “Maybe the government is trying to tell them to do it properly, but the employers, they don’t look at it that way” (Al Jazeera 2007). Atugoda continues, “Even animals, you don’t treat like that” (Al Jazeera 2007).

Gulf states tend to point to the fines levied against major corporations as proof of their effectiveness in implementing laws. Dr. Ali bin Abdulla Kaabi, UAE Minister of Labour states in indignation:

The sum of the fines paid by companies for renewal of labor IDs, forcing laborers to work in the middle of the day in the summer, and providing suitable accommodation total $110 million dollars in 2006 alone. And you are coming to me saying that this country doesn’t follow the labor laws? You are completely wrong! (Al Jazeera 2007)

As critics of corporatism often point out, corporations may weigh costs and benefits, and determine that underpayment of workers or cutting corners on safety standards will be better for the bottom line, even if fines are levied.

One could use the analogy of Exxon not repairing an aging tanker and opting to pay for cleanup from an eventual oil spill, or an American car company making cost-benefit analysis over whether to recall a defective car vs. pay for lawsuits for wrongful death. In the Gulf, where records are distinctly not transparent, it is impossible to
determine whether these calculations have occurred, so pointing at the fines paid seems hardly to be incontrovertible evidence, especially when one actually speaks with migrant laborers. Multi-national corporations are not democratic, and they are decidedly not accountable to anyone—which is significant because in the Gulf, even the emir is subject to the threat of a coup if there is popular revolt! (And history demonstrates that such overthrows do occur with some regularity.)

5.3c (Qatari) Merchant Class Sponsors

In Qatar, which I define as a laissez faire autocracy, the state is legitimated and strengthened paradoxically by ceding power to (and thereby strengthening) the merchant class. Similarly in Kuwait, “the state’s most important contribution consisted of creating a labor market that was pliant to the demands of the private sector employers” (Longva 1997, 67). Anthropological research in Bahrain also supports this thesis; writes Gardner:

In Bahrain, the responsibility for managing, controlling, and monitoring the foreign labor force is largely distributed to the citizenry: the citizen-sponsor profits from the transnational labor he (or occasionally she) controls, but in that citizen-sponsor we can also see a manifestation of the responsibilities that, in other places, are reserved for state bureaucracies and the police force (2010, 310-311).

These above insights from Gardner are what inspired me to look further into the regime type I am now labeling a laissez faire autocracy; as this dissertation demonstrates, ceding power to the merchant class happens in areas other than the kafala system; in all instances, it serves to strengthen the ruling regime.

From the citizen-sponsor’s point of view, employing a foreign worker is a huge risk, as the sponsor becomes responsible for him or her once on Qatari soil. Therefore,
sponsors reckon, withholding passports, not allowing exit visas, and even withholding pay are necessary safeguards in a system where the worker could exploit them. Gardner (2010, 331) discusses the historical roots of the kafala system:

As the anthropologist Anh Longva has noted, in the Gulf nations the kafala emerged in the twentieth century as an outgrowth of a cultural practice used to organize labor on the pearling dhows that plied the waters of the Persian Gulf (Longva 1997, 106–7). Enmeshed in this notion of the kafala as a cultural practice, citizens often balance the systemic abuse levied against guest workers with notions of the kafeel’s responsibility for potential moral and cultural transgressions of foreigners in Bahraini society, a notion that posits guest workers as a polluting presence (Peutz 2006, 223, 231; Douglas 1966/2002).

The old political science adage “where you stand depends on where you sit” definitely applies here—Qatari sponsors often argue that power is distinctly in the hands of the expatriate workers, who form a majority of the population. However, I join Longva and Gardner in pointing out that I am aware of no instance where sponsors have suffered adverse effects as a result of some moral or cultural transgression on the part of their sponsored workers.102

5.3d Multi-National Corporations

It is not simply Qatari sponsors who are being charged with significant blame here. In many situations, the Qatari sponsor merely owns a 51% share of operations in Qatar; the remaining 49% and all day-to-day operations are managed by multinational construction, oil/gas, and other corporations, often based in the West (or in India, in the case of construction companies). According to Hadi Ghaemi of Human Rights Watch:

102 Between the three of us, we have compiled well over a decade of fieldwork in the region.
The Western construction companies that we have talked to agree that [the] recruitment process is unfair and puts a heavy financial burden on their workers, yet they say that this is customary and the root of the problem is the sending countries. Yet the very same [companies] are the ones going to the subcontinent, hiring recruiters, and bringing thousands, and hundreds of thousands of workers (Al Jazeera 2007).

Ghaemi continues, “[Western] companies are very much implicated in the ongoing abuses because they tolerate them. They usually may shrug them off by saying that we are not directly responsible and our subcontractors are responsible. But that is no excuse for allowing their business to operate in this environment” (Al Jazeera 2007). Indeed, because the abuses to labor rights occur in and between several states, I shall now turn to the responsibility held by sending states in the abuse of their citizens at home (during the recruitment process) and abroad.

5.3e Sending States

Dr. Ahmed Saif Belhasa, Chairman of Gulf Contractors’ Association (Dubai), said in the 2007 Al Jazeera documentary Blood, Sweat, and Tears, “It is not my responsibility as a contracting company owner to pay dues to employment agencies in India, Pakistan, or the Philippines. These countries should look after their citizens, and they do have laws regulating the business of these employment agencies.” The logic of the laissez faire autocracy seems to have caught on with most if not all workers in Qatar, as they are more likely to petition their own embassies for redress than the Qatari state. Although much of the exploitation of unskilled laborers happens at the time of recruitment and visa procurement in their home states (in the form of demands for illegal payments and predatory lending), the problem is compounded once the laborer arrives to
the Gulf and finds that his salary is not what he had been promised, if it comes with any regularity at all. The transnational character of exploitation is ripe for buck-passing.

For example, I met with Indian Ambassador George Joseph in September 2008, during a large multi-day protest staged by over 100 Indian workers at the Indian Embassy (the *Gulf Times* reported 107; Ambassador Joseph told me the number was actually 176). According to *Gulf Times* reports, most of the workers had “walked the 20km journey from Street 44 in the Industrial Area to register their complaints as they were unable to afford the taxi fare” (Qazi 2008). The article continues, “Pouring into the embassy at 10am yesterday, the men said they were only demanding what was promised to them back in India: decent food, human accommodation, salaries ranging from QR1200 to QR1500, and a little dignity” (Qazi 2008). Because these promises were made before the contracts were signed, a common tactic of sponsor corporations in the Gulf is to merely place the blame on dishonest brokers in the home state. As I will highlight in a later discussion about forms of domination, these accusations are not entirely unfounded, but the problems compound once laborers arrive in the Gulf.

Because of the international nature of the work contracts in the Gulf, many claim that it is the responsibility of sending states to protect their citizens abroad. This logic is not universal. In the United States, for example, it is not an acceptable defense to say that the Mexican government should protect from passport confiscation and denial of back pay to legal Mexican workers in the U.S. Rather, protections given to laborers in the U.S. indisputably put the mechanisms of enforcement and punishment in the hands of the American government.
Embassies in Qatar are often overworked and understaffed. This is symptomatic of the states from which they hail: for example, the Nepali and Sri Lankan embassies both have large contingents of their population working in Qatar, but these expatriate workers are needed by their native states because they are a major source of wealth (via remittances). According to Kapiszewski (2006, 10), $27 billion worth of remittances are sent from the GCC each year (2004 data). State apparatuses in Nepal and Sri Lanka are run on a shoestring budget, and it is logical that their Gulf embassies would face similar problems. Due to the large Indian population in Qatar (according to a statement by the Indian Embassy, over 500,000 out of the 1.6 million total population), even the larger and better staffed Embassy of India has tasked itself with dealing with individual cases (The Peninsula 2009). As Ambassador George Joseph told me, his embassy has neither the time nor the resources to engage in broader policy debates about the exploitative characteristics of the kafala system. All these embassies realize that if they complain about the treatment of their workers, including abuse, passport confiscation, and withholding of pay, the Qatari government can easily retaliate by restricting the amount of visas granted or renewed in the future.

The Philippine Embassy sticks out as one exception to this race-to-the-bottom dynamic. Because over 11% the GDP of the Philippines comes from remittances, embassies around the world have been active in promoting and protecting their nationals’ rights, including instituting a global minimum wage for all Filipino citizens. The

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103 In early 2009, Ambassador Joseph was transferred to Bahrain as part of standard procedure; he was replaced by Ambassador Deepa Gopalan Wadhwa, who had been serving in Sweden. She is the first female Indian envoy to Qatar.
government of the Philippines also focuses on providing skills training to workers before they leave for positions abroad. The Embassy in Qatar, led by Ambassador Isaias Begonia until mid-2009, has also instituted a scheme where all contracts signed by Filipino citizens are government-regulated, and the English-language version of the contract prevails in disputes (unlike in many instances in Kerala, where differently-worded Arabic versions are mandatorily signed by unwitting workers).

However, the Philippines is paying (indirectly) for placing protections and safeguards on their nationals. For example, many Qatari families report that in the past, they had Filipina housemaids, and now the trend is towards Malaysian and Indonesian domestic help, because they demand a much lower salary (live-in housemaids and nannies typically earn between QR600 and QR800, or between $165-220, per month). In 2008, Qatar and Vietnam signed a bilateral agreement which should usher in 100,000 Vietnamese skilled and unskilled workers over the next three years, ostensibly also to make up for the loss of cheap Filipino help.

The calculation of remittances from the Gulf to South Asia does not take into account the costs incurred by individual families who take out loans in order to pay for recruitment and (illegal) visa fees to send a family member abroad. As Gardner (2010) points out:

Indian laborers and their families typically pay thousands of dollars for the right to work in the Gulf, and the first two or three years of labor are often devoted simply to paying back the debts they and their families incurred. While the bulk of these payments move across the transnational divide to the sponsor, the debt itself remains in India and, typically, with the transmigrant’s family. The transnational character of this debt becomes a fulcrum for abuse: a labor strike or individual resistance to the conditions of employment in Bahrain puts distant
Indian families and key, oftentimes mortgaged resources at great risk (Gardner 2010, 330).

We can then envision this system as a *vast transfer of wealth*, one whereby thousands of families in South Asia are separated from what little wealth they have accrued, through equity or debt, which is then transferred to sponsors in the Gulf—sponsors who, in conjunction with the state, perpetuate and maintain the deportability of the laborers they bring to the island (Gardner 2010, 341, emphasis added).

The next two sections of this chapter will directly address the structural sources of exploitation under the kafala system, including deportability, crippling loans, passport confiscation, and the belief that abuses are endurable because they are temporary. The next section will discuss these “temporary” forms of exploitation through the lens of the physical segregation of South Asian migrant labor from Qatari society.

5.4 Securitization via Segregation

5.4a Segregation on the Job: Drivers, Janitors, and “Tea Boys”

The three categories in the sub-title (drivers, janitors, and “tea boys”) are not exhaustive. Indeed, since South Asian men make up approximately 40% of the population in Qatar according to the U.S. Department of State (2008 numbers), there is bound to be a great amount of variation in their workplace activities. The salient point here is that eligibility for jobs in Qatar, perhaps not surprisingly at this point, is often determined first and foremost by nationality or ethnicity.

Gardner (2010, 318) confirms this analysis. He writes:

Indians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis work in construction and the service sector, Filipinos work as concierges and run beauty parlors, and Indonesian and Sri
Lankan women work as housemaids. In part, the association of particular national and ethnic groups with particular sorts of work can be explained by chain migration and the labor brokerage system: brokers serving one portion of the workforce use connections they have established in particular regions of South Asia. At the same time, chain migration—the process by which one transmigrant from one particular place uses his or her knowledge and contacts to pave the way for additional transmigrants—also structures the workforce in this manner. Finally, perhaps as a result of these processes, employers in the region come to believe that particular sorts of people—specific ethnicities or nationalities—are naturally better for certain sorts of positions, and hire accordingly. Together these interlocked processes have forged a workforce deeply patterned by ethnicity and nationality. These patterns, and the processes undergirding them, characterize all the states of the GCC.

A look at the “wanted” section of the local newspapers demonstrates these patterns about which Gardner writes in black and white: for example, a Gulf Times newspaper that was published on the day I wrote this section (Wednesday, 18 March 2009, a sufficiently random date with no major events, news stories, or holidays) lists twenty-eight job vacancies. Of those, eleven stipulated “preferred nationality,” four required the applicant to be either male (accountant, automotive manager, driver) or female (secretary), and two included age ranges (40-45 for the automotive manager; 24-28 for a beverage runner, commonly known as a “tea boy”).

Following are excerpts from a few of my favorite advertisements on this particular day in the Gulf Times on 18 March 2009:

**REQUIRED. ASIAN DRIVER** for Qatari family. Transferable visa or 6 months letter. Having a good experience in the same field…

**A REPUTABLE COMPANY** is in need of male Filipino Beverage Runner (from 24-28), presentable and with experience…

**WANTED URGENTLY:** A chef to provide part time lessons. An accomplished International Culinary Cuisine Chef of Western Nationality is required to provide part time lessons for a female culinary student…

**WANTED INDIAN’S** Electrical Engineer, Civil Engineer, Electricians required…

**REQUIRED URGENTLY.** Nepali Salesman and Labour for a Hardware shop…
Even at the highly skilled employee level, these biases persist. While teaching “World Politics” at Texas A&M University in Qatar, I asked in a written assignment whether the students had ever experienced racial stereotyping in Qatar. One student responded that some of her classmates referred to an Indian female professor of engineering as “the maid.” (It should be noted here in the main body of text, and not relegated to a footnote, that this view is not pervasive within Texas A&M in Qatar, but instead recalls a rare yet disturbing instance.)

These practices—of stereotyping jobs according to the ethnicity of the employee—contribute to and strengthen the state-as-ethnocracy. As the second and third chapters of this dissertation discussed, nationality becomes the most important distinction for all citizens of the Gulf (with exceptions for other GCC citizens when it comes to social customs such as intermarriage). If two people do accept the same job—even at a high level such as a medical doctor—standard operating procedure in the Gulf is to pay according to nationality (according to what one would reasonably expect to be paid in her home state). I have spoken with medical professionals in Qatari hailing from the U.S., New Zealand, and India, and each have confirmed this system. Kapiszewski (2001) has seen the spreadsheet at a major oil company that charts pay for every rank and position, separated by nationality. I personally know of one instance where an elite Indian family who had been living in England for years—but who had resisted taking the British passport—changed their citizenship before relocating to the Gulf, because the pay disparities were enormous.
There are gendered dimensions of this segregation as well; South Asian men tend to work in “feminized” jobs where Arab men would never be allowed. For example, Longva (1997) discusses the regular practice of hiring South Asians to sell lingerie in Kuwait. In 2007, bans on this practice were passed and have been enforced in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, but Qatar has lagged behind. Reports The Peninsula in November 2009, “Many in the Qatari community are unhappy that over 30 months after the Central Municipal Council (CMC) urged the government to ban men from working in outlets selling lingerie, nothing has changed” (Abdulrahman 2009). The end of the Peninsula article is worth quoting at length; note the buck-passing of responsibility in several places, and the statement about providing accommodations for female workers:

Sources in trade and industry say a ban is easier said than done as that would complicate things.

First of all, not all such shops are actually owned by Qatari nationals. There are proxy expatriate owners who hire sales staff on their own.

Secondly, the Ministry of Labor does not issue visas for single women to work in independent shops as sales assistants. And even if the visas are issued, it is not cost-effective for an employer to hire female workers.

Additionally, providing housing to single women workers and managing their affairs is full of hassles, said a source.

Contacted for comment, a source at the Ministry of Labor said the responsibility for framing a law banning men from working in female undergarments outlets was the responsibility of the Ministry of Municipality and Urban Planning.

He said if the owners of such shops applied for work visas for single women sales staff, the ministry would gladly provide approval. “I don’t think we would have problems approving such visas,” said the source.
Indeed, housing for women and men is managed much differently at the unskilled and low-skilled levels. The next section mostly will focus on the labor camps, which are populated entirely by men. Women tend to be put up in villas or apartment blocks (with as many as ten women crammed into one room). Their time is even more strictly regulated than men; most companies enforce strict curfews, ban wireless internet, and do not allow visitors. At the end of the discussion on accommodation, I will elaborate on one case of a married Filipino couple who faced challenges in both the male and female living arrangements in Qatar.

5.4b Segregation in Accommodations

In the field of anthropology, “plural society” has relatively negative connotations. In contrast to a “pluralistic society” which is “healthily differentiated in political science literature (R.T. Smith 1961, 155, quoted in Longva 1997, 3), “in anthropology, on the other hand, pluralism is a societal anomaly” (Longva 1997, 3). Of late, anthropologists have called into question the idea of a plural society, contesting that societies are never homogenous or perfectly integrated in the first place. But in the Gulf, the extent and degree of separation makes the categorization continue to resonate (Longva 1997, 8). As chapter two discusses at length, the ethnic (versus civic) conception of citizenship in Qatar means that “Qatari society” is ethnically based, a definition in line with classical conceptions of a society that can be securitized (as in Collins 2007, 168).
Perhaps because of the tight bonds of ethnicity and “Arabness,” the first significant migrant population in the Gulf were non-Gulf Arabs, followed years later by the sizeable South Asian population evident today. According to Longva (1997, 31-32), Arabs tended to stay in the Gulf longer than Asians. Birks and Sinclair (1979, 89) suggest that this is because Levantine Arabs, along with Europeans, are more likely to fill highly-skilled positions, which pay very well, enable them to bring their families, and live comfortable lifestyles. The South Asian workforce (and some low-skilled Arabs) are housed in labor camps.

Qatari society is highly segmented in the realm of accommodations. As chapter four discussed, Qatari neighborhoods remain almost exclusively Qatari. Americans and Europeans (along with their “Western” counterparts including Indian and Arab elites), live in gated compounds or luxury apartments; Qataris and other Gulf Arabs live in walled villas, sometimes with their extended families; lower-skilled Egyptians, Levantine Arabs and Asians live in apartment buildings; the least fortunate bunch, unskilled South Asian males, are crowded into aluminum “labour camps.”

5.4b1 Skilled Asian accommodations

Throughout the Gulf, seemingly diverse societies are organized by nationality in the classical sense of a “plural society.” Pakistanis go to Pakistani schools; Indians to Indian schools; Lebanese to Lebanese schools; Americans to American schools. The miniscule levels of civil society that do exist are also organized along ethnic lines: for example, the Indian Community Benevolent Fund (ICBF) often charges itself with raising money to help fellow Indians in Qatar who have been stranded by their sponsors.
and unable to leave. Gardner’s research in Bahrain and Longva’s work in Kuwait suggest that this is a Gulf-wide phenomenon (A. M. Gardner 2010); (Longva 1997). Both Gardner and Longva also point out that it is not uncommon for an expatriate family who has lived in the Gulf for generations never to have been invited into a local’s house.

One of my students at Texas A&M University at Qatar, a Muslim woman of South Asian descent whose family has been here for over thirty years (since well before she was born), asserts that this is true for her. I will call her Amina for the purposes of this story. As Amina said to me, she realizes that when she travels to her native state in the summer, “I have to camouflage myself; look exactly like them” so that they don’t realize that she is really a “foreigner,” which is how she feels there. But at the same time, Amina continues, she will always be a foreigner in Qatar, too. “Whether you’re in this country for 25 years or all your life, you would never have the privilege of being a Qatari.”

Amina, a petroleum engineering major, is finding it impossible to find an internship for next summer. The reason is a logical one on the part of petroleum companies: policies of Qatarization mandate that they must hire mostly Qatari workers in the future, and internships normally lead to employment in the engineering industry, so it is irrational for companies to give an internship to Amina. She is now unsure of her future and is considering going to Europe or the U.S., because she says that although her home is Qatar, she will never be “at home” here, and her native country is not an appealing option for educated women with professional aspirations.
The ethnocratic culture of the Gulf becomes ingrained on expatriate communities as well, so that many if not all individuals inevitably come to identify with one another along ethnic lines. Here is a short selection of “housing available ads” from the 18 March 2009 issue of the *Gulf Times*:

**F/F ROOM** available for non-cooking [executive] bachelor for 2-3 months only, near Bus stand, Gold Souq (Indians preferred)...

**SHARING** accommodation available for Filipino bachelor / couple only. Located in Bin Omran, back of Town center...

**ROOM AVAILABLE** in a villa, at Bin Mahmoud before Al Tani Building for Filipino family / bachelor only...

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**5.4b2 Unskilled Labor Accommodation: The “Labour Camp”**

Of all commonplace English-language phrases in the Gulf, the prevalence of so-called “labour camps” is probably the most disturbing. Labor camps are located mostly in the Industrial Area, on the outskirts of town and an area that is only entered by those who have business to be there. The streets are numbered (not named) and men and heavy equipment sleep side-by-side in ramshackle surroundings. The streets are unpaved, full of sinkholes and potholes, and teeming with workers. This photo from my collection is just one of many that demonstrates typical living conditions:
On the day that I visited with anthropologist Andrew Gardner in May 2009, this apartment block had been without water or electricity (including air conditioning) for days. It was an unseasonably warm spring and temperatures often topped 120 degrees Fahrenheit with high levels of humidity. Al Jazeera secretly filmed in the Sonapur labor camp in Dubai; with over 100,000 residents, Sonapur is the biggest labor camp in the Gulf. “In India ‘Sonapur’ means ‘city of gold.’ Given the squalid conditions and chronic overcrowding, this name couldn’t be more misleading.” Again, the unskilled laborers are under complete control of their sponsors with regards to accommodation, further contributing to the structural violence of the system, as all agency and indeed humanity is stripped from the workers. Says one man, “If you were given a better room, that would be great. But that depends on the company and their decision. You must accept” (Al Jazeera 2007).

Again, a look at the 18 March 2009 advertisements in the Gulf Times is illuminating, especially due to the dehumanizing language used throughout. This is common in the Gulf, especially in Dubai and Qatar where labor camps dominate.

**LABOUR CAMP AT AL KHOR** behind Grand Mart shopping. Can accommodate up to 150 people. Please contact…

**LABOUR CAMP FOR RENT** in Industrial area. 20 Rooms, 20 bathrooms, 1 big kitchen for rent in Street 38. …

**FURNISHED / UNFURNISHED LABOUR** accommodation. Furnished labour camp (54 rooms) for rent in Industrial area. Also available 5, 10, 15 rooms in Industrial area…

Whether the low-skilled migrant is Muslim does not seem to matter. The following case, which is one of many, will serve to illustrate this point.
In offices throughout Qatar, it is common to have a person whose job it is to serve coffee, tea, and other beverages. I only have to dial a number, place my order, and a drink made to my exact specifications is brought to my office. The unofficial (and somewhat demeaning) title for a person in this job is “tea boy” or “tea girl.” One of these so-called “tea girls,” Farida, a 28-year-old Muslim woman from the Philippines, shared with me her story of being misled upon signing employment papers.

Although Farida speaks native Tagalog, good English and some Arabic, and has years of experience as an upscale restaurant server, she was misled as to the terms of her employment. Upon signing her employment contract in Mindanao, she believed that she would be working as a server in a four or five-star restaurant in Doha, making generous tips on top of her monthly wage. She also believed that she and her husband—also Filipino and Muslim, also employed in Doha—would be able to find an apartment together. Unfortunately, they discovered soon after arrival that both of their employers require them to live in company-provided housing, and will not allow the pair to live together.

Farida’s activity is even further restricted, with a curfew that prohibits her seeing her husband except for about two hours on Friday mornings. She is further infantilized by the strict prohibition of internet in her accommodations, and chaperoned grocery trips during the week. As the Peninsula article earlier quoted at length, sponsors are unwilling to hire females because “providing housing to single women workers and managing their affairs is full of hassles”—the underlying assumption being that it is the responsibility of

104 Name has been changed to protect her identity.
the sponsor to “manage the affairs” of these “single” women. Furthermore, although Farida was told upon signing her contract that she would be provided a stipend for food purchases as part of her “free room and board,” she has yet to receive any such stipend.

As of March 2009, Farida was pregnant, and she returned to the Philippines in August 2009 to raise the child in her mother’s house, after just over one year in Doha. As a result of breaking her two-year contract, she was forced to pay for her own plane ticket back to the Philippines, making her unpleasant stay in Doha one without any financial benefit in the end. Her husband is also trying to find a way out of Doha as soon as his contract ends (in 2010). He is investigating options to find work as a janitor in Los Angeles (where he has family members already) although he is skilled as an electrician.

The significance of Farida’s story is twofold: first, it includes elements that seem to be the rule and not the exception for low-wage labor in Qatar (severe restrictions on movement, dishonest recruitment agencies, unfair levels of pay and lack of promised compensation). Secondly, Farida and her husband are Muslims. Their story, and many like it, suggest that being Muslim, especially a non-Arab Muslim, provides few if any distinct advantages in Qatari society.

In fact, Muslims and other religious groups are often forced together against their will, which can cause serious difficulties in food preparation and dining, for example, where halal meat is prepared and served next to a vegetarian Hindu. In a New York Times piece on Dubai, Michael Slackman interviews an Egyptian worker whose experiences were not what he had hoped:
“When I first arrived it was not what I expected,” Mr. Galal said. “You hear about the Emirates, but all the people I worked with were Indian. I wanted to leave.”

Now his home, or rather, where he sleeps, is in Labor Camp No. 598,655. He shares a room the size of a walk-in closet with two other men on the first floor of the dormitory. The hundreds of men on his floor share a bathroom and a kitchen, where he will not eat because they serve only Indian food. There are about 20 Arab men out of 3,000 mostly Indian residents. Most of his meals are at mall food courts or in cheap restaurants serving Arabic cuisine.

In fact, the mix of nationalities has made Mr. Galal redefine himself — not predominantly as Muslim but as Egyptian. Asked if he feels more comfortable with a Pakistani who is Muslim or an Egyptian who is Christian, he replied automatically: “The Egyptian” (Slackman 2008).

For unskilled migrants of all non-GCC nationalities, labor camp living is the norm. Relations between Arab minorities and South Asian majorities within the camps are often contentious, as an example in the final section of this chapter will illustrate. This chapter focuses on the South Asian diaspora in particular because it is the largest segment of the unskilled class, and their dealings with the kafala system and recruitment agencies tend to differ from their few Arab counterparts.

5.4c Segregation in Recreation

Considering again the staggering demographics of Qatar, where a maximum of 20% of its residents are Qatari citizens and the bulk of the remaining 80% are “single-status” migrant workers, there is a perceived threat to the sanctity of the family unit (Nagy 2006). (Although a “single-status” worker may be married with children, his visa type only allows for him to live in Qatar; the rest of his family stays behind. In the Indian
state of Kerala, from where many “single-status” migrants hail, the phenomenon has produced millions of women collectively called “Gulf wives.”

These single-status workers are deemed so much of a threat to Qatari families that recently, Doha souks and malls have started enforcing “Family Day” on Fridays (which is often the only day off for most unskilled migrant workers) and barring entrance to any males of Asian origin trying to enter without wives or children. Even the Corniche, a public park-lined boulevard in central Doha, has enforced a ban on single Asian men on Fridays. Most Doha parks are designated as “Family Only” at all times, and security guards man the entrance. However, two years’ experience demonstrates to me that men of European descent can freely enter.

Even with a closed idea about Qatari society and citizenship, there is no pre-existing ontological reason that unskilled South Asian laborers should be considered a threat to the Qatari family, whereas single men from the Levant are not (as evidenced by Family Day practices) (Gulf Times 2008). Yet as a simple deconstruction of the

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105 I first heard this phrase on a research trip to Kerala, where I helped to interview and photograph the families of 40 migrant workers in Doha. The phrase is common in South India.

106 A more common but less precise designation is “bachelor,” although (as stated) many South Asian workers are actually married with children. A more accurate variation that is very rarely used is “geographical bachelor.”

107 Single men of European origin are not banned as a practice. The Qatari daily the Gulf News has published several articles on the topic, and recently conducted an unofficial experiment where one European reporter faced no problems entering a mall on Family Day, while his similarly-dressed Indian colleague was not allowed to enter. See articles in Gulf News dated 14, 16, and 20 June 2008; 23 July 2008.

108 Although this cannot be confirmed with multiple examples, one African American man told me anecdotally that he is regularly stopped at the doors of malls, and asked, “African or American?” Upon giving his answer, he is allowed to enter freely. His assumption is that were he to answer “African,” he would be barred from entry.
following paragraphs from a *Gulf Times* article entitled “Influx of foreigners blamed for spurt in crimes” will demonstrate, South Asians are implied as threatening:

While blaming the massive influx of expatriates for rising crimes in Qatar, the chief of Capital Security has implored foreigners to respect the customs and traditions of the country. “The major issue which concerns us today is the habits of people in their home country and the taboos they have to face here as we are a tradition-loving Islamic country,” Col Ahmed Abdullah al-Houiti, director of the Capital Security Department, told *Gulf Times.* ...For instance, pick-pocketing in crowded buses and the bus stations in Doha and in the Industrial Area had become a major problem in Qatar. Equally alarming was the spurt in instances of people shop-lifting mobile phones (Nair 2008).

The identification of Qatar as a “tradition-loving Islamic country” clearly delineates it from non-Islamic countries, most of which are outside the Arab world with regards to states with significant populations in the Gulf. Secondly, the identification of pick-pocketing in buses and the Industrial Area as the main crime of interest also points to the South Asian population, as these men make up the vast majority of bus riders and Industrial Area residents. Ostensibly, these crimes are also aimed at other unskilled workers, because the typical Qatari citizen or white-collar expatriate would not ride on overcrowded buses or frequent the Industrial Area.

A story of threat, of rising crime in concentrated areas of the city, could be re-interpreted as one of increasing desperation, if one questions the motivations behind the rise in crime rates. Longva (1997, 123) says that “before the 1990 Iraqi invasion, life in Kuwait was so secure that people seldom locked their doors.” Therefore, “everyone in the country was aware that the specter of the predatory ‘bachelors’ was a half empty threat…foreign men seldom allowed themselves overtly improper behavior, knowing fully well the sanctions that might result from it.” It is quite possible that the crime rate
is raising because the system is failing more people. If this postulation is paired with the
general trend towards Asian labor as documented in the first section of this chapter, it
may be understood why South Asians are perceived to be the problem, but the
constructed nature of this understanding is also made more clear.

At an objective level, although there are no statistics available, experts suggest
that most crimes outside the Industrial Area (where most unskilled laborers work, and
where most “labour camps” are located) are actually committed by restless young men,
sons of skilled and established expatriates who are born and raised in Qatar—not
temporary South Asian workers.¹⁰⁹ In my informant’s words (a former reporter for a
local English-language newspaper), “laborers are not responsible for the rise in petty
crime. Laborers are just too tired! This threat is exaggerated. It’s the young guys like
me—born and raised here, and bored—who are doing the crimes.” Yet the
intersubjectively constructed understanding is that South Asian, unskilled migrants pose
the greatest threat.

When security guards are asked how it is decided who would be admitted to the
mall, replies range from “no Nepali allowed” to “no Chinese, Indian, or Pakistani” to
simply “Western OK.”¹¹⁰ In practice, any man of Asian descent is questioned upon
entering, and the more the men looked like they could be unskilled laborers, the more

¹⁰⁹ Anonymous newspaper reporter, interviewed 4 September 2008.
¹¹⁰ Based on questions I ask at the malls every Friday, and others’ experience as reported
to me and posted on the Qatar Living website. Qatar Living is a website frequented by
expats, full of personal anecdotes from Family Day, including one from a Singaporean
professional invited to Qatar for a high-ranking conference, who was then turned away
from the shopping malls: http://www.qatarliving.com/node/215406
likely they are to be turned away. Rather than officially banning groups of people by nationality, though, one senior executive at Hyatt Plaza mall stated that the ban was against “bad-smelling, poorly-dressed adult men” and that “reasonable, decent men” will still be allowed in (Qazi 2008).

At City Center mall, according to one security official as reported in the *Gulf Times*, “security supervisors employed by the mall are notified about the policy by the central management on a weekly basis” (*ibid.*). The *Gulf Times* article further cites an official at Villaggio mall, who stated “we have been observing the weekend ban since our opening in the summer of 2006.” My own experience demonstrates clearly that this is not true, as do many media reports. This is an example where the discourse lags behind the practice—the security-making happened in practice in June/July 2007; the mall execs claim (in 2008) that it has been in effect since 2006. Their attempts at discursive maneuvering do nothing to change the minds of the thousands of people who (like me) experienced the policy change first hand. It also highlights the fact that ‘security’ was done without discourse, and the discourse is misleading. It may confirm that securitization has taken place, but it does not do the securitizing.

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111 In several days’ worth of observation at the doors of malls across town, I have seen men of all Asian descents get turned away, including a Japanese man and an Australian of Indian descent, both of whom are obviously in the “skilled worker” expat class. More often though, the security guards turn back (very clean and well-dressed) South Asian laborers, the majority of whom are Indian, Pakistani, Nepali, and Bangladeshi. I have never seen anyone of European, African, or Middle Eastern descent get turned away, although I have heard rare reports of such occurrences from men (including one Qatari and one American) who have spent most of their lives here. These men have told me that upon being barred, they simply walk around to a new entrance and walk in closely following a family of similar ethnicity; once inside, they face no problems.
The rising crime rate, discourses, and especially practices of securitization as a result of this threat are key to understanding the institutionalized form that societal securitization takes in Qatar, as demonstrated by the next section of this chapter.

5.5 Structural Violence, Alienation, Docility, and Resistance

One fascinating illumination made by Longva (1997, 83) is that even in a situation where power is seemingly as one-sided as in the Gulf, power remains multi-dimensional and relational in the Foucauldian sense. Longva writes, “The expatriates’ submission…arose from decisions reached within a context of opportunities and constraints and in the light of carefully weighed priorities.” Among those opportunities and constraints is the recognition that material benefits are bigger than those at home, and the temporariness of life in the Gulf makes it more bearable.

For all expatriate workers in Qatar, skilled or unskilled, there seems to be the shared idea that you should “keep your head down,” finish your work quietly, and collect your paycheck until your contract ends. At times, the system feels weighted entirely towards the Qatari sponsor or employer. As a result is a phenomenon of “studied deference” whereby expatriates will go out of their way to please Gulf natives “because it’s their country” (Longva 1997, 178).

I do not intend to imply that we ignore the agency exerted [by certain individuals]…—that these scenarios involve humans choosing to abuse, exploit, maim, and dominate other humans. Rather, I seek to couple that basic fact with an analysis of the structural forces that permit, cause, encourage, or in some other way produce the violence between citizen and foreign laborer in Bahrain. Those structural forces, I argue, are essential in understanding the context and nature of
the episodic violence levied against guest workers in the Gulf States (A. M. Gardner 2010, 309-310).

A 1993 country study of Qatar commissioned by the U.S. Library of Congress reports:

Although the amirate (sic) has experienced little internal unrest, the large number of foreigners--forming 80 percent of the work force--are regarded as possible sources of instability. Qatar is determined to maintain control over their activities and limit their influence… Foreigners are liable to face arbitrary police action and harassment and often complain of mistreatment after their arrest (U.S. Library of Congress 1993).

The near-constant threat posed to expatriates by a shadowy law enforcement system, run by kafeels and secret police, lead to a culture of deportability that governs the actions of expatriate workers in the Gulf.

5.5a Deportability and Temporariness

Like Foucault’s understanding of the panopticon, deportability means that anyone could be watching at any time (1995, 250). Secret police are prevalent in Qatar it is estimated (or more accurately, rumored by an Associate Dean at an Education City institution) that 1 in 4 Qatars report to them; we do know that our phone and internet conversations are tracked and observed, and that some security guards and taxi drivers are paid informants. (I personally know of two arrests and one deportation which directly resulted from tip-offs made by a taxi driver and a security guard.) Writes Gardner:

depортation—and the threat of deportation—becomes a principal fulcrum in the systemic abuse and exploitation of guest workers in Bahrain. As Nicholas De Genova suggests, the everyday lives of ‘illegal’ or undocumented workers are shaped more by deportability than deportation per se (2002,438) (A. M. Gardner 2010, 309).
According to Longva, “awareness of temporariness”...provided a rationale for the expatriates’ acceptance of exclusion and the structure of dominance under which they lived. Likewise, it led them to hold on to the status quo even though it was often blatantly in their disfavor” (Longva 1997, 181). As Longva points out, temporariness also contributes to the lack of collective action on the part of Gulf labor; few individuals are invested in the “greater good” as they all seek the same solution at an individual level: to pay off the debt, and go home as quickly as possible.

Families back in South Asian states are more often than not hyper-aware of the potential burden of an unpaid debt, and they may encourage the worker to endure temporary hardships, as this vignette from Gardner demonstrates:

They told him that the company was very bad, that they had to work until midnight, that the company didn’t always pay their wages, and that they certainly didn’t receive overtime pay. He called his father, and his father told him to weather the difficulties. It wasn’t a lifetime, he said—just two years. He couldn’t understand a lot of what was going on around him, because he only spoke two South Indian languages (A. M. Gardner 2010, 325).

Deportability makes workers much less likely to speak up, and on the occasion they do so, they must by necessity do it anonymously. In Blood, Sweat, and Tears, a worker who feared deportation and asked for his face and voice to be obscured stated that he was promised $220 per month but is receiving $185 because they are deducting for accommodation and food. “I thought my time here would be very different,” he lamented (Al Jazeera 2007). But there is a tacit understanding that causing trouble for one’s sponsor will in turn lead to trouble for you—a burden that unskilled workers cannot
afford to challenge, especially given the crippling loans which got most of them to the Gulf in the first place.

5.5b Loans

All of the 40 families we interviewed in Kerala as part of economist Ganesh Seshan’s research in March 2008 had sold most of their family jewelry and/or land, and taken out loans in order to send one son to the Gulf. Ethnographic work by Gardner (n.d., 11) supports this. Without significant collateral, these families are unable to secure traditional bank loans. According to Indian Ambassador Joseph, most unskilled laborers who come from the Gulf end up taking out loans from so-called “loan sharks.” These loans may be at a 20% interest rate, compounded monthly, so that a 100,000 ($2150) rupee loan becomes over 400,000 in the end—an unpayable amount (Joseph 2008).

The loans compel migrant to the Gulf to endure whatever hardships they encounter, because they realize that their entire family’s welfare is at risk if they fail to repay, which nevertheless is an impossible task in many cases. Returning home is not an option, as Gardner (2010, 335) writes:

... they return home to families stripped of key productive resources and burdened by the additional debt incurred to send them to the Gulf in the first place. These forces compel the guest worker to stay in place, to endure the suffering at the hands of exploitative and abusive sponsors, or to flee those scenarios in search of work as an ‘illegal’ laborer.

According to American intelligence firm STRATFOR:

There...are large numbers of workers who simply cannot return home, and who would rather risk the consequences of becoming illegal aliens in the Gulf. Many of these South Asian natives gave up most of their belongings just to get to the
Persian Gulf, and they still owe fees to the agents who helped them find work in the Arab world. If they return home, their debts will follow them. They could wind up bankrupt or worse. This has led to concerns among authorities that Dubai soon might see a rise in suicides or even a potential uptick in militant threats (STRATFOR Global Intelligence 2009).

Indeed, in 2006 alone, the Indian Embassy in the UAE confirmed a minimum of 109 cases of suicide by Indian workers in the UAE. Indian community leaders attribute to money problems brought about by compounding loans and realization that they will not be able to repay—if they are even paid for their work at all (Al Jazeera 2007).

5.5c Passport Confiscation

Passport confiscation is a widespread practice in the Gulf; the rationale is that it provides the *kafeel* and anyone to whom the worker may be indebted with security that they will not flee the country. But in practice, the confiscation of passports takes away one of the few potential options for resistance available to the abused worker.

Hence their ability to physically leave the island, as one potential response to violence and exploitation, is controlled by the kafeel, who is, at the same time, the individual or entity positioned to profit from the workers’ presence (A. M. Gardner 2010, 330).

In February 2009, the sponsorship law in Qatar was amended so that passport confiscation is now illegal; by all accounts, the practice has not changed. In November 2009, English-language newspapers reported that for the first time, a court case has been brought to test this law; the case has not been resolved at the time of this writing.

5.5d Lack of access to recourse
Since most migrant workers live in the Industrial Area on the outskirts of Doha, they face serious difficulties if they do choose to contact authorities regarding labor violations. Embassies are in the central part of town and not well served by public transport. Most workers work every day but Fridays, which is the one day that all government agencies and embassies (and most shops) are closed. If a worker is able to contact an official at the Ministry of Labour, more often than not he is redirected to the National Human Rights Committee, to his own embassy, or to the Ministry of Interior. Without a clearly codified law laying out the responsibilities of each branch of bureaucracy, these organizations are able to buck-pass amongst themselves.

Because Qatari sponsors are often figureheads, not involved in the daily operation of a business, workers have limited access to them. In Blood, Sweat, and Tears, one worker\textsuperscript{112} had been in the Gulf for 13 months, but had only received four months’ pay. He lamented, “My sponsor doesn’t care. He doesn’t even come to see us to discuss the matter, so that we could sort it out” (Al Jazeera 2007). This practice seems normalized; as Gardner comments, “None of the workers were allowed to talk directly to the boss, the Bahraini sponsor, and their arguments with the [expatriate] manager went nowhere” (A. M. Gardner 2010, 326).

\textbf{5.5e Resistance by “Western” expatriates\textsuperscript{113}}

\textsuperscript{112} The documentary focused on Qatar and Dubai; it was unclear where this worker was located.

\textsuperscript{113} Recalling the description of “Western” in the previous chapter as all well-paid, skilled expatriate labor (whether of European descent or not).
Not all expatriates prioritize the material gains of residence in the Gulf over all else: for example, the leader of the NGO “India First” and certain members of the English-language press in Qatar continue to push the boundaries by highlighting the exploitation of migrant labor. Despite a few newspaper articles about Family Day in the local press, in the future (and I am not able to relay the exact details here), there will be no more stories published by any newspaper in Qatar regarding Family Day practices.

Although significant self-censorship amongst academia in Qatar does exist as well, some in-country academics continue to focus on the negative side of migrant labor, corruption, and religious fundamentalism in the Gulf, despite material incentives to do otherwise. (Funds for such scholarship are generally not awarded by the hugely endowed Qatar National Research Fund, while scholarship that paints Qatar in a positive light are generously funded—see the list of 2009 awardees for examples of this.) As a Polish ambassador-turned-scholar on the Gulf pointed out, “only those who praise the government have easy access to visas, interviews, and elite circles” (Kapiszewski 2001, 28).

In one instance, in the spring of 2009 about 40 members of a Christian organization that both proselytized and provided food for laborers in the Industrial Area were served notice that their residence permits were being rescinded. This group was made up in part of highly-skilled Qatar Foundation employees from the U.S. and Europe. At Texas A&M University, one of my students and his family were deported for their participation in this group. Another staff member was threatened with deportation, and it took weeks of intervention by Texas A&M and the Qatar Foundation to have his
residency re-established. After this incident, the Dean of Texas A&M sent out an email to all faculty and staff, reminding us of the limits of our residency in Qatar and how our rights differ from our native states.

5.5f Resistance by low-skilled laborers

Brave individuals have been rising up in the labor camps, too. Roshan, a Nepali worker who lives in the Industrial Area of Doha but works in the office of a construction company, has been lobbying on behalf of his compatriots for better food in the cafeteria (“before, it was like garbage”) and for back payment. In an ethnographic interview conducted by Andrew Gardner (2009), Roshan described how he helped a fellow Nepali employee in his company. The Nepali man had been involved in an altercation with an allegedly abusive Egyptian co-worker. Roshan reports:

The Nepali guy told me that you can ask anyone, ask ANYONE—the Sri Lankan guys working in the garage, the Filipino guys working in the garage, the one Turkish guy also there, Bangladeshis, Indians—ask anyone, they will tell you it’s not my fault.

Nevertheless, the manager (a Palestinian) wanted the Nepali man to sign a document saying that he chose to cancel his contract, which would have relieved the company from paying any back salary and the promised flight home, and stopped them from having to

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114 Roshan is one of my field partners in the Industrial Area; he works closely with Andrew Gardner but I visited him once in his accommodations. The visit proved dangerous for Roshan as I drew much attention from the Egyptian minority in the camp, who (as this section demonstrates) have a contentious relationship with Asian workers in their particular accommodation. The photos of the labor camps in the previous section were provided by Roshan. Due to security risks for Roshan, I have cut off email and phone conversation with him.
sign a No-Objection Certificate—effectively banning this man from working for any other company in Qatar for at least two years.

Roshan continues:

He [the Nepali] said he will not sign the document. So I went to the manager and told him that he will not sign the document. And the manager said that if he will not sign the document, then he will suffer. I will squeeze him. That means I will crush him. He will suffer. I will stop his food, I will stop his salary, and after three or four months he will realize what power we have.

At this point, Roshan began to grow concerned, and decided that a quick deportation was in the Nepali man’s best interest. Roshan uses enviable diplomatic skill with the manager:

So I told the manager that [the worker is] going to go to the human rights commission because he has a relative there who works as a security guard. He will go to the labor court, and he will go to the Nepali Embassy. In this way, I said, while he cannot do anything, the company name may come on a blacklist. That is not good. So I, as your employee, I always think about the company, and in my opinion, I said, it’s best to send him as soon as possible—in two or three days.

The Nepali was given his back pay, benefits, and salary (minus the plane ticket home), and was flown back to Nepal in the next couple of days. According to Roshan, in the end, “he was happy” because the camp had been without electricity or water for eleven days at that point (May and June, 2009, when temperatures reached 120 degrees Fahrenheit on some days).

5.5g South Asian “docility”

As Gardner succinctly writes (n.d., 11):
…the men in the Gulf are neither properly conceived as individual agents in the self-interested tradition of homo economicus, nor as the patriarchal architects of some coherent plan for a nuclear family. Rather, in assembling these formidable fees, and in undertaking the very decision to come to the Gulf in the first place, these transnational proletarians are better conceived as emissaries of extended Indian households, and hence one component of a complex web of strategies and interests. The fact that they represent a household’s interests, and often risk an entire extended household’s productive assets, plays an important role in the structural violence they endure in Bahrain. Upon arrival on the island, many guest workers face extraordinarily difficult and problematic working conditions, less pay than contractually specified, longer working hours, and poorer housing conditions than promised. The docility of the Indian labor force, often attributed to some inherently Indian cultural matrix by Bahrainis, must be understood relative to the broad swath of productive resources, and lives, that hang in the balance (emphasis added).

Put briefly, some of the perceived “docility” of South Asian laborers most likely stems from the reality that they are not individual agents, but “better conceived as emissaries of extended Indian households” with the future of many family members hanging on their success—or at least their willingness to stick out a contract to the end, no matter the circumstances.

The strike at the Indian Embassy (discussed earlier in this chapter) is another example of resistance by unskilled laborers. In true Ghandian fashion, it was a nonviolent sit-in. A strong history of civil society and NGOs in India means that nonviolent protest is often the first option for unskilled Indian workers. However, we must be careful not to overgeneralize here. As Samad Iqbal, a fictional Bengali character in the novel White Teeth by Zadie Smith, tells us:

[The] land we call ‘India’ goes by a thousand names and is populated by millions, and if you think you have found two men the same among that multitude, then you are mistaken. It is merely a trick of the moonlight (2000, 85).
Regardless of diversity, and in stark contrast to the “threat” of bachelors used as the rationale for family day, family parks, and blamed for the rise in crime, there is a competing discourse in Qatar of South Asian workers as docile. This stereotype is promoted by the Indian embassy in order to maximize its workers abroad; it has also been internalized by some Indians in the Gulf:

In a letter to the editor of the English-language Gulf Daily News, one self-identified Indian bachelor noted the following: “Seeing the number of letters appearing in this column about abuse to Indians, I feel this menace is widespread. One primary reason I think is that we Indians by nature are very docile people, and will never retaliate or take any such action and hence fall easy pretty to these bullies. Another reason I think is because a lot of our countrymen are doing menial jobs here and when some of us are seen in better circumstances, it is difficult for these people [Bahrainis] to accept us if we do not act like their servants” (Gulf Daily News 7/11/03) (A. Gardner n.d., note i).

When discussing the reasons for a move towards Asian work forces in the Gulf, recall that Kapiszewski (2006, 6) summarizes: “First of all, Asians were less expensive to employ, easier to lay-off, and believed to be more efficient, obedient, and manageable (Ghobash, 1986, pp. 138-142; Girgis, 2002, p. 29).” According to a report given by a University of Bahrain professor to the United Nations, “Asians have more skills, are more docile, and accept lower wages and come single, so they come first [in the hiring market]” (Al-Najjar June 2006). This stereotype of Asians as “docile” stands in direct contrast to the “threat” of migrant labor—I submit that the “docility” discourse is used when describing South Asians as employees, and the “threat” discourse is predominant when describing South Asians as “bachelors” or criminals.

Furthermore, active measures are taken by employers to prohibit collective action and protest in the South Asian labor population. There is substantial evidence of
corporations and agencies purposely mixing language and ethnic groups in accommodations and on the work site to minimize the chance for collective action (Al Jazeera 2007). Reinforcing the stereotype, Asian embassies tend to promote their workers, and they promote them as “docile” to the government and the merchant class. While this practice serves the immediate goal of securing visas for one’s nationals to find employment in the Gulf, it further reifies ethnocentric beliefs.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that societal securitization has increased as the Asian population in the Gulf has increased. The kafala system is a mechanism for institutionalized securitization, but this should not be understood as a “cultural” explanation in the traditional sense. Instead, as chapter six will argue, the key reason for applying securitization theory in the Gulf is to make connections between Gulf and Western societies. Each have experienced societal securitization as a result of migration—if anything, the traditional Arab Gulf states have been more tolerant of very high levels of immigration than most states around the world. However, the kafala system does serve to reify power relations within the Gulf states, to reinforce ethnocratic lines around citizenship, and to ensure that the rights of migrants will continue to be abused unless serious attention is given to the threat felt by indigenous societies. The rising abuses to workers in the region has led to rising (yet undocumented) rates of absconding workers, which in turn raises crime rates and reinforces the view that society is rightfully securitized.
The next and final chapter of this dissertation will make specific policy recommendations for Gulf and Western states. By taking societal securitization seriously, the constructed threats of non-Gulf Arabs (chapter three), of “the West” (chapter four), and of South Asian labor (chapter five) may be compared to successful instances of de-securitization in other states, especially in the U.S. and EU where societal securitization and de-securitization have been studied in depth. In the final chapter, I will also expand on the utility of visual methods for political science research, and I will summarize and extend on the four main theoretical contributions that this dissertation makes to the Copenhagen School of security theory.
CHAPTER SIX:

VALUE-ADDED TO THEORY AND POLICY

6.1 Introduction

This final chapter is divided into six sections. In the first (this introduction), I will recap the ways in which traditional security, political, and economic analyses of the Gulf have failed to grasp the most pressing issues in the region, due to these studies’ overlooking of societal security. The second section will review and expand on my discussion of the theoretical advances made by this dissertation in light of the case studies from chapters three, four, and five. The third section of this chapter will discuss the dissertation’s methodology using specific examples, and advance the case for a new method, which I am calling “visual political science.” Fourth and fifth, I will discuss policy alternatives for Western and Gulf actors (in that order). Being mindful of the “critical” part of the “critical security theory” label means calling into question state policies that contribute to human suffering, chief among them being the draconian sponsorship law. The sixth and final section of this chapter will serve as a conclusion to the entire dissertation, including a final comment on the importance of this case, its transferability to other world regions, and possible future directions for research.

The goal of this dissertation has been to provide an anthropological understanding of social relations in the Gulf, and ultimately to more accurately describe real and perceived security threats in the region. This enables us to delve deeper into the decision-making processes made both by the political elite and the merchant class in order to
“protect” Qatari society from threats to its identity. Both of these groups share power in the laissez faire autocracy as I define it; both are driven by societal insecurity, which is entirely unstudied in the Gulf. Although “migration to the Gulf States make up the third largest migration flow in the contemporary world, both scholarship and baseline data about the fundamental aspects of these migration flows remain in their infancy” (Gardner 2009, 24). Indeed, Shah (2006, 3) laments that regional data is hard to come by—“there is no regular publication that provides comparative data” in the GCC, and in individual countries’ censuses, “limited information on nationals vs. non-nationals is available.” Indeed, my experience during over two years’ worth of data collection supports Shah’s conclusions. As was demonstrated in the first chapter of this dissertation, I had difficulty pinning down even the proportion of nationals and expatriates in Qatar, and had to use multiple sources (ostensibly with their own error margins and mechanisms for counting) in order to arrive at rough estimates.

Gardner (2009, 24) mentions that most studies of Gulf migration focus on remittances, rather than the social issues surrounding migration. Supporting this view, Longva (19972) discusses political and economic studies as the two predominant types of research in Kuwait:

With few exceptions (e.g., Crystal 1990), [political studies] tend to concentrate specifically on the formal processes of decision making, from which non-Kuwaitis are entirely excluded…Although economic studies, on the other hand, devote much attention to labor migration, they unfortunately do so primarily in terms of volumes, trends, and patterns.

For example, “Qatar’s Labor Markets at a Crucial Crossroad” in Middle East Journal (Berrebi, Martorell and Tanner 2009) is a well-researched but purely economic account
of migration in the Gulf. In the field of political science, political studies tend to fall into the subfield literatures of international relations or comparative politics, and in both subfields, the sovereign state political system remains central. As a result, sources of potential security “threat” are, more often than not, other sovereign states—namely Saudi Arabia and Iran within the Gulf.

Perhaps no single book title can sum up this preoccupation with Iran and Saudi Arabia better than the book *Iran’s Rivalry with Saudi Arabia between the Gulf Wars* (Fürtig 2002). The working group from the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar’s Center for International and Regional Studies (CIRS) published a report entitled “The International Relations of the Gulf” (2009). In this report and the forthcoming book, only three states are given their own chapters: Qatar (the host state for CIRS and the working group), Saudi Arabia, and Iran. As two articles on the Gulf published in the top comparativist policy-oriented journal *Middle East Policy* demonstrate, a focus on the two “great powers” of the region dominates. Michael Ryan Kraig focuses on the “regional order” of the Gulf and specifically on the influences of Saudi Arabia and Iran (2006), and Aarts and van Duijne look at the position of Saudi Arabia in the case of a U.S.-Iranian détente (2009).

The main architects of the Copenhagen School, Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, posit that American-style (or traditional) security studies came of age during the Cold War, and necessarily focused on deterrence theory, balance of power, and other state-centric threats as a logical result of Cold War great power security concerns (Buzan and Wæver in Collins 2007). In analyses of Gulf security threats, it is ostensible that the
pattern of focusing on Saudi Arabia and Iran occurs for the same reasons. During the Nixon administration, the United States pursued a “twin pillars” strategy, relying on Saudi Arabia and the Shah’s Iran to promote American economic interests and stability in the region; it is likely that the scholarly focus on Saudi Arabia and Iran became institutionalized in the security literature in the region. As security studies in general have moved towards a broader conception of security, studies of the Gulf have lagged behind; this dissertation seeks to make up some of the lost ground.

In military and political terms, and despite conventional wisdom, my own research has led me to conclude that Iran and Saudi Arabia are emphatically not a threat to the smaller Gulf emirates. Although relations with Saudi Arabia are “strained” at times (Peterson 2006, 746), and there were a series of border skirmishes before final lines were agreed upon in 2008, the idea of Saudi Arabia invading Qatar is almost unthinkable. This is largely due to the strong ties that are shared by Gulf societies—especially by the Wahhabi Sunni majorities in both Saudi Arabia and Qatar. As discussed at length in earlier sections of this dissertation, tribal and familial ties on the Arabian peninsula bear little relation to the sovereign state borders established in the post-colonial era.

The State of Qatar enjoys a growing international presence and recognition, and is regarded as legitimate both internally and externally, which “enhances the prospects of the state’s survival” (Peterson 2006, 748). As chapter two of this project details, internal legitimacy comes from the emir’s popularity, the rentier status of the state, and the devolution of power in controversial issues (such as Family Day) in this laissez faire autocracy. Evidence of external legitimacy includes the World Trade Organization’s
ministerial meeting in Doha in November 2001 (giving rise to the “Doha Round” of WTO negotiations), hosting the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) summit in 2003, being elected to the UN Security Council in 2005 (Peterson 2006, 746-747), and playing host to the 21st Arab League Summit in 2009.

Qatar has made a name for itself in other non-political realms including sports, playing host to the 2006 Asian Games, annual professional tennis and golf tournaments, and making it to the semi-final round in its bid for the 2016 Olympic Games. In January 2009, the New York Times named Doha the “Cultural Destination of the Year,” citing I.M. Pei’s grand Museum of Islamic Art as a sure sign of Qatar’s rise in international prominence as “A New Arts Capital.” This belief is ostensibly shared by Robert DeNiro, who successfully brought his Tribeca Film Festival to Doha in the fall of 2009. Diplomatically, Qatar maintains good relations with such disparate states as the U.S., Israel (though relations have deteriorated since the 2008-2009 Gaza War), and Iran.

In an October 2009 interview with an Egyptian newspaper, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad stated that although “our enemies in the West are keen to distance and to drive wedges between us”…“our hands are stretched out to the Gulf countries, and exchange visits with each other, [and extend] invitations to others to visit us. I have visited Saudi Arabia and Qatar four times, and the Rulers of Dubai and Oman have visited us” (Howeidi 2009). Indeed, the Emir of Qatar visited Tehran after the disputed June 2009 elections, and was photographed standing side-by-side with Ahmedinejad. Although the Gulf Cooperation Council was initially formed in 1980 as a result of the Iran-Iraq war and as a counterbalance to Iranian military might, the alliance
can best be compared to NATO now—despite its military origins, the GCC is now most useful in coordinating policies outside the military realm. For example, a monetary union and common currency is being discussed, although there is little possibility of any major changes occurring in the short term.

Although an understanding of Saudi Arabia and Iran as potential threats to Gulf stability is logical, there seems to be little evidence that either of them would benefit from overt war in the region.\(^{115}\) In the military and political sectors, then, very few issues are highly securitized. What then are the main security issues in the Gulf, as measured by levels of securitization? The Copenhagen School’s understanding of security sectors is a useful alternative framework for understanding security in the Gulf. Recall that the framers of the Copenhagen School posit that security is itself meaningless without a referent object to secure, and that securitization can occur in five major sectors: political, military, societal, economic, and environmental (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998). (Other security sectors such as medical, religious, and cyber security have been suggested since the first definitive book was published in 1998; see for example Wæver 2002 and Hansen and Nissenbaum 2009.)

Although the economic sector of Dubai was securitized in the aftermath of the global financial crisis of 2007-2009, evidenced by discussions of the survival and viability of Dubai bandied about in the Gulf and Western media before it became clear that Abu Dhabi would support Dubai’s recovery, securitization in the economic sector

\(^{115}\) With the exception of Saudi support of the Yemeni government in its battles in the border region of Yemen with separatist Houthi rebels; these battles are constrained to the immediate vicinity and although they have resulted in diplomatic tensions, there is no evidence that the war itself will spread outside the immediate area.
has largely not occurred elsewhere in the Gulf. Political regimes and their military counterparts remain unchallenged, and the environmental sector is not yet a major issue on any Gulf state’s agenda. But the societal sector, however, is an extreme case of institutionalized securitization, making it a fruitful place to test and expand Copenhagen School theories. The next section of this final chapter will extend on the discussion started in chapter one, highlighting the four theoretical advances made in this project. To recap, these are:

- Rethinking Western definitions of society, citizenship, sovereignty, and weak/strong states
- Incorporating action/practice with discourse into the Copenhagen School
- Institutionalized securitization
- Lessening the theoretical focus on decision-making and audience in non-democracies

When we dispense with the commonly-held assumption that Saudi Arabia and Iran (external military security) should be the focus of security studies, we are able to look at the societal securitization of migration, which has much more of an impact on policymaking and everyday life. In turn, this focus leads to several significant theoretical advances, to be discussed in the next section.

6.2 Theoretical Advances: Securitization in non-Western, non-democratic states

6.2a Rethinking Western definitions

In her oft-cited article “Seeing IR Differently: Notes from the Third World,” Arlene Tickner argues that the field of international relations is largely an American
social science, and states remain the primary actors in the field (2003, 297). Furthermore, Tickner points out that theories generated in the United States are often presented as universal knowledge, but that the idea of universality is itself culturally relativistic (303-305). To take a brief example in the Gulf context, the idea of an overthrow or coup has quite different connotations from its Western counterpart. According to a reference website on Qatar:

On February 22, 1972, with the support of the Al Thani, Khalifa ibn Hamad assumed power as ruler of Qatar. Western sources frequently refer to the event as an overthrow. Qataris regarded Khalifa ibn Hamad's assumption of full power as a simple succession because leading members of the Al Thani had declared Khalifa ibn Hamad the heir apparent on October 24, 1960, and it was their consensus that Ahmad ibn Ali should be replaced (all-refer.com 1993).

In the Gulf, because ruling families often make decisions by consensus rather than edict, it may be generally agreed upon that an heir apparent should take over. Similarly, as detailed earlier in this dissertation, the current emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa, took power from his father (Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad) in 1995. This event arguably more closely paralleled a bloodless coup in the Western sense, but the idea of a takeover is more normalized in the Gulf than in Western democracies.

The concepts most germane to this dissertation are sovereignty, society, citizenship and weak/strong states; this section will address each in turn.

6.2a1 Sovereignty, society and citizenship

According to Arlene Tickner, sovereignty (or what Buzan and Little (2001) call the “Westphalian straitjacket”) is seen as a precondition for development, and all vestiges of colonialism are perceived to impede modernity (2003, 318). Autonomy in a sovereign
state system is normatively valued, even if dependency would breed better well-being for a state’s citizens. In the small Gulf emirates, this boils down to seeking independence wherever possible. Although Qatar relies on the United States for military backup, it does maintain its own army, as well. In other realms, as discussed, Qatar has striven for noteworthiness and “branding” (Peterson 2006). J.E. Peterson writes that territorial boundaries are “a relatively new phenomenon” in the Gulf states (CIRS Working Group Report 2009, 5). In fact, Qatar’s borders with Saudi Arabia were only finalized in December 2008.

The problematization of “sovereignty” in the international relations literature is clearly established (see for example the heavily-cited (Krasner 1999)). However, “whereas state and nation have frequently been problematized by students of the non-Western world, the conceptualization and practice of citizenship have been, until recently, the object of limited analytical scrutiny” (Longva 2000, 179). I would argue that the same can be said for “society” as a concept; throughout the Copenhagen School and in international relations in general, societies are generally accepted as congruent with the state (“the German society”), or as composing a unified minority group which maintains a separate national identity from its parent state (such as the Turkish population in Germany).

As chapters two and three discussed, in Qatar there is a complicated relationship between state and society. This is due to three main factors. First, by all accounts, less than 20% of the total population of Qatar are actually citizens. Therefore, the rentier state is set up to provide goods and services for this small minority. Second, this
minority is quite closed off from other segments of the population, due to the persistence of tribal organizing patterns and to the securitization of society. Third, and following the first two, the “innermost rings” of Qatari society also include citizens of other Gulf states. Families often cross national lines; I personally know families with Qatari citizenship who refer to their close relatives from each of the other GCC states (Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman). In some instances, the family lives in just one or two Gulf states; in others, the family may be scattered throughout the GCC.¹¹⁶

Gulf societies are exclusionary, and citizenship is exceedingly hard to come by. Jus soli citizenship is very rare, while jus sanguinis rules almost always prevail. I have argued that this is due to social relations brought about by tribalism; the resulting system is an ethnocracy. Nils Butenschon defines an ethnocracy as “a state that allocates citizenship according to specific ethnic criteria (as normally spelled out in a nationality law)” (Butenschon 2000, 19). In addition, this ethnic conception of citizenship is bolstered by societal securitization. As Longva writes, when the concept of citizenship was adopted (and along with it the spoils of citizenship in a resource-rich state), there was already a sizeable migrant population to be excluded:

To understand society and state in Kuwait and the other Gulf countries, it is essential to understand that the presence of migrant workers there is not merely an epiphenomenon of the economy but a major constitutive element of these societies…One could claim that nation-building—or, more precisely, the awareness of national identity, of belonging to a modern nation-state, in the region owes much of its success to the overwhelming presence of the migrant workers (Longva 2000, 183).

¹¹⁶ Some families often have relatives or roots in Iran, as well, as discussed in chapter three of this dissertation.
Although she does not utilize IR literature, the phenomenon Longva describes is one of societal securitization, albeit a form of societal securitization not often dealt with in the Copenhagen School, as the referent object (society) does not find sole authority in the (political) state, but instead relies on other tribal elites and the merchant class as well.

*When we discuss the securitization of migrant labor in Qatar, we are really discussing a phenomenon that takes place at many levels simultaneously, and where “the state” acts to protect a “society” that makes up only a portion of its subjects.* However, as Pinar Bilgin (2002, 101) points out, the Copenhagen School of security studies largely continues to “prioritize the state as the primary referent (to whom security refers) or agent (those who act for security), [and] end up reinforcing statism in security studies.” Although the architects of the Copenhagen School reject the idea that the state is the only referent object in security studies (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998, 37), Buzan (2008, 6) wrote that “at the end of the day security policy still has to be made by states.” As this dissertation has demonstrated, this is not always the case.

### 6.2a2 Weak and strong states

Arlene Tickner points out that in the discussion of “weak” states in the American political science literature, states (typically developing states in the Third World) are defined not in terms of their structure, but instead in terms of what they lack (such as identity, capability, or legitimacy) (2003, 314).

The State of Qatar maintains a military force of approximately 12,000 (the number has not changed significantly between 1993 and 2009 U.S. State Department
reports. In 2009, the State Department reported that Qatar has an additional security force of 8,000 men including forces for internal security. This number does not count police officers. I know the wife of one Special Forces officer who would be counted among the 8,000, and it is clear that their work is highly confidential and considered of utmost importance to the political regime. Their primary duty is to maintain law and order, and only Qataris from “original families” (discussed in chapters two and three) are hired. The attention paid to internal security strongly suggests that a “weak state” in terms of Western perceptions (with a small military force) may indeed be very strong internally.

Politics, at its most simple level, are the rules that govern our everyday lives, or “who gets what, when, and how” (Lasswell 1958). In that sense, it is clear that the actors in the Gulf political realm are not just the emir, his cabinet, and the Advisory Council. As this dissertation has demonstrated, the private entrepreneurial/merchant class has real decision-making power and authority, governing where certain people (especially Asian “bachelors”) can and cannot go, where they are allowed to shop, and whether they are allowed to exit Qatar or change jobs.

The “Family Day” system differs from segregation in the U.S. South because the government has not formally ruled on it as in Plessy v. Ferguson.\footnote{Likewise, segregation in the Gulf is sometimes referred to as an apartheid system and anecdotally compared to the former system in South Africa, but Gulf governments are very clear in repeating that “Family Day” policies are not law but instead rules made by individual merchants.} Instead, the government leaves issues of major import to be settled by private companies. Similarly, widespread human rights abuses are left up to the companies to adjudicate and solve.
The Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Interior, and the National Human Rights Committee all delegate responsibility to one another, and to the private companies, and responsibility is not taken, nor does any one body claim responsibility to hand down judgments.

The fact that the merchant class has considerable freedom accomplishes several objectives: first, it allows the state to function as an alternative to democracy, where unelected Qatari merchants outside the political realm wield large amounts of power. This informal enfranchisement of the merchant class has the result that that they are not inclined to make a bid to take over the government (Crystal 1989). Secondly, devolving power to the merchant class gives Qatar external legitimacy: the emir’s refusal to crack down (to make the regime as authoritarian as it could be within the current rules of the game) allows Qatar to co-exist happily with advanced industrial states (such as the U.S.) who depend on the region’s oil and gas, but whose moral compass require them to take objection to the human rights abuses in the region. By passing the buck on migrant labor to the private sector, the emir avoids being taken to task by the U.S. (and the U.S. appreciates this, because it hates to be called hypocritical, but knows that the charge contains some truth in this region).

Another major part of the bargain is that the emir retains internal legitimacy (which, as my dissertation has demonstrated, is the most significant potential threat to the Qatari regime). Instead of resenting, blaming, and eventually rioting against the ruling family/government, disenfranchised “bachelors” (who make up a significant part of the population and could, if coordinated, cause upheaval to the state) blame private merchants (their sponsors; mall owners) instead of the ruling government elite, and
(when rare protests occur) these protests tend to happen at workers’ embassies, not in front of the Qatari Emiri Diwan.118 This misdirection of migrants’ frustrations contributes to stability because rather than engaging in collective action against the state, the anger of unskilled laborers is fragmented into anger at one’s individual sponsor, or one’s company of employment, or one shopping mall owner, or one particular mall security guard.

6.2b Incorporating action/practice with discourse

Iver Neumann, Vincent Pouliot, and Emanuel Adler are three contemporary IR theorists generally associated with “the practice turn” in international relations (for representative examples see (Neumann 2002), (Pouliot 2008), and (E. Adler 2008)). Citing Schatzski (2001, 3), Neumann defines practice as “general and abstract accounts of incorporated and material patterns of action that are organized around the common implicit understandings of the actors.” According to Neumann, “the practice turn” entails a re-incorporation of non-verbal actions into contemporary interpretivist international relations work, which draws heavily on discourse analysis in the tradition of Wittgenstein and Michel Foucault (Neumann 2002, 627, 635). Neumann argues simply that “practices [are] part of discourse” (2002, 629). Here, I use this basic insight from “the practice turn” to widen the theoretical underpinnings of securitization theory.

118 The Emiri Diwan is the equivalent of the West Wing of the White House; the emir does not live there but all executive offices are housed there.
While discourse analysis can help us to uncover meaning and intent in a text, study of practice allows scholars to study the manifestations of beliefs or “socialized patterns of action” (Neumann 2002, 631). According to Pierre Bourdieu, practice is different from discourse because practice does not require the actor to articulate what they are doing (Bourdieu 1977, 106). As will be expanded upon in the methodology section of this chapter, Family Day as a practice is probably the singular most important piece of data in the interpretation of South Asian migration as highly securitized.

Although the social theory behind “the practice turn” in international relations is quite complicated, the methodology should not be needlessly complex. In order to study the practice of Family Day, I observed mall entrances and counted interactions, walked around the souks on Fridays, asked security guards on several occasions who was allowed inside on Family Days, and spoke with reporters and fellow Doha residents about their insights and experiences. From a Bourdieuan perspective, it is significant that the answers I got when questioning guards on who is allowed into malls (ranging from “Western OK” to “no Asians” to utter confusion) may differ from the practices I observed (which consisted almost entirely of dark-skinned South Asian men being stopped at the doors). An incorporation of both discourse and practice leads to a more complete picture. Discourse (in the form of answers to my questions) yields an answer that may be more palatable, thought through, or given to the guard as a guideline from the mall manager. On the other hand, practice demonstrates how these rules are understood and carried out, based on social beliefs of who is acceptable (and who is not) on Family
Day. Neumann relies on the work of social anthropologist Michel de Certeau, one of the early proponents of “the practice turn:”

contrary to Foucault, de Certeau aims at establishing a theory of action. His basic unit of analysis is not the utterance, but the action. In order to understand everyday practices de Certeau focuses on the tacit knowledge that goes into performing them and perhaps altering them, all the tricks and improvisations which come into play and which are traditionally read out of social analyses (Neumann 2002, 633, citing de Certeau 1974, 67).

So whereas, according to the Copenhagen School, “the utterance itself [of security] is the act” (Wæver 1995, 55), for adherents to “the practice turn,” the “basic unit of analysis is not the utterance, but the action” (from Neumann quote above). This supports my theoretical argument that security cannot be understood as a speech act in all times and places; instead, we must look at both discourse and action/practice in order to get a fuller picture.

Recently, this belief has cropped up elsewhere, as in this forthcoming chapter by Thierry Balzacq:

the claim that security is a speech act may be intuitively strong, but it is theoretically restrictive and methodologically unfruitful. In fact, what has often been taken to be the result of the performative use of the concept security does not follow from that assumption. Rather, securitization results from other unarticulated assumptions about security’s symbolic power. In other words, securitization is a pragmatic act, i.e.: a sustained argumentative practice aimed at convincing a target audience to accept, based on what it knows about the world, the claim that a specific development is threatening enough to deserve an immediate policy to curb it (Balzacq forthcoming, 9).

This dissertation joins works such as Balzacq (above) and Lene Hansen (2008) in questioning the Copenhagen School’s reliance on the speech act, and posits instead that theorizing “the practice turn” can be especially useful in providing theoretical underpinnings for securitization theory.
In a 2008 *Millennium* article, Wanda Vrasti is critical of the selective use of ethnographic approaches and methods in international relations. She provides an excellent summary of “the practice turn,” its major theorists and works, and the pitfalls to which IR scholars are most prone. I will be citing Vrasti both in this section and in the upcoming discussion on methodology.

Vrasti summarizes:

Neumann is frustrated with the ‘linguistic turn’ in critical IR, which has generated a wealth of ‘text-based analyses of global politics that are not complemented by different kinds of contextual data from the field’. To better illustrate how global politics is experienced in everyday action, Neumann recommends what Schatzki et al. call a ‘practice turn’. In a nutshell, the ‘practice turn’ invites us to replace the discourse theories of Wittgenstein and Foucault with the social action theories of Bourdieu and de Certeau. Despite their shared affinities, the latter two offer a slightly distinct model for understanding social reality. In their ethnographic studies, Bourdieu and de Certeau draw upon minute and idiosyncratic aspects of everyday life to demonstrate how dominant cultural and political regimes are either activated or resisted at various nodes and in various modes (Vrasti 2008, 290).

Neumann’s goal is to “refrain from splitting the social world into its sensory components and creating a division of labor between language and action, hearing and seeing, discourse analysis and ethnological studies” (Vrasti 2008, 291). Epistemologically, methodologically, and theoretically, then, “the practice turn” is consistent with my own claims, and it is useful for their elaboration.

6.2c Institutionalized securitization

Paul Roe writes that “successful securitization is predicated on the intersubjective establishment of existential threat” (2004, 281). In the Gulf, this “intersubjective
establishment” of migrants and other outside influences as “existential threat” actually pre-dates the sovereign state system. It is worth re-quoting Longva here:

To understand society and state in Kuwait and the other Gulf countries, it is essential to understand that the presence of migrant workers there is not merely an epiphenomenon of the economy but a major constitutive element of these societies...One could claim that nation-building—or, more precisely, the awareness of national identity, of belonging to a modern nation-state, in the region owes much of its success to the overwhelming presence of the migrant workers (Longva 2000, 183).

Jef Huysmans (1998) and Paul Roe (2004), among others, are concerned with the moral causes and consequences of this Manichean “citizen vs. migrant” thinking. According to Huysmans, the assumption is that the “enemy” [in this case, the migrant]...“unites the functionally fragmented society of the liberal state” (Huysmans 1998, 576). And Wæver (2000, 253) reminds us that societal securitization is especially tricky because it has “a particularly strong self-reinforcing character.” This is because “problematising the security of an identity and triggering attempts to define and complete it tend to expose its contingency, incompleteness and impossibility and thus lead to further action” (2000, 253).

Summarizing Wæver (1995, 43), Roe (2004, 289, his emphasis) writes that “culture can be defended ‘with culture,’...’if one’s identity seems threatened...the answer is a strengthening of existing identities. In this sense, consequently, culture becomes security policy.’” In other words, focusing on societal identity in the context of threat will necessarily lead individuals to focus on areas of weakness, and reinforce the securitization process.
In the Qatari case, this is most definitely true. As chapter three detailed, the State of Qatar and other influential groups are engaged in an active nation-building project. For example, the establishment of Qatar National Day on December 18th of every year (the date of the current emir’s accession\textsuperscript{119}), and the prominent placement of national flags throughout Doha serve to bolster this identity. FANAR, the Islamic Center in Qatar, hosted an exposition in November 2009, with the goal of promoting Islam and Qatari culture (called the FANAR Expo; the tagline was “where morals and cultures flourish”). In addition to information on Islam, booths featured traditional Qatari hobbies and jobs such as woodworking, making nets for pearling dives, Qatari food-making stations, henna tattoos, and an extensive collection of antique silk dresses (jalabiyyat). If Roe (2004, 284) is correct when he posits that “the very nature of collective identities creates propitious conditions for so-called societal security dilemmas,” in a state such as Qatar where “census, map, and museum”\textsuperscript{120} strategies are recently and currently being used in the nation-building process, this is especially true and the institutionalization of securitization seems almost assured.

The Copenhagen School’s conception of security as a “speech act” means that “the utterance itself is the act” (Wæver, Securitization and Desecuritization 1995, 55). But in order for a securitizing move to be successful, the audience is very important:

As Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde (1998: 31) make clear, ‘securitization is not decided by the securitizer but by the audience of the security speech act: Does the audience accept that something is an existential threat to a shared value?’... In instances of ‘institutionalized securitization’, however, the role of audience is at best marginalized or at worst excluded (Roe 2008, 618, emphasis added).

\textsuperscript{119} Ironically, December 18\textsuperscript{th} is also International Migrants’ Day!

\textsuperscript{120} See chapter three.
The next section will discuss the role of audience, especially with regards to institutionalized securitization.

6.2d Decision-making and audience

Recent work on securitization theory has problematized the concepts of decision-making and audience in the Copenhagen School. According to Paul Roe (2008), insufficient attention has been paid to the role of audiences in the securitization process. Roe argues that the general public, while valuable, is less important than “formal support” by other members of the political class. Roe’s article discusses the assent of the British Parliament to Tony Blair’s plan to invade Iraq; his analysis like most if not all Western pieces of scholarship on the issue consider the political realm in a way that would exclude the merchant class in Qatar. However, “formal support” for a securitizing move in Qatar, following Roe’s logic and extending it to this Gulf society, would come from the merchant class, tribal elites, and the Emir’s inner circle.

This begs the question, then, of who is seen as a valid securitizing actor? Wæver writes that, “By uttering ‘security,’ a state representative moves a particular development into a specific area…” (1995, 55, emphasis added). This formulation betrays a bias towards states where official representatives make policy, and have to validate that policy to a public. In Roe’s example, it is assumed that the Prime Minister is a valid actor. In the Qatari case, however, there does not seem to be one central player in the securitization of society. Rather, as the bibliographies from earlier chapters of this dissertation demonstrate, securitizing moves (positing that technology, English, or
migrant labor are existential threats to Qatari identity) come from prominent attorneys, shopping mall owners, Shariah law scholars, and various other sources, but rarely do they come from the political elite (with the exception of Sheikha Mozah and her criticism of “immoral” satellite television programming, as discussed in chapter four of this dissertation).

Furthermore, Roe argues, “In instances of institutionalized securitization…as audience the general public is for the most part excluded from the securitizing process” (2008, 632). Roe’s article discusses the decision in Great Britain to go to war with Iraq, which is firmly planted in the military sector of security. His argument is that military institutions do not rely on the general public when making policy decisions, and so the public cannot be regarded as the audience for any securitizing moves.

Roe’s argument is successful, and it applies more broadly than his traditional case study (military security in Britain) would initially suggest. In Qatar, the institutionalization of societal securitization occurred at the time of state formation; at that time, Qatari citizens (society) were not necessarily the audience; because of their small size and claims on the rentier state, they can more accurately be considered to be securitizing actors.

According to an article in The Peninsula, a “prominent Qatari woman” Amina Al-Hail suggested that

the menace of single workers is such that many Qatari families avoid venturing out on weekends. She suggests the government build a large city complete with all the needed infrastructure where single workers can be accommodated. ‘I suggest that this city be located far away from Doha and should provide good accommodation and recreational facilities for foreign workers,” she said (The Peninsula 2009).
According to Gardner (2009, 20), similar proposals are being seriously considered in Kuwait, Bahrain, and the UAE. (In Kuwait, the project is named “Bachelor City.”) He writes, “it is clear in all parts of the Gulf many citizens envision the legion of migrants in their midst as a threat to their family, to their personal security, and to the integrity of their culture” (Gardner 2009, 20). Jocelyn Vaughn argues that securitizers may attempt to persuade multiple audiences of the legitimacy of a securitizing move (2009); here I am arguing that securitizers (or securitizing actors, to stay true to Copenhagen School terminology) may be multiple, and are not necessarily state-level actors.

In the absence of a formal decision, adherents to “the practice turn” argue, “existing practices will tend to flatten out any innovation” (Neumann 2002, 642). In a case of institutionalized securitization, if no actor steps up to make policy changes, the institutionalization simply continues, and we see no meaningful policy change.

6.3 Methodological implications and directions for a future “visual political science”

By now it should be very clear that for many reasons (including lack of press freedom and Qatari cultural traditions that privilege privacy), there is a severe lack of openness in Qatari society. Perhaps Naima and Jamil, married Lebanese expats who have been living in Qatar for 16 years, said it best when they said simply, “Not even Qatari really know what’s happening here” (Adler 2009).

One major theoretical advance that this dissertation argues for is a broadening of the Copenhagen School’s understanding of security to include action/practice as well as discourse. For data-gathering and theoretical reasons, then, this dissertation provides the
ideal grounds for the development of a “visual political science.” A simple internet search will reveal that as yet, there is no such development; however, it is unnecessary to reinvent the wheel completely. This dissertation draws heavily from the methods of visual anthropology and visual sociology, to which I will now turn.

One of the pioneering books in the development of a “visual anthropology” was *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method* by father-and-son team John and Malcolm Collier (Collier and Collier 1986). Much like early qualitative work in the field of international relations (such as King, Keohane and Verba 1994), *Visual Anthropology* sought to live up to the empiricist and positivist standards of the mainstream of its field at the time. Collier and Collier’s claim is that images can provide as much empirical data as written records, and that the perception that images are somehow of a lower-order is based only on the social scientist’s cultural bias (1986, 170).

In a detailed how-to style, Collier and Collier explained how visual images can be used in three phases of research. The first phase is when initial data is gathered, usually when the researcher first arrives at a location. Photographs can be taken in the first few days, before the researcher is oriented to the land, in order to “preserve vivid first impressions” which may be useful later (16). According to Collier and Collier (and displaying their positivist inclinations), “these early records can be decoded intelligently by any native collaborator in the immediate present, or read significantly by the investigator as knowledge deepens” (16-17). In the case of my dissertation, I used this visual method to arrive at the metaphor of concentric circles used to discuss social
patterns in Qatar, and to organize the layout of the entire project (the orders of the chapters following a “concentric circles” pattern).

Looking back on the photographs I took when I first arrived in Doha, taken for the purpose of representing my life in the city to my friends and family in the U.S., I was struck by the prevalence of gates and walls (around parks, houses, and compounds) in my photographic collection. When taking these photos, I had not striven to represent spatial separation—in fact, I had not even conceived of this research topic. Similarly, I have started reading the photographic collections of my newcomer expatriate friends in Doha with the same eye. With the help of Facebook photo albums, I have been looking at the first photos posted, those that (for the poster) best represent the Doha landscape. Walls are omnipresent.121

When it comes to patterns of social relations, this particular “first-phase” use of photography is also telling in photographs I have seen from my fellow skilled-class expatriates, and my working-class Nepali field partners. In both cases, photographs of social occasions (parties and get-togethers) reinforce the idea that many societies exist alongside one another in Qatar. In a series of over thirty photos, my field partners documented a “Nepali friendship party” which involved painting one another’s foreheads and sharing food. I did not need the mechanics of the ritual spelled out for me to arrive at the basic fact that this was a Nepali tradition, and not a Qatari one. Similarly, attending a meal to break the fast during Ramadan with some Kenyan Muslim friends, I was served

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121 As this section will discuss, the goal is not any sort of quantitative study of the occurrence of walls in a random sample of photographs—instead, I used this information in my initial phases of research to guide further reading and investigation.
Kenyan food, the women wore Kenyan clothes, and—other than the architecture of the home we were in—the scene was straight out of Mombasa, not Doha.122

There seems to be more interaction across nationalities when it comes to the skilled expatriate class—for example, a Halloween party I recently attended was populated by people of Canadian, American, English, Indian, Australian, Omani, Bahraini, and Lebanese origins. What this group shared, however, was a status as “skilled worker” in Doha, with the multiple-exit permits and relatively high salaries that accompany such a designation. In that sense, the “society” existing independently of its surroundings is distinctly separate. A look back at photographs taken during these gatherings has aided me in my interpretations.

Collier and Collier would not be satisfied with my use of touristy or non-scholarly photography in this first phase of my research, striving as they did for systematic and positivist analysis. Similarly, although ethnographic analysis has become slightly more common in international relations, Wanda Vrasti argues that the interpretivist epistemology of ethnography has not traveled with the methodology when utilized by many IR scholars:

in international studies the ‘ethnographic turn’ was used to facilitate a return to empiricism, albeit a new and improved kind of ‘emancipatory empiricism’ (Pouliot, “Sobjectivism”, 367), which promised to refurbish the parochial vestiges of the discipline and restore its much desired critical voice while keeping its regulatory mechanisms intact (Vrasti 2008, 281).

Quite simply, modern ethnography does not hold itself to the standards of positivist analysis, because ethnographers believe that knowledge cannot exist outside of

122 Because I was a guest and participant in the dinner, this was a conclusion I arrived at via experiential practice, not an analysis of discourse.
interpretation: the standards are different, and not lower as positivists may assume (many would argue that the attention placed on post-positivist epistemologies mean that standards in ethnography are much higher, but this is outside the realm of my discussion here). Any students of IR who consider co-opting of ethnographic methods should be conscious of this, and not “pick and choose” ethnographic methods without understanding ethnographic epistemology (Vrasti 2008).

This may be an unpopular argument to make in many circles of IR (particularly in the U.S.—on the U.S/European epistemological divide, see (Wæver 2004)). Vrasti (2008) uses language harmonious to the topic of my analysis here:

The regulatory mechanisms of disciplinary IR are such that extra-disciplinary efforts are granted a ‘workers’ visa’ only if they conform to already-existing criteria for good research and unless they do anything to perturb the ontological imagination of the discipline (297).

And here:

Inter- or multi-disciplinary solutions are not enough to disturb disciplinary power because although, occasionally, ‘extra-disciplinary insights and ideas’ may be granted a ‘workers’ visa’, only rarely do they come to enjoy ‘the rights of full disciplinary citizenship’ (300).

For better or worse, then, I am conscious of the post-positivist and interpretivist epistemological commitments of ethnography as a research methodology, and I strive to remain consistent with them while working within a broader “international relations” framework.

The tension between positivism and post-positivism is not unique to political science. Sociologist Sarah Pink cites Collier and Collier, and post-positivist

Collier and Collier recognized that the ‘whole’ view of a situation cannot be recorded on video, they urged the research photographer to confront ‘the challenge of gathering a semblance of the whole circumstance in a compressed sample of items and events observed in time and space’ ([Clifford] 1986, 163). However, their work was inconsistent with the ‘postmodern turn’ in ethnography since they did not account for the possibility that any attempt to represent a ‘whole view’ itself constitutes a ‘partial truth’ or, in Clifford’s terms, a ‘fiction’ based on ‘systematic exclusions.’

As Vrasti (2008) argues, the mainstream of ethnography today is much more in line with Clifford and Pink’s post-positivist epistemology, which would allow for the use of my photos in the way I described, as items to be interpreted to arrive at general themes and patterns in the research project’s first phase.

According to Collier and Collier, the second phase of a field study is the more detailed fieldwork phase. Collier and Collier suggest using photography here “in search of particular evidence pertinent to the goals of the research” (1986, 15). After general directions for research have been decided upon, “research methods become increasingly specialized, interviewing more structured, speculations more analytical…” (ibid.). Once a hypothesis has been established, in other words, fieldwork becomes more targeted at arriving at conclusions, or uncovering causal mechanisms.

Chapter four of Collier and Collier’s book described many strategies for the use of photographs in the interview process, in order to get “better” information. While my goal in interviewing was never to get better (as in, more “true”) information, I always sought to hear as much as possible from every subject, in order to have a fuller picture of *their* understanding of social reality. For example, discussions with the ambassadors
from India, the Philippines, Singapore, and Sri Lanka yielded four very different opinions on the most important issues for migrants in the Gulf, and the best-practice strategies for their particular nation’s embassy. Likewise, it would be foolhardy for me to assume that any amount of interviewing would yield me a consensus list of the founding families of Qatar. However, accomplishing multiple interviews and comparing this data with other sources (namely Nagy 2006) allowed me to come to some fairly reliable (if not universally accurate) conclusions as detailed in chapter three.

The use of visual methods was indispensible in the interview phase, and although I used Collier and Collier’s (1986) helpful advice as a jumping-off point, much of my methodology had to be worked out on the ground, as a response to the local challenges of information gathering. As Lizette Josephides writes, “there can be no blueprint for how to do fieldwork. It really depends on the local people, and for this reason we have to construct our theories of how to do fieldwork in the field” (Josephides 1997, 32). In the end, I utilized two sorts of visual interview techniques: formal and informal. In the formal technique, I used visual sources in two ways. First, I asked a Qatari focus group to email me photos of their most prized family possessions in the home. We then used these photographs for a jumping-off point to discuss traditions and rituals. For example, Jawaher sent me a photo of her mother’s wedding chest. In a focus group with Jawaher, Maryam, and Aisha,¹²³ I learned about the different wedding traditions in each of their families. This conversation extended to the types of interior decoration in their family 

¹²³ In no particular order, these are three Qatari women (actual first names): one is from a Bedouin family, one is Hawla identifying as Qatari, and one is Hawla identifying as Kuwaiti. The Hawla-Kuwaiti woman was born and raised in Qatar, as were both of her parents, but her grandparents and extended family live in Kuwait.
homes, the incense used as home fragrance and women’s perfume, to incense used for medical purposes, to Qatari hospitals, to differing health care policies in Qatar and Kuwait, to differing marriage and citizenship laws in Qatar and Kuwait. From one photograph, with three women, many fruitful lines of discussion emerged.

All of this was not nearly as easily accomplished, or even possible, without the presence of the photographs. As Collier and Collier note, the simple act of placing a photograph on the table re-directs the focus of the interview, so that what may have felt like an interrogation instead changes to a more free-flowing conversation (1986, Ch.4). The power relations changed dramatically when a photograph was introduced, because the women around the table had a visual anchor, and were quick to offer helpful addenda based on their own family’s experience and traditions. Before the introduction of photography into my interviews, subjects would often view me and my motives suspiciously. In this very closed society, trust is built slowly and my intentions (genuine interest about Qatari traditions) were more clearly understood when I asked for photographs and was able to express an interest.

Similarly, my second formal visual interview technique (again, discovered in the field) was to use my reference articles in the interview process. For example, I had printed out an article on the organization of Qatari society, on which I had made several notes. I had several questions about what I believed to be inconsistencies in the article, so I asked Maryam and Aisha (same women as above) to come to my office to help me out. When talking with them about intra-Qatari relations, both women appeared a bit uncomfortable, and there was much hesitation in their voices when I asked sensitive
questions about Hawla/Bedouin relations and the relations between ‘Abd (former slaves) and the families who had owned them. Finally, I pulled the article off my desk and showed it to them. Their ability to see where I had gotten my information in print allowed them to more concretely answer my questions—soon, they were exclaiming “this is wrong!” and “that’s not true!” at some of the suggestions made in the article. Together, we drew up a chart of the main social groups in Qatar, on the back of the very article. This chart became a touchstone for my further investigations.

The use of visual methods in informal interviews was also very helpful. For example, one of my Qatari students (Abeer) had just gotten engaged, as I noticed by the henna on her hands and arms one day in class. Excited, I asked her after class all about the engagement party, her future husband, and her plans. She told me about her party and her friend Sara mentioned the photos taken of Abeer (“glamour shot” style photos for the bride and husband-to-be). These photos are normally kept in the family home; if an unrelated male saw these photos (of the woman uncovered) it would be very bad for the family’s honor. Because of my genuine interest, however, Abeer brought in the photographs to my office the next week. Through viewing them, asking her questions about the wedding, and experiencing her genuine emotional reaction to the photos (especially those featuring Abeer and her fiance), I learned more than I ever could have without the use of photography. To be clear, the photos did not stand in place of verbal interviewing—rather, they were a catalyst for enhanced interaction.

The third and final phase as characterized by Collier and Collier is the organization and reporting of one’s data. They write:
in the final phase the study involves synthesis, when the research must be developed into conclusions. In this phase photographic evidence must, of course, be abstracted in the same way as all other data, verbalized, translated into statistics, even computed electronically in order to become a genuine part of the fabric of scientific insight (15-16).

For Collier and Collier, if photographs are present in the final analysis, they are generally only for illustrative purposes, to shorthand something which could otherwise be written, and not because they are epistemologically significant for their own reasons—emotional impact, for example, or representation of non-verbal practices.

Even at the time of publication (1986), Collier and Collier’s positivist and scientific realist stance was not in the mainstream of anthropology. Vrasti writes that “In 1973 Clifford Geertz’s seminal essays on ‘Thick Description’ and ‘Notes on a Balinese Cockfight’ were the first to highlight that ethnography is a textual negotiation of cultural and political meaning where description and interpretation, experience and theory, are inseparable” (Vrasti 2008, 282). To take the Family Day example once again, the experience of Family Day practices (both the barring of South Asian men and the prohibition on media coverage), and the theory behind it, are intertwined. According to Iver Neumann, “practices answer to a regularity and inertia which serves to maintain power relations…actions will be met with counter-actions to resist change and hold intact the existing set of preconditions for practice” (Neumann 2002, 641). The study of practice incorporates the researcher into her own fieldwork so that “armchair analysis” becomes an epistemological impossibility.

One early ethnographic study that resulted in an intertwining of the researcher and her subject of research was Carol Cohn’s “Sex and Death in the Rational World of
Defense Intellectuals,” a feminist analysis of the language used by professionals in nuclear defense during the 1980s. As chapter two of this dissertation discusses, Cohn’s methodology of *multi-sited ethnography* is what I chose for this dissertation. According to a later reflection on her own methodology, Cohn defines a multi-sited ethnography as a “transdisciplinary approach and a composite methodology that combines cultural analysis and qualitative, ethnographic methods” (2007, 92). In my study, these methods included interviewing of people with several standpoints and several positions of power, including ambassadors, NGO leaders, migrant workers, academics, Qatari citizens, and expatriates. I also conducted surveys (with marginal success, as discussed in the first chapter), worked with photography, read and categorized over 500 local news articles, performed quantitative and qualitative observations at shopping malls and souks, and investigated sudden changes in the tone of news articles by tracking down and talking with various reporters.

Cohn’s fieldwork had her sitting in on high-level meetings at the Department of Defense and analyzing the masculinist and dehumanizing language used in order to talk about nuclear weaponry and mutual assured destruction (Cohn 1987). According to Vrasti:

> The outcome was stunning. Compared to the sterile and pedantic rhetoric dominating IR literature around that time, Cohn’s piece startled its readers with a captivating combination of experience near insight and candid autobiographical reflection. ‘Sex and Death’ was quickly devoured by undergraduate and graduate students across the continent, becoming the flagship ethnography of the discipline (2008, 285).
While Vrasti notes, “Cohn’s project remains firmly confined within the epistemological boundaries of mainstream social science” because her goal was to arrive at an empirical reality or Truth, and Cohn expressed surprise at her adoption of the same language as her fieldwork progressed (Vrasti 2008, 286).

Cohn cannot help but be surprised by her sudden loss of innocence. Having imagined ethnography to be a reliable data-collection machine, she is shocked to see the hyphen between ‘participant’ and ‘observation’ dissolve. How could she, an innocent bystander, have been lured into the linguistic universe of defense intellectuals? How could a pacifist feminist researcher become complicit with its cognitive effects? When this happens, Cohn has difficulty coming to terms with the fact that the social world is not a laboratory one can report on without becoming a part of it (Vrasti 2008, 287).

By adopting a staunchly interpretivist stance, I argue that my goal as a researcher is not to uncover a Truth about Gulf society; instead, my goal is to apply (and advance) securitization theory in order to arrive at a policy conclusion that helps to improve human rights in the region. My stance is not that everyone who does not see Qatari society as securitized is wrong; instead, I argue that the lens of securitization can help us to make connections across societies and bring about meaningful policy change in the Gulf.

This goal of bringing policy change along with theoretical insight is explicitly critical (as in, critical theory). It seems a natural fit when focusing on practice to actually see the possibilities to change practice:

The hatching of new discourses may be preconditions for new actions, and those new actions may, if they take on enough regularity to count as practice-creating, actually add up to change. The social and political analyst who wants to investigate this must and should choose other points of departure and include other kinds of material than the study of text. It is time to complement all the good work already done in the wake of the linguistic turn in IR by bringing practices back in (Neumann 2002, 651).
According to constructivist theory in international relations, “anarchy is what states make of it” (Wendt 1992). But a critical-theoretic approach (including critical security studies) problematizes this, and argues that constructivism “programmatically fails to challenge the IR theory is about the system of states” (Neumann 2002, 638). In other words, although Wendt and later constructivists focus on the constructed nature of the sovereign state system, they do not look at ways in which this system is maintained, and focus on how the academic field of international relations itself may help to preserve this system.

In contrast, critical security studies de-centers the notion of the state as central to international politics; in the Copenhagen School this is one goal behind the innovation of multiple referent objects for security other than the politico-military state (society, the economic system, and the environment being other referent objects). But whereas all too often, the Copenhagen School defaults back to state-centrism, this dissertation works outside the “Westphalian straitjacket” and focuses on society as separate from the state, even though this adds complexity to the analysis.

The next sections will discuss ways to go about bringing change, first by Western/outside actors, and then by Gulf actors at the individual, state, and regional levels.

6.4 Policy Options for the West

6.4a Desecuritization

By now, the concept of desecuritization should be intuitive—it simply means a returning of a securitized issue to the realm of “normal politics.” Huysmans (1995)
discusses three broad strategies by which desecuritization around the issue of migration may occur. First, in the objectivist strategy, actors will try to “convince people of the fact\textsuperscript{124} that the migrant is not really a security problem” (65). Along these lines, Western scholarship and the English language media could produce statistical information on, for example, crime rates in Qatar (to demonstrate that the crime rate, however recently hyped as chapter five discussed, is still very low, and that expatriate crime is generally targeted towards other migrants).

Following the objectivist strategy, the media could also continue to publish articles detailing the hardships that downtown merchants were suffering from a severe loss of sales income following the enforcement of Family Day policies on Fridays. Publishing this information can help to change peoples’ perceptions—according to Eriksson and Rhinald (2009, 253), “events and conditions are often plagued with a great deal of uncertainty, [so] that the possibility of purely imaginary threats or seriously misperceived security issues must be taken into account (Jervis 1976).” At this point, because reliable data are unavailable, it is difficult to demonstrate to what degree the “threat” of migrant labor is “seriously misperceived.”

The media should certainly not promote stereotypes, as in this Gulf Times cartoon printed on November 22, 2009:

\textsuperscript{124} Of course, the goal of this critical, interpretive analysis is not to uncover capital-T Truth (or facts), but that is not to say that, following the objectivist strategy, facts such as the crime rate cannot be used to the advantage of making policy changes.
Cartoons such as this, and stories that prominently display the nationalities of those convicted of crimes, should be stopped immediately. English-speaking expatriates in Qatar have the responsibility to speak up with regards to their newspapers, in the hopes that their sister Arabic language papers would follow suit. This suggestion (effectively of censorship) is a sensitive one especially in light of the widespread condemnation of the Danish cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammed—but if the editors of Qatari papers can spark a discussion on racism and discrimination in the Gulf by vowing not to print such cartoons, all the better.

As Claudia Aradau points out, the telling of migrants’ stories should not only come from outside sources; the migrants should be given a voice with which to tell their own stories (Aradau 2003). As the methodology section of this chapter (and the second chapter) describes, this dissertation is a multi-sited ethnography. A significant
component of ethnography is the allowing of one’s interview subjects to speak in their
own words (Vrasti 2008), as I have done whenever possible (for example, with Amina
and Roshan in chapter five). Other more direct ways that migrants may be able to speak
for themselves in the Gulf may include petitions, letters to the editor, and embassy sit-ins.

The second strategy for desecuritization of migration named by Huysmans, the
constructivist strategy, means “to understand how the process of securitization works”
(1995, 66). This would entail educating elites on the securitization of Qatari society, in
order to illuminate the main sources of threat (Western influence and South Asian
migrants). This approach is especially promising because securitization theory sheds real
light on policy intransigence with regards to labor rights. Here, all concerned parties can
play a role, starting with academics (such as myself). This strategy “builds on a
separation between understanding and handling. One first has to understand the causal
processes, and then one can start, with the help of acquired knowledge, to try to handle
the process” (Huysmans 1995, 66). This dissertation is the very first application of
securitization theory in the region; the policy consequences of an understanding of
migration as securitized could be quite significant.

I firmly believe that the greatest chance for a real improvement in the rights of the
ten million migrant laborers in the Gulf lies here, in the constructivist strategy. If we are
able to reach elites such as Sheikha Mozah and the Prime Minister Sheikh Hamad bin
Jassim Al Thani to discuss securitization, we will be able to make connections between
the problems faced in the Gulf with migrant labor in the U.S. and EU. By removing the
“blaming and shaming” tone of the discourse and instead stressing similarities in our
challenges, we may be able to find better solutions through forging common ground. After all, the will is there: a representative from the “Labor Market Regulatory Authority, Ali Ahmed Radhi, said that Bahrain wanted to ‘conform to international regulations and human rights norms’ regarding the employment of expatriate labor” (Al-Arabiya.net 2009). Affecting policy change is my highest goal in Qatar upon dissertation defense.

Third and finally, the deconstructivist strategy could work well in the Qatari media, and Western states and organizations could both encourage and help in its implementation. The goal here would be to make public more and varied migrant experiences, in order to un-fix the identity of migrants as simply migrant workers, and re-cast us/them as family members, breadwinners, religious individuals, or simply men and women. According to Roe (2004, 286), “the migrant is revealed as being someone who is just like us, just like one of the natives.” The title of a Peninsula article on the March 2009 changes to the national sponsorship law, “Balance between rights of workers and sponsors,” also works to ease tensions; such calming language should be striven for whenever possible, rather than sensationalist and attention-grabbing headlines.

6.4b Forget about democracy promotion in the Gulf

Perhaps as an artifact of the Cold War, American policymakers often judge other states primarily in terms of their adherence to democratic principles. According to former Secretary of State and current Georgetown professor Madeleine Albright, “we should remember that the alternative to support for democracy is complicity in backing governments that lack the blessing of their own people” (quoted in Etzioni 2007, 51).
Curiously, this position is maintained even when “the people” in question express no interest in democratic governance—as occurred on February 15, 2008, at a question and answer session between Albright and a group of students at Georgetown University’s satellite campus in Doha, Qatar. The student body president, a young Qatari woman named Assma Al-Adawi, stood up to ask the first question after Albright’s address. Assma (who is, ironically, elected by popular vote) asked why the United States would support democracy in a region that does not welcome it—as she stated, she had no desire for Qatar to become a democratic state. Almost without blinking, Albright replied that everyone in the world wants democracy, to be able to decide by popular vote who their leader will be. Although Assma was far from convinced, Albright’s belief was unflagging.

President Obama shares Albright’s conviction to democracy. In his June 4, 2009, speech in Cairo, Egypt, entitled “A New Beginning,” Obama addressed seven “issues of tension between the United States and the Middle East” (Obama 2009). The fourth issue on his agenda was democracy, and although Obama clearly stated that “No system of government can or should be imposed by one nation by any other,” he affirmed a few paragraphs later:

I do have an unyielding belief that all people yearn for certain things: the ability to speak your mind and have a say in how you are governed; confidence in the rule of law and the equal administration of justice; government that is transparent and doesn't steal from the people; the freedom to live as you choose. These are not just American ideas; they are human rights. And that is why we will support them everywhere (Obama 2009).

Although President Obama’s commitment to democracy promotion is perhaps less

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125 A subsequent personal conversation confirmed this.
pronounced than the two presidents immediately preceding him, the commitment remains nonetheless.

There is a long and ongoing tension in activist and policymaking circles between promoters of democracy—including the transitologists—and promoters of human rights, although the field of international relations has been relatively silent. Thomas Carothers’ 1994 essay “Democracy and Human Rights: Policy Allies or Rivals?” is one of the clearest exceptions. Carothers points out that while some assume that promoting democracy and promoting human rights are “two sides of the same coin,” “some members of the U.S. human rights community do not see any natural or inevitable complementarity between U.S. efforts to promote democracy and to promote human rights” (Carothers 2004, 9).

The differences between the two groups are relatively straightforward. First and foremost, human rights advocates are reluctant to get tied into the promotion of democratic ideology; they are more concerned with protecting individual rights in a variety of political systems. They are generally not hopeful that democracy will be a silver bullet, and believe that a focus on strengthening democratic institutions is misguided: “elections sometimes constitute only superficial political maneuvering that leaves underlying anti-democratic forces intact” (Carothers 2004, 15).

One expert who comes from the perspective that human rights should be promoted over democracy is British scholar Tony Evans. Evans tends to be critical of

126 For a great summary on Eastern and Western views of human rights and democracy, see Bell 1996.
international efforts to promote democracy, favoring a focus on human rights instead. He argues that democratic promotion policies mask an imperialist economic agenda, and obscure the issue of improving human rights for people outside of the global economy, such as politically marginalized and poor people in less developed states (2001, 623).

This rift between human rights and democracy promotion goes back to the early 1980s, which Carothers describes as “the beginning of the current wave of democracy promotion activity” (2004, 10). Prior to this, President Carter had made explicit commitments to protect and promote human rights as a plank of his foreign policy platform. Upon Reagan’s victory, promoting democracy meshed well with “President Reagan’s fervent anticommunism and his related desire to reverse the Carter administration’s human rights policies” (Carothers 2004, 10). His message was quite successful, especially given the perceived triumph of democracy that attended the fall of the Berlin Wall. Democratic promotion has become an integral part of “the development consensus” since Reagan’s pro-democracy efforts in the 1980s, and even more so in the 1990s, with the end of the Cold War (Carothers 2004, 259).

After the Cold War, according to Evans, it was no longer acceptable for Western states to justify trading with illiberal regimes on the grounds of maintaining order. Therefore, a distinction was highlighted between totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, defining authoritarian regimes as “representing a transitory stage in the move to full democracy” (2001, 629). Citing Carothers, Evans reiterates that democracy promotion discourse further supplanted discussions on human rights in the early 1990s. “Through
this device, it remains legitimate to continue with economic relationships, to call for extended aid programs and to develop new trade and business relations, unhindered by moral concerns, provided a country shows progress in creating the institutions of democracy” (Evans 2001, 629). Thus, the U.S. is able to engage in military and economic partnerships with repressive regimes, provided they are painted as “in transition to democracy.”

Carothers believes that the divide between democracy promotion and human rights activism has been artificially propped up, and that a “middle ground” should be sought (Carothers 2004, 18). But others disagree. Writes Tony Evans, “we must treat the claim that human rights and democracy share a symbiotic relationship with great caution” (2001, 628). If we look at the historical evidence, Evans further argues, democratic regimes actually can be highly exclusionary, offering rights only to a select few. Consider the classic example of Athenian Greece, where only adult males born in Athens were afforded freedoms, and women and slaves were exempted (Evans 2001, 628).

Given Gulf demographics and the high numbers of excluded individuals (the 80+% expatriate population), the Athenian example translates well. In the case of the Gulf, I respectfully but strongly disagree with Carothers. The two positions (democracy and human rights) may not be natural or given opposites, but there is no need to strive to incorporate both goals. Rather, the advancement of human rights is a goal to be striven for in the Gulf, taking a prudent “human rights realist” strategy, because it will produce far more favorable results both for the international community (preserving stability) and for the residents of the states.
The goals of human rights activists and realist-oriented security specialists are
(perhaps oddly) synergetic in the Gulf. Amitai Etzioni, for one, sees no inconsistency in
promoting a “muscular, moral foreign policy” (as his 2007 book title suggests). This
policy “calls for securing the lives …of the citizens of other nations, whether they are
rich or poor, south or north, allies or not” (2007, xii). Instead of promoting democracy,
these “human rights realists” focus on improving individual lives, while preserving
overall stability. IR realists and policy-makers alike pose the question “why jeopardize
success by antagonizing [Gulf] leadership or worse, prompting elections that may elect
parliaments that will object to an American presence?” (Crystal 2005, 4). Unfortunately,
Crystal, Norton, Schmitter, and other adherents to the democratic transitions paradigm
cannot provide an adequate answer. According to many transitologists, the United States
should promote democracy, not human rights, believing that individual reforms miss the
big picture and ultimate goal of democracy. Crystal discourages devoting too much
attention to promoting women’s rights, for example, and learning to “live with
imperfection” for the sake of democracy (2005, 10).

According to the literature on stable authoritarian regimes, this stability as
monarch—and not democratization—is precisely the goal of liberalizing policies. In a
Ministry of Foreign Affairs-sponsored book, David Chaddock writes, “[Qatar’s emir]
Sheikh Hamad has made it clear that he wants to spread the democratic experience”
(2006, 77, emphasis added). The discourse is instructive here: it is possible that the emir
wants to spread the democratic experience, but not democracy itself! Anyone who has
visited Doha’s newest shopping mall (Villaggio), and seen its EPCOT-esque European
streets, complete with chlorinated canals, painted day-and-night skies, and Nepalese gondoliers piloting motorized gondolas, will understand this reference: the democratic experience is to democracy as Villaggio is to Venice. One is a stylized, sanitized, culturally detached, convenient, and safe version of the other. Kamrava (2009) supports this thesis, arguing that all moves toward democratization have halted now that the emir has unquestioned legitimacy as ruler of Qatar.

6.4c Strategic use of “slavery” discourse

The idea of calling the oppressive conditions of migration to the Gulf “slavery” seems to be spreading, in the academic literature, by Western media, and even in some inner Gulf circles. Kevin Bales (2004) defines contract slavery or debt bondage as one type of “new slavery.” Bales defines slavery in terms of control: “it is not about owning people in the traditional sense of old slavery, but about controlling them completely” (2004, 4). In this sense, the kafala system in the Gulf states can be understood to be a form of new slavery, as Gardner (2010, 28) points out. Newspaper articles are also increasingly using this rhetoric: “The ‘virtual slaves’ of the Gulf states” was a 2009 article in the Guardian (UK) (Malik 2009). According to Iver Neumann, “Changes in global political discourse…[open] up the possibility for initiating new practices” (2002, 648). Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem Al Thani stated on the record that “It is difficult to retain the exit permit system in its existing form…The system is being criticized. It is being likened to slavery” (no author 2007).
Ministers of labor in Bahrain and other Gulf states agree that the sponsorship system needs overhauling, and Bahrain’s Minister of Labour Majeed al-Alawi also “likened the current system to slavery” (Harmassi 2009), saying “The end of the sponsorship system is the most important aspect of this law because in my opinion that phenomena does not differ much from the system of slavery and it is not something suitable for a modernized country like Bahrain” (Al-Arabiya.net 2009).

Al-Alawi’s view of the issue seems to be complex however; on an Arabic language program (Ida’at), he also stated that the presence of foreign labor in the Gulf threatened the “cultural identity and the political and social future of the region” (Al-Arabiya.net 2009). According to the summary article published in Al-Arabiya (in Arabic but notably not in the English version), “[al-Alawi] cautioned…that the presence of a foreign workforce in the Gulf is the greatest security, social and cultural concern, heralding a flaw in the Gulf demographic structure in the long run” (Al-Arabiya.net 2009). STRATFOR reports that “[al-Alawi] claimed in January 2008 that the expatriate worker population posed a bigger danger to the region than fallout from an atomic bomb or an attack by Israel” (STRATFOR Global Intelligence 2009).

A new school of realist-constructivist thought, developed by Ronald Krebs and Patrick Jackson, centers on the idea of “rhetorical coercion” (Krebs and Jackson 2007; see also Krebs 2006 and Mertus 2004). Krebs and Jackson argue that it is irrelevant whether domestic elites are actually persuaded by human rights dialogue; what is relevant is whether the discourse effectively boxes actors into a corner, coercing them to acknowledge abuses and make changes whether they want to or not. In the case of
migrant labor, the purposive application of the term “slavery” may have the sort of effect identified by Krebs and Jackson.

6.4d Encourage competition

Nisha Varia of Human Rights Watch lauded Bahrain’s decision to nationalize the sponsorship system, stating that “Bahrain deserves enormous credit for being the first to make concrete reforms. Other countries should follow suit” (2009, emphasis added). The Human Rights Watch report names Saudi Arabia and Kuwait as two states who are considering changes, possibly stimulating healthy regional (GCC) competition. In the case of the banning of child camel jockeys, regional competition led to major policy changes in the early 2000s, as the following example will demonstrate.

Camel racing is a traditional sport dear to many Qataris. As with horse racing, the smaller and lighter the jockey, the faster the camels can run. In the 1970s, the practice of using children as camel jockeys began throughout the region. These children are usually between four and seven years old. As one reporter put it, “The younger and lighter the child, the louder the screams of terror and greater the speed of the camel” (Alam 2001, 1). Child camel jockeys faced the risk of grave injuries both on and off the racetrack.127 Although most of the children in Qatar were trafficked from Sudan, children in the UAE came largely from Pakistan and Bangladesh. As a result of coordinated international pressure, the Emir (along with the heads of the UAE and Oman) banned the practice of

127 Interestingly, sports medicine doctors began documenting and publishing about these injuries during the time period immediately preceding the ban. Cf. Caine and Caine 2005; Nawaz, Matta, Hamchou, Jacobsz, and Al Salem 2005.
child camel jockeys in 2005, and hundreds of boys were returned to their families. This international pressure came from one Anglo-Pakistani NGO, the Ansar Burney Trust Fund, from media pressure following a 2004 HBO Real Sports feature story, and from the U.S. Trafficking in Persons report.

Although the language of “slavery” was used, it was used sparingly, and this does not appear to be a case of rhetorical coercion. Instead, regional dynamics were at play, as once the United Arab Emirates passed a ban, Qatar and Oman followed almost immediately. The Gulf states are as close as siblings—and they are also as competitive as siblings. The international community has much to gain in encouraging each state to “be the first” in taking an initiative.

One example of Western encouragement of competition on the labor issue can be found in our very own Hoya backyard. When Georgetown University agreed on its building with Qatar Foundation, then-Dean James Reardon-Anderson insisted on “quarterly safety audits by a contracted consulting firm, as well as an on-site supervisor to ensure compliance with safety regulations” (Reger 2008). Reardon-Anderson hopes that this independent monitoring system “might serve as a future model for safe construction in Education City, Qatar, and the wider Middle East” (Reger 2008).

6.5 Policy options for Qatar and the Gulf States

This section will start with policy options for individual Gulf states (including Qatar), and then move towards suggestions for coordinated GCC action.
As this dissertation has argued, Qatar is a laissez faire autocracy, where responsibility for enforcement of many rules is devolved by the state to the merchant class. When Ali al-Marri, Secretary General of the NHRC, dismissed the 2009 U.S. Trafficking in Persons report, he added that “we only consider the reports issued by international organizations and the UN” (Elshamy 2009). However, when the UAE went up for periodic review by the UN’s Human Rights Council, the UN reported that the sponsorship system, large visa fees and predatory lending practices all led to a situation “equivalent to debt bondage” (DPA-Geneva 2009). Although the situation is quite similar in Qatar, the NHRC and media made absolutely no comparisons. Qatar is scheduled for its own periodic review in February 2010, which has not yet been mentioned in the Qatari press.

Although the ruling elite is quick to duck responsibility on issues such as Family Day (The Peninsula 2008), it is also clear that there is a recognition at the highest levels of government of the unsustainability of current labor laws. “In the past few years…a plethora of signs suggest the battle lines, once sketched as vociferous western human rights activists versus a recalcitrant or indifferent local population, no longer characterize the situation in the Gulf States” (Gardner 2009, 12). Stated Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem Al Thani at a meeting of government and private sector officials in 2007, “It is difficult to retain the exit permit system in its existing form…The system is being criticized. It is being likened to slavery” (no author 2007). However, in the same meeting, the Minister of Interior Affairs Sheikh Nasser bin Abdulla
Al Thani stated that his ministry had no intention of scrapping either the sponsorship or exit permit system—and, at the time of my writing almost three years later, this continues to be the case.

Some religious scholars are also questioning abuses of migrant labor in Qatar. In a *Gulf Times* article, Dr. Abdul Hamid Al-Ansari, former dean of Qatar University’s Shariah College, stated his beliefs: “denying laborers access to a specific area is not a civilized act. We have brought them here and they deserve to be treated well. It is our responsibility to provide means and places of entertainment to them” (Viewpoint 2008). The deputy chairman of the Central Municipal Council (CMC), Jassem al-Malki, concurred: “It is unfair to bring 1.35 [million] expatriates who are contributing to the progress of Qatar and then deny them access to places of entertainment. It is our mistake that we are not well prepared to deal with a situation like this” (Viewpoint 2008).

As we have seen in chapter five, responsibility for abuses to the *kafala* system are most often passed on to the sending states: according to the State of Qatar, it is India’s responsibility to protect Indian workers abroad, the Philippines’ responsibility to protect Filipinos, and so on. Even the Secretary General of the NHRC has stated that all cases of human trafficking in Qatar should be blamed on “countries of origin of the workforce coming to Qatar” (Elshamy 2009). But as Longva (1997, 70) points out, the reality is that poorer sending states depend heavily on remittances, and when they ban their nationals from working in certain states and/or sectors that are prone to abuse, they do so only “half-heartedly.”
This is understandable; according to (Gardner 2009, 16), over $26 billion in remittances is sent from the Gulf each year—more than the total amount sent from the United States. Put another way, Gardner notes, “remittances contribute 22% to Kerala’s state income” (Gardner 2009, 16); according to Shah (2006, 13, citing Skeldon 2005), “Kerala has shown poverty reduction of 12% associated with migration and remittance income.” United States Ambassador Mark Lagon, Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, wrote referring to Saudi Arabia and other states with the sponsorship system that they “must step up to the responsibility of protecting the helpless on their soil” (Lagon 2008).

One state that has been proactive on protecting the rights of its citizens in the Gulf is the Philippines. The Philippine government has recently instituted a minimum wage for its nationals worldwide, which has been a positive development for some. However, at least in part in response to the strengthening of protections for Filipinos, Qatar signed a bilateral agreement with Vietnam in January 2008, to allow 100,000 Vietnamese worker visas in the next three years—at lower wages and with fewer protections. Because of the all-too-common “race to the bottom” dynamics of labor wages in the highly internationalized Gulf markets, it is simply not feasible to put the onus of responsibility on sending states, if one is serious about protecting laborer rights even to minimal standards.

6.5b Promote an open Qatari identity

Dr. Marzook Basher Binmarzook, the Editor in Chief of the Gulf Times and member of the Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Heritage, spoke at a Doha press conference
on February 14, 2009, to introduce a seminar entitled “Language and Identity” which ran from February 15-17, 2009. Stated Binmarzook, “Language is the key issue for societies’ identities.” The *Gulf Times* article reporting on the event, entitled “Arabic ‘under threat in Gulf states,’’ continues, “GCC countries were facing a great danger in this regard, due to the non-Arabic speaking majority” (Hussein 2009). But, Hussein remarks, “The expert [Binmarzook] noted that although Arabs should spar a war to protect their original language, this did not mean an appeal for a closed identity. ‘The Arab identity is always open to other cultures,’ he said while calling for an interactive Arab identity that provided the world a cultural model (Hussein 2009).” In light of securitization theory, this last statement is especially intriguing, because (recalling the first chapter of this dissertation) “it is when identities are securitized that their negotiability and flexibility are challenged, denied, or suppressed” (Williams 2003, 519). If Binmarzook is correct, there appears to be potential for desecuritization by reorienting Qatari identity around the idea that “the Arab identity is always open to other cultures.”

**6.5c Emphasize societal inclusion**

Many local (Qatari) experts and officials agree that Family Day should be banned as a practice. The only woman elected representative to Doha’s Central Municipal Council, Sheikha Al Jefairi, stated to *The Peninsula* that “If it is like this, there should be ‘Bachelors Only’ days too…I will also urge for more public places in order to accommodate the increasing numbers of workers and families here.” Dr. Moza Al Malki, a Qatari psychologist and writer, responded to *The Peninsula*’s questions: “A law in a state is applicable to all. It should not be imposed based on nationality. If a law
segregates nationality, color, sex or creed, then it is racism. Allowing people of certain nationalities to enter and others to be barred is not fair. Either they let all people enter or they should not let any bachelor enter.” (N.V. 2008)

Opening a few parks to bachelors on Friday mornings may ease much of the tension of Family Day. I took these photographs within 30 minutes of each other in June 2009, to demonstrate the difference in crowding patterns between the small souk area where migrants are allowed to go on Fridays) and the nearby family-only park:

Surely a study of space utilization in Doha could be contracted, so that some of this tension (and the resulting perception of “threat” due to the over-crowded streets) could be eased.
6.5d Threat management

“The Copenhagen School has...expressed a preference for descuritization” (Roe 2008, 282). However, it is difficult to deny that the skewed demographics in the Gulf do not add up to real material cause for societal securitization. Instead, using a management strategy as Roe (2004, 293) suggests, “there is the clear acceptance that both sides have genuine security concerns.” This strategy, while normatively second best (after desecuritization) would allow for the security concerns of Qatari nationals to be legitimized, which might in turn create space (and generosity) for attention to be paid to the legitimate concerns of migrants in the Gulf.

Paul Roe (2004, 280) argues that with regards to minority rights, desecuritization may be impossible; the goal should instead be the “management of securitized issues.” He cautions, however, that “the management of securitized issues may well bring with it some nation of ‘normalizing’ the situation” (Roe 2004, 285). In the Gulf, societal securitization is already deeply institutionalized, so I argue that this should not be a preoccupation. Under the demographic circumstances faced throughout the Gulf, where citizens are in the minority in every state except for Saudi Arabia, it is hard to imagine a completely desecuritized migrant labor population. The key instead may be in managing the threat, or reimagining the large population as less-threatening.

Human Rights Watch has made a summary list of eleven recommendations to improve the lives of migrant workers in the UAE; the first six items on this list is relevant throughout the Gulf (Human Rights Watch 2006):

1. Establish an independent commission to investigate and publicly report on the situation of migrant workers in the country.
2. Prohibit companies from doing business with recruitment agencies, in the UAE and abroad, that charge workers fees for travel, visas, employment contracts, or anything else. Prosecute and implement significant penalties for employers and recruiting agencies that violate the law.

3. Aggressively investigate and prosecute employers who violate other provisions of the UAE labor law. Impose meaningful and consequential penalties on companies that violate workers' rights, to put an end to the present atmosphere of impunity.

4. Provide quantitative and qualitative data on labor disputes, deaths and injuries at construction sites, and government actions to address these issues.

5. Increase substantially the number of inspectors responsible for overseeing the private sector's treatment of migrant construction workers. Ensure that they carry out their duties to inspect construction sites to verify that they are safe and meet the requirements of law.

6. Take immediate action to inform and educate migrant construction workers arriving for employment in the UAE of their rights under UAE law.

All of these proposals could fall under the category of threat management. More ambitious but also likely more effective would be policy coordination throughout the GCC, a meta-proposal on which the remainder of these proposals rest.

6.5e Policy coordination

Mohammed Dito, a Bahraini labor expert, has argued that the GCC states should adopt a common migration policy (IANS 2008). Dito posits that “decision makers in the GCC states are divided, with one camp viewing the huge number of expatriate workers as a threat to the countries’ national cultures, traditions and values, and the other believing their employment is necessary and in keeping with globalization” (IANS 2008).

One aspect of security theory developed by Copenhagen School theorists (namely, Barry Buzan) is the concept of a regional security complex. Buzan (1991) details how geographically proximate states affect one another’s security, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Buzan and Wæver (2003) list regions including Europe and the Middle East. However, as this dissertation has established, “the Middle East” is
rather a large region, and security issues are as likely to involve states outside the region (such as the United States) as they are to be two states at opposite ends of the region.

Instead, I propose that the Gulf (the six GCC states, plus Iran) can be more accurately understood as a regional security complex. In a complex of this order, internal and external security issues often bleed into one another (Eriksson and Rhinard 2009, 250); for example, worker riots in Dubai and Bahrain may cause Kuwaiti and Qatari officials to ramp up their police forces. The creation of a coordinated recruitment, visa, and payment system, run and monitored by the GCC, would benefit workers, sponsors, and states. Workers would have increased rights as their passports would not need to be confiscated (since they are under regional and not individual control), they would have a dramatically decreased risk of overpaying during the recruitment process, and their monthly salary would be paid automatically by the regional organization under this system. Sponsors would not have to face the risk of absconding workers, and if a worker did go missing, the replacement costs would be greatly decreased. States would enjoy an increase in their international reputations, and a decrease in regional tensions as riots and unrest would drop.

6.5f Demystifying deportation

Recall from chapter five that it is not deportation, but deportability, that has the greatest influence on migrant life in the Gulf (A. M. Gardner 2010, 309). Writes Longva (1997, 100):

As a mechanism of control, the importance of deportation resided less in its actual implementation...than in its pervasive presence as a threat and in the unclear
contours of its modalities...as a long-time resident in Kuwait commented: ‘deportation is to the expatriates what the sword was to Damocles.’

The threat of deportation is a human security issue. Grayson (2003, 340) argues that governments should work to redefine “threats” as “vulnerabilities,” the difference being that vulnerabilities “remain open and politically contestable.” Although the political sector in Qatar is quite closed, there is some (limited) space for discourse in the social sector, including newspapers, radio and television shows, and word-of-mouth (as Qataris remain a relatively small population). Taking this suggestion seriously would mean that the media, scholars, bureaucratic chiefs, and other experts should be careful not to use the language of threat when discussing migrant labor.

According to STRATFOR:

Occasionally, foreign governments attempt to step in and demand better wages and working conditions for their expatriates, but it is usually much easier for the GCC states to deport foreign workers en masse whenever a labor issue arises. Since there will always be more people looking for jobs who are willing to tolerate existing labor conditions in the Gulf, the governments have incentives to shuffle foreign worker populations as frequently as possible—preventing migrant laborers and their families from assimilating and settling in GCC countries (STRATFOR Global Intelligence 2009).

This (“shuffling foreign worker populations”) is not necessarily a bad thing. The concept of circular migration could be the single most important policy change for Gulf states to embrace; if managed well, circular migration can be of the greatest benefit to sending states, while being highly salient with securitized Gulf societies.

6.5g Circular migration

In a 2008 visit to Doha, Dr. Alejandro Portes (a leading scholar on migration issues) stated that the demographic situation in the Gulf will become untenable in the
future (Qazi 2008a and 2008b). As Portes remarked, “there is no precedent in history of a labor-short growing economy that has become developed by importing workers and then refusing to integrate them” (Portes 2008). But as this essay demonstrates, migration is a security (and not a political) issue in the Gulf, and as such the improvement of human rights for migrants will require a process of desecuritization first. Ideally, the securitized Qatari identity and migration scheme could loosen, as the citizen-minority recognizes that one productive way forward would be to expand opportunities for citizenship—“to make more of them like us.” Failing this, there are still many options.

If change to the kafala (sponsorship) system is to occur, migrant workers should be re-constructed by the media and the state as “family men,” victims of poverty forced by circumstance to leave their wives and children behind. This reality is missing from academic studies of migration in addition to local interpretations in the Gulf: after all, “while the [migration] literature often frames migrants, in the tradition of homo economicus, as rational individual agents, migration research in the Gulf states clearly suggests that most Gulf migrants should be considered emissaries of extended families” (Gardner 2009, 15). Organized calls for visas for wives and children, and family housing, could appeal to this sentiment. This would likely have to be paired with assurances that these families will not seek citizenship. In fact, Portes lauds the pattern he calls “circular migration,” whereby workers can only legally stay in the region for a set number of years, after which time they must return to their local communities, bringing with them the resources and education they have gained abroad.
In this way, more sustainable and healthy communities in the sending countries can be encouraged. Indeed, such a policy change may be on the horizon. In August 2008, the *Gulf Times* reported that the GCC summit in Muscat would take up the issue of imposing a six-year residency cap on expatriate workers in the Gulf, after the Geneva-based GCC labour ministers’ council had adopted this general approach. According to the article, “the proposed cap on the stay of expatriate workers comes amid fears of them claiming rights of suffrage” (Gulf Times 2008), confirming that if citizens were protected from perceived threats to Qatari society, by following a policy of circular migration, the rights of non-citizens may be protected, too.

Individual states including Bahrain and Kuwait are considering imposing these rules separately, in order to “prevent a perpetually discontented underclass—residents who cannot become naturalized citizens but are unwilling to leave—from forming” (STRATFOR Global Intelligence 2009). Although it may not be a popular solution for many individual families, there is rising tension as the “perpetually discontented underclass” of educated yet deportable non-citizens grows in number. Recall in chapter five, my discussion of the Texas A&M engineering student who was unable to secure an internship, yet did not feel “at home” back in her family’s home country—a policy of circular migration may have benefited her, and may benefit future generations.

As Neha Vora observed, although many migrant families (including my student’s) hail from states where extended family living is the norm, family visas in the Gulf, when they are allowed, contribute to the nucleation of families (Vora 2008, 381). Perhaps a policy of circular migration would help to preserve homeland traditions, making the
transition less awkward? My ethnographic experience mirrors Gardner’s in Bahrain; he writes, “the children of foreign workers spoke at length about their struggles with their placelessness in the contemporary world” (Gardner 2009, 18). The student I interviewed intonated that Europe or the U.S. were really the only logical places left for her in the world; Gardner likewise states that “the Gulf states have emerged as a stepping stone to further diasporization, with Canada, England, New Zealand, Australia, and the United States as typical destinations” (ibid.).

A regional model of circular migration could work well in the Gulf—but without an understanding of migration as securitized, calls for improved human rights will continue to miss the mark. The most important thing for circular migration to work is coordination across the GCC and in bilateral agreements with sending states—otherwise, migrants and migrant families could fail to return to their home states and work in promoting the domestic infrastructure, as the policy is designed to do.

6.6 Conclusion

Well over ten years ago, Anh Nga Longva recorded the fears of an aging Kuwaiti woman, who was afraid that her country was becoming unrecognizable:

You have been to Abu Dhabi and Dubai, haven’t you? How many local people did you meet in the streets there? One? Two? They are so few compared to the expatriates that they have surrendered the streets to them. Sometimes I think we [Kuwaitis] should do that too, withdraw to a ghetto where we would be only amongst citizens. …[But] we want to retain our streets, to keep them Kuwaiti. We want to hear Kuwaiti spoken out there, see Kuwaiti people and Kuwaiti manners around us. This is our home. We don’t want to lose it (Longva 1997, 125).
It almost seems as though the Kuwaiti woman feels as though she is part of a battle in Kuwait; that “withdrawing” would allow the enemy to gain a foothold on the Kuwaiti streets. This is an understandable view when we acknowledge the woman’s experiences and her point of comparison, the UAE, where citizens are now outnumbered by an even greater percentage.

Whereas security and human rights experts have never spoken the same language in the Gulf, this dissertation brings the two groups together as a matter of course. In order to understand either security or labor rights abuses in the Gulf, it is necessary to understand that their roots are one and the same: societal securitization. After all, “The extensive social segregation in the Gulf is often portrayed as strategically necessary for the preservation of a local social and cultural identity amidst a sea of foreign influence” (Gardner 2009, 7). This conclusion to my dissertation will remark on the importance of the Gulf to world politics, the transferability of the theoretical advances to the Copenhagen School from Qatar to other parts of the world, and future directions for my own research.

6.6a The Qatari / broader Gulf case

Within the Middle East, the area known as “the Gulf” is coming under increased attention by security and economic experts: “the regional balance in the Arab region has been moving relentlessly away from the historically better established states towards the oil-rich ‘parvenus’” (Luciani in Fawcett 2005, 98). The United States is not merely a supporter of any one particular Gulf regime, market, or state: rather, American political,
military, and economic influence has made it a regional hegemon in its own right (Sick in Lesch 2007, 327). After the 1991 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, several small Gulf states…came to rely on the U.S. for protection (Kechichian 2008, 203). United States Central Command (CENTCOM) for the Middle East is located in Qatar; the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are both orchestrated from there. The U.S. also maintains large naval bases in Bahrain and Qatar. This is in both Gulf and U.S. interests, because regional security in the Gulf is a global public good (Kraig 2006, 84).

By better understanding internal Gulf politics, Western policymakers may be more able to have influence on improving human rights while protecting regional stability. Otherwise, as one Ambassador told me, the U.S. Departments of State and Defense act as though “the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing.” In other words, while the State Department condemns Gulf human rights records in its Trafficking in Persons report, the Department of Defense continues to provide military support for Qatar by maintaining large American bases there.

Anthropologist Andrew Gardner (2009, 12) writes that the kafala (sponsorship system) “has been a lightning rod for international critique…[in addition to the State Department reports] these sentiments are echoed by the International Labor Organization. [INGOs] such as Human Rights Watch continue to issue scathing reports…” but the GCC states are generally able to ignore or downplay all of these, because they realize that their political-military security is assured. This situation contributes to the oft-repeated claims of hypocrisy on the part of the United States. Gardner further posits that

128 Interview with an Ambassador to Qatar from an economically powerful Asian state, who wished to be kept anonymous.
In general, the GCC states historically responded to this sort of criticism by challenging the methodological underpinnings of these reports, or portraying them as part of an ongoing Orientalist rhetoric, by directing attention and blame to the labor brokers in the sending countries, or by noting the extraordinary logistical and bureaucratic challenges posed by the rapid pace of development characteristic of the region (Gardner 2009, 12).

For example, the U.S. Trafficking in Persons report was rejected by none other than the secretary general of Qatar’s National Human Rights Committee, Ali al-Marri, who called the report “political” and “full of wrong information” (Elshamy 2009).

Not only the United States, but also the European Union and international organizations, are encouraging economic and political reform in the Gulf, utilizing policies that, at times, compete with one another (Luciani in Fawcett 2005, 102). And all of these efforts are not having a meaningful impact: in fact, the title of Freedom House’s annual Freedom in the World Report executive summary for 2008 is “Freedom in Retreat?” According to the summary, “many more countries suffered declines than registered improvements,” and “countries with recent records of improved democratic institutions were unable to sustain progress and gave clear signals of backsliding” (Puddington, 2008, 1). No progress was registered in the Gulf states, and three Middle Eastern states (Libya, Saudi Arabia, and Syria) were named in the “the worst of the worst” section (Puddington 2008, 5). It seems that a new approach is needed.

According to Dr. Ibrahim Ibrahim, the secretary general of the General Secretariat for Development Planning in Qatar, “We need the loyalty of the expatriate workforce and in return Qatar will maintain and preserve their contractual, social and cultural rights” (Elshamy 2008). Ibrahim remarked further that loyalty to Qatar could be ensured only by giving rights to expatriate workers. Summarized Elshamy, “Qatar will seek to strike a
delicate balance between achieving development goals and maintaining its national identity without hurting the rights of expatriates” (Elshamy 2008). After all, as Longva (1997) noted, the national identities of the Gulf states were forged in opposition to migrant labor, which was present in large numbers at the time of the founding of the Gulf states. “Paradoxically, the same massive expatriate presence that ‘contained seeds of cultural destruction’ has contributed most to the preservation of local traditions” (Kapiszewski 2001, 167).

6.6b Transferability: The Copenhagen School’s travels to Doha…and from there, where?

First and most obviously, expanding this project into a systematic comparison of Qatar and another Gulf state (or two) would likely yield fruitful results for regional experts. At the level of IR theory, however, the Gulf states are arguably too similar to be contrasted against one another, with the possible exception of Bahrain. Because Bahrain has a large lower-middle class of citizens, high levels of unemployment, and low oil reserves, the material incentives behind a strict citizenship system are lower. Bahraini citizens compete with migrants for low-skilled positions such as taxi drivers and car maintenance men. Therefore, while tensions are understandable, they should not occur for reasons of rentierism, or because Bahraini citizens garner many distinct benefits directly from their citizenship. Along these lines, a fruitful comparison may be made, in order to determine to what extent citizenship is strictly regulated because of material benefits, and to what extent the ethnic conception of citizenship so prevalent in the Gulf has a purely ideational basis, separate from those material spoils.
While the Gulf’s demographics are certainly unique, there are states outside the region that would make good comparative studies. In particular, Singapore and Brunei would make excellent comparisons, because like the Gulf emirates, both states are small, non-democratic, wealthy, and house large migrant populations. Taking the comparison outside the Gulf region would allow me to re-visit the overtly cultural aspect of my argument from chapters two and three, which is that tribalism is responsible for much of the closed nature of Gulf societies.

6.6c Future research agenda

Within Qatar, there is one group that this dissertation has ignored almost completely, but who deserve attention in future research projects. Even if practice is incorporated into our understanding of securitization, there is still one large group who remains almost invisible and totally silent: domestic workers. In chapter four of this dissertation, I wrote that I would discuss the situation of housemaids in Qatar in this final chapter. According to Gardner (2010), housemaids “are literally locked inside for most or all of their stay in the Gulf.” Jeff Reger cites the *New York Times* when he writes that “domestic workers are trained to expect routine beatings from their employers” (Reger 2008). As Shah reports, “cases of non-payment of wages, over-work, lack of holidays, beating, and in some cases rape have been repeatedly reported in the press” (2006, 14). While this is true (a search on any newspaper site will reveal several stories), it is likely

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129 Lene Hansen (2000) focuses on those marginalized populations (often with gendered dimensions) who cannot “speak” security. Along the same lines as my research (though still in the center of Europe), Hansen’s current research project (2009) thinks through the incorporation of practice into the Copenhagen School when discussing the Danish cartoon crisis and the Mohammed cartoons.
that the vast majority of abuse cases go unreported. After all, domestic help is completely unregulated by existing labor laws, and those who face the worst abuse are not likely to escape their situations easily.

At a theoretical level, it is my opinion that although all four of my theoretical advances yield useful insights, two are worthy of extended further exploration in separate projects. Firstly, this dissertation is the among first to explicitly combine “the practice turn” literature in IR with a move towards broadening securitization theory to incorporate action and images—a move already supported by several Copenhagen School works including Williams (2003) and Hansen (2000; 2008). Secondly, although this dissertation has established that securitization is often institutionalized, especially in the non-democratic context, the concept of institutionalized securitization deserves further attention. Now that I have provided an interpretation of institutionalized securitization outside of the Western environment of most other Copenhagen School projects, it would be theoretically useful to bring these insights into a comparison between the institutionalization of migration in the Gulf and in Europe, or the Gulf and the United States.

Last but not least, “visual political science” as a new method is one that will have widespread appeal and utility in each of the subfields of political science—not just international relations. As I proceed in policy activism in the Gulf, until the end of my residence there, I will also be developing the concept of a visual political science method. Even in large-N quantitative studies, there is a potential for visual political science to play a role as a supporting or complementary method.
To take just two examples of visual methods I have not utilized in this dissertation, but would be useful to others: aerial photographs of cities in the U.S. could be used to map out population patterns, which could then be combined with demographic and survey information in a study of American urban development. Comparativists could use a method suggested by Collier and Collier (1986, 58) called the home inventory: photographing and documenting all the items within a family home can yield valuable insights which can later be used in interviews, or on their own. The possibilities are endless—and much like the topic of this dissertation, there are countless avenues still to be explored.
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