UCL Institute of Education

The Politics of Teacher Policies Reforms in the Arab Gulf States:

A Comparative Study

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Declaration

I, Ibrahim Alhouti, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis. The total word count for this thesis is 75,830 words.

Ibrahim Alhouti
Reading

Abstract

In the past two decades, the Arab Gulf States have introduced several educational reforms, seeking to improve the quality of their education systems in a drive to diversify their economies. Despite heavy investment by the Kuwaiti government in education reform, its implementation of teacher policies reform has had limited success. To explore and understand why Kuwait has not implemented any reforms related to teacher policies in the past ten years, this study compares the process of teacher policies reform in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain and investigates the variations among the three countries. The research is approached through the lenses of different policymaking theories, specifically the Institutional theory and the Multiple Streams theory, as its main focus is to study education reform in the three countries from a political perspective. It employs a qualitative comparative study, analysing key policy documents and consultancy reports, as well as interviewing policymakers and faculty members in Kuwait's education colleges, to gather relevant data. The three countries shared similar aims and agendas for reforming their education systems, including teacher policies, and all three relied on international consultants in developing the reforms, but the significant difference concerned the degree of emphasis on reforming teacher policies; in Kuwait, this received much less focus than in Qatar and Bahrain. Guided by the Most Similar System Design, three explanatory factors were identified: the ruling establishment's degree of motivation for reform, the stability of the administration responsible for the reform, and the extent of stakeholder involvement in the process. Bahrain and Qatar had highly motivated ruling establishments, stable administrations, and extensive stakeholder involvement, thus facilitating reform, whilst these factors were absent/weak in Kuwait. Therefore, this research argues that these three factors are closely related to the outcome of interest and explain why Kuwait was less successful with teacher policies reforms.

Impact Statement

This thesis explores the politics of educational reforms, particularly teacher policies reform, in a region that is under-researched and not well understood in the literature. It provides a qualitative understanding of how educational reforms are designed and implemented in the Arab Gulf States, focusing on reforming teacher policies—such as teacher initial training, teacher professional development, teacher selection, and teacher career development—as one aspect of reform in the region. The research aims to understand why Kuwait has been less successful in designing and implementing teacher policies reform over the past ten years, in contrast to neighbouring Qatar and Bahrain, who managed to implement such reforms. This research brings out for the first time the voices of key politicians and policymakers who seek to explain the challenges they faced in reforming education and perceived outcomes.

This research has potential impact within academia, specifically as a contribution to knowledge and literature in the fields of comparative education and education policy, and more generally to the education reform literature regarding the Arab Gulf States. The findings contribute to these fields by examining the educational reforms in the region from a politics perspective, which is considered a relatively new angle for studying educational reforms in the Arab Gulf States. Most of the literature exploring the reforms in the region has focused either on describing the content of the reforms or examining them as a result of policy borrowing, whereas this study delves more deeply into the politics of the decision-making process itself, to gain an understanding of who was involved and why, and how these reforms were handled. The research illuminates the contextual political situation that must be taken into account to achieve a more thorough understanding of education politics in the region.

Beyond academia, this research can contribute to public policy and inform policymaking related to reforms and development in Kuwait. Its analysis provides a framework that may help to resolve the problem of the lack of significant development in education that Kuwait has faced during the past two decades. This framework recognises that the motivation of the ruling establishment must be at the core of any serious reform. Therefore, based on my findings, I argue that Kuwait's policymakers and other Arab Gulf States could utilise this framework for

any further planning to reform the education system or for implementing development plans.

Finally, on a personal level, this thesis has had a significant impact on my own personal and professional development. Conducting this research has helped me to expand my view of education reform in the region and to understand education politics and policy more widely. The implication of this is that I will return to my academic position at Kuwait University with a broader perspective on education reforms and how difficult they are to achieve, as well as more sensitivity toward the Kuwaiti context. My experience at UCL Institute of Education has equipped me with the knowledge and skills to conduct significant research to help Kuwait and other countries in the region to reform their education systems for improved outcomes.

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To Nourah... this is for you.

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List of Acronyms

AGS	Arab Gulf States
BTC	Bahrain Teachers College
CBE	College of Basic Education (in Kuwait's PAAET)
CfBT	Centre for British Teachers
COE	College of Education
CSC	Civil Service Commission
EDB	Economic Development Board (Bahrain)
EFNE	Education for a New Era (Qatar)
EQI	Education Queensland International (Australia)
ERB	Education Reform Board (Bahrain)
EU	European Union
FM	faculty member
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GSSCPD	General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (Kuwait)
IERP	Integrated Education Reform Program (Kuwait)
ILSA	International Large-Scale Assessment
KTS	Kuwait Teachers Society
KU	Kuwait University
MDSD	Most Different System Design
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MESA	Math, English, Science, and Arabic
MOE	Ministry of Education
MP	Member of Parliament
MSSD	Most Similar System Design
NCED	National Center for Education Development (Kuwait)
NIE	National Institute of Education (Singapore)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAAET	Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (Kuwait)
PDCM	Professional Development Continuum Model
PDO	Professional Development Office
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PLO	Professional Licensing Office

PM	policymaker
PSCI	Profile, Selection and Criteria Initiative (Bahrain)
QNPSTSL	Qatar National Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders
SEC	Supreme Education Council (Qatar and Kuwait)
SSO	School Support Organisation
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TPCP	Teacher Preparation and Certification Program (Qatar)
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UOB	University of Bahrain

Chapter 1 Introduction: From an Oil-based to a Knowledge-based Economy

1.1 Overview

Governments around the world are placing great emphasis on their education systems due to the direct role that education plays in improving economic status and human capital (Harris & Jones, 2018). This policy action has been influenced by the so-called 'global education agenda' that regards education as an economic investment. This agenda is promoted by international organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank, and the European Union (EU), as well as other international institutions (Spring, 2015). Consequently, governments have periodically reformed their education systems in order to improve the quality of education provision and achieve enhanced results.

In the past few decades, reforms have focused on different aspects of education such as the amount of funding in the education sector, the curriculum, the level of centralisation, and the use of technology in the classroom. More recently, due to the global shift in attention from education access and equity to education quality and performance, more emphasis has been placed on improving teacher practice and teacher quality (Wiseman et al., 2018). Consequently, teacher policies reform has risen to the top of the education reform agenda in the past decade (Akiba, 2013a; LeTendre & Wiseman, 2015). This is due to the recognition by policymakers and scholars in different countries of the significant role teachers play in improving education outcomes.

The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers, and education reform mostly fails when teachers are excluded from the reforms (Akiba, 2013a; Schleicher, 2011; Wiseman & Al-bakr, 2013). Teachers nowadays are expected to be agents of change not only in the schools where they teach but also across the whole education system, as scholars have increasingly argued that that the quality of the education system is directly associated with teacher quality (Wiseman et al., 2018). They become the key players in any educational reform, as teachers are the only human factor that deals directly with students in the

classrooms (Alfadala, 2015; Fullan, 2016; Oon Seng, 2015; Schleicher, 2011; Smylie at al., 1999).

Barber et al. (2007) quoted an unnamed Singaporean educational-policy expert as saying, ‘You can have the best curriculum, the best infrastructure, and the best policies, but if you don’t have good teachers then everything is lost’ (p. 41). Hence, governments are seeking to make teaching more attractive and to prepare teachers as well as possible. This should ideally be done by providing them with the skills and knowledge that enable them to both implement reforms and manage reform-related changes that take place in their classrooms or schools.

Teacher policies are the key to improving teacher quality, which in turn impacts student outcomes (Oon Seng, 2015). Therefore, teachers have been seen as the most significant factor in any education reform and hence the primary determinant of the quality of education at all levels. Davies (1999) stated:

> If teachers are as important as most experts say they are, and as most students and parents believe, then a reformed educational system will need to find ways to recruit excellent people into teaching and provide them with reasonable pay, working conditions, and recognition. Improving the pre-service and in-service preparation of teachers… [Teachers] should also be an important component of any country’s educational reform strategy. (p. 12)

The Arab Gulf States (AGS) – Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Qatar – have been influenced by the global agenda of implementing a number of reforms to their education systems to develop their economic status and human capital, as well as improve their education outcomes. Policymakers in the Gulf region have recently recognised that the underperformance of students was associated with the ineffectiveness of existing teacher programmes and policies, and that new teacher policies must be established to prepare their teachers for the new era (Wiseman et al., 2018). However, the individual countries have planned and implemented this reform in different ways, and the effort that they have put into reforming teacher policies varies.

This variation motivated me to conduct this research to investigate the similarities and differences among these countries in reforming teacher policies, and to examine why some of them have refrained from including teacher policies

as part of their reform agenda. Understanding the variation across nations is a useful way of understanding teaching practice in more depth (OECD, 2016), because each country has its own way of designing and providing teacher-related policies. Harris and Jones (2018) argued that the 'quality of policy implementation, rather than policy selection, is the key to promoting and sustaining educational improvement' (p. 195); therefore, examining the policymaking process for teacher policies reform provides opportunities to look at the variation in designing and implementing this kind of reform in the AGS.

Comparative education research seeks to identify similarities and differences in specific phenomena to develop mid-range explanations that provide an understanding of the issue under investigation. Hayhoe and Mundy (2008) argued that comparative education research is a starting point for improving educational systems and practice. This study aims to compare Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain to gain an in-depth understanding of implementing teacher policies reform and to explain why Kuwait has invested less in reforming teacher policies. The reasons for choosing these three countries will be discussed in the methodology section, where this selection will be justified in more detail (see Chapter 4).

1.2 Context of the Research

This section will provide the context of the study. Specifically, it will briefly discuss the establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the political and economic status of the AGS, as well as the educational challenges that have pushed the AGS to reform their education systems. Paulo Freire (1985) stated 'that no educational practice takes place in a vacuum, only in real context – historical, economic, political, and not necessarily identical to any other context' (p.12). Therefore, introducing the context of the AGS is crucial to understanding the educational reforms in the region and the aims behind these reforms.

1.2.1 Political and Economic Status of the AGS

The GCC was established in 1981 and comprises Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Qatar, each of which is ruled by a monarchy. The council is essentially a political organisation involving the economic alliance of these six countries, as well as a military coalition that seeks to protect these monarchies from any external threats that may arise, especially after they gained

independence from British protection during the 1960s and 1970s (Davidson, 2011a; Roberts, 2011). However, in this study, they are referred to as the AGS instead of the GCC, as this research is not attempting to study the council itself, how it operates, or its role in the education sector.

The AGS share many commonalities including their history, culture, language, religion, geography, political system, and economy. Moreover, the ruling families in these six states hold the ultimate power to formulate and implement all policies; cabinet ministers are appointed by these monarchies rather than being elected (Davidson, 2011a; Nolan, 2012). Understanding this fact is significant to this research in terms of clarifying who has the power to develop policies and push for reforms. The political structures of Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

The exporting of oil and gas in the 1930s marked a significant shift in the development of the AGS economies and markedly improved the welfare of their citizens (Alshehabi, 2018; Cammett et al., 2015). Ever since, oil and gas exports have been the main source of national revenue for these six states. Holding 45% of the global oil reserves and 20% of the world's natural gas makes the Gulf region one of the richest regions in the world (Ridge, 2014).[1]

Oil revenues, which constitute around 90% of the national revenues of the AGS, became the main income of the Gulf region. If we try to calculate the total oil revenues earned by the AGS between 1932 – when the first barrel of Gulf oil was produced – and 2015, the lowest estimate reaches the USD$6.63 trillion mark (Alshehabi, 2017). With this huge amount of wealth, the Gulf region has been the site of one of the fastest growing economies globally over the last three decades, bustling with activities and grandiose projects of all kinds (Bashshur, 2010).

1 The oil revenues are a form of economic rent. Economic rent is the difference between the market price of the commodity (oil) or a factor of production and its opportunity cost, so oil rents are the difference between the market price and the cost of producing oil. What makes the Gulf the richest region in the world is the low cost of oil production, due to the characteristics of its land. For example, the cost of producing a barrel of oil in England is USD$39, while in Kuwait it is only $4 (Alshehabi, 2018; Cammett et al., 2015).

Despite various attempts to diversify their economies, the AGS still rely on oil industries as the main, and essentially the sole, source of state revenue, as Ulrichsen (2016b) noted several years ago. However, this overreliance on oil and gas contains a risk because oil prices are not stable; they fluctuate significantly over time, based on international markets that they have little control over, and this has an impact on the amount of national revenue and consequently on the sustainability of the welfare system (Alshehabi, 2017; Cammett et al., 2015; Ulrichsen, 2016b). Moreover, 'oil production appears to have a strong and decisive influence on the nature of the state' (Luciani, 1990, p. 70). Hertog (2010b) concluded that oil rents had a negative impact on economic growth, the quality of institutions, and the level of democracy. Diversification of the economy is regarded as one of the biggest challenges that AGS face today, and this diversification does not come without political costs (Ayubi, 2009); the question is whether the ruling families are willing to accept these risks.

Nevertheless, the oil revenues have been invested to build the state infrastructure, which includes hospitals and clinics that provide free health care for citizens. Schools and universities provide free primary and secondary education, and some states also provide post-secondary education at no cost. The states provide free housing for their citizens and guarantee public sector employment, which means a guaranteed monthly salary, with no need to pay any tax in return for all these free services (Alshehabi, 2017; Davidson, 2011a). This makes the AGS rentier states, in which the state depends on external rent, with a small fraction of the society involved in generating oil revenues while the rest are involved only in the distribution and utilisation of these revenues (Beblawi, 1990).

Historically, when these states started to use their oil revenues to build the modern state and its bureaucratic systems, most of their labour force was illiterate (Cammett et al., 2015; Ridge, 2014), and the few who were skilled were assigned to public sector employment. The AGS have long had small populations;[2] the national labour force was limited and remains so today (Cammett et al., 2015), so foreign labour was needed to fill the gap. As a result, the AGS have attracted a

2 The population of the AGS in 1960 was as follows: Bahrain: 162,429; Kuwait: 269,026; Oman: 551,735; KSA: 4,086,534; Qatar: 47,383 and the UAE: 92,417. Source: https://data.worldbank.org/country

large foreign population to support national growth and economic development (Cammett et al., 2015; El-Kogali et al., 2017), but most of these expatriates have been low-paid and low-skilled (El-Kogali et al, 2017).

Today the situation remains unchanged. The AGS still rely heavily on foreign labour, and one of the reasons for this is the lack of formal education that could supply a skilled workforce (Mohamed, 2019). In 2010, expatriate labour made up nearly 80% of the AGS workforce, with 90% of these workers working in the private sector. The AGS rank third, after the United States and the EU, as a region for immigration (Cammett et al., 2015). Overall, foreigners form 52% of the population of the AGS, and in some states, such as Qatar and the UAE, they account for 90% of the total population (Alshehabi, 2018). This creates a population imbalance between citizens and foreigners, and what makes the situation more complicated is that most of the work in the AGS is done by the foreigners, while a large share of the returns goes to the locals (Ayubi, 2009).

With an increasing number of young, educated citizens in the AGS reaching employment age, the demand for jobs has increased. The issue here is that AGS citizens are not willing to take the kinds of jobs that foreigners accept, especially jobs in the private sector. Many citizens turn down private sector positions, preferring to remain unemployed in the hope of finding public sector jobs (Cammett et al., 2015), which offer higher wages, shorter working hours, earlier retirement, and other benefits that make up a more attractive package than that provided by the private sector (Ridge, 2014). The public sector is able to offer generous benefits because of the high oil revenues that sustain the state's rentier economy (Ayubi, 2009). Alshehabi (2017) explained that the salary received by AGS citizens is not based on the amount of effort that they put into their job or the benefits that the institution gains from their work; instead, it is simply a way of distributing the state's wealth to its citizens. The combination of free education in the tertiary level and guaranteed employment in the public sector has developed what Ayubi (2009) called a 'rentier mentality', with which individuals 'can live well without having to commit themselves to any strict work ethics nor does any distinction need to be made between income received and income earned' (p. 227). The resulting unproductive and non-competitive labour force cannot always be relied upon by the state, and this constitutes a significant issue in the AGS.

The number of young, educated citizens who hold higher education certificates but have no jobs has increased sharply. The AGS has created jobs in the civil service and the public sector, with job creation becoming an objective in its own right, regardless of what these recruits actually end up doing (Ayubi, 1990). As a result, the bureaucracies in the AGS have expanded extraordinarily; for example, Kuwait's public sector expanded from 22,000 employees in 1963 to 146,000 in 1980, and then to 392,000 in 2009 (Cammett et al., 2015, p. 339), and over-employment in the civil service in Kuwait is more than 50% (Hertog, 2012).

The expansion of bureaucracies in the region cannot be taken as a sign of strength; it is rather a sign of weakness (Ayubi, 2009). Scholars who have studied the bureaucracies and civil service in the AGS described the system as dysfunctional due to overstaffing with employees who have low skills, low productivity, and poor performance; red tape; and a shortage of innovations (Ayubi, 1990; Jabbra & Jabbra, 2005; Jreisat, 2012). This has a negative impact on the quality of institutions. From a political perspective, Ayubi (2009) argued that the expansion of bureaucracy provided the rulers with a 'stability platform', a control device and a space for extending patronage but not for developing the economy. Hence, 'in managing these institutions, political loyalties take precedence over efficiency and knowledge' (UNDP, 2003, p. 11). Therefore, instead of functioning as a high quality institution with a specialised, skilled workforce capable of independent action and analysis, the bureaucracy has become merely a tool to serve political leaders (Jreisat, 2006). Instead of reforming the bureaucratic system to solve this issue, the AGS rulers create new, parallel administrative structures, set up as quasi-governmental bodies, which circumvent government hiring policies and are able to get results, thus creating a positive image of the rulers (Abdel-Moneim, 2016). These quasi-governmental bodies also exist in the education sector, as will be presented in Chapter 2.

To summarise the economic situation in the Gulf region: these young, wealthy states are dependent on oil revenues, while they produce citizens who are unwilling to compete with a sizeable foreign workforce. The AGS countries are similar in terms of not only the factors discussed at the beginning of this chapter—history, language, culture, and the like—but also the challenges that they will face in the future.

Accordingly, the leaders of the six states met in Doha in 2002 to discuss the economic challenges facing the region, especially the issues associated with a resource-based economy, such as the imbalance in the job market and the shortcomings of the current education systems. They decided to begin shifting from oil-based economies to knowledge-based economies, by improving the human capital of AGS citizens (Secretariat General, 2003; Wiseman et al., 2014). Through this transformation, AGS leaders hoped to create a new economic system that would be less reliant on the oil and gas industries and that might develop human capital that would be much more competitive and able to meet the needs of the labour market.

Several studies assumed that this type of knowledge-based economy could only be achieved through education (El-Kogali et al., 2017; Mazawi, 2010; Wiseman et al., 2014). However, the education systems in the AGS have not been able to accommodate this type of shift yet, and there is a glaring contradiction between the expectations of AGS leaders and the reality of their education systems. Low-quality education systems are one example of the shortfalls in capacity which may impede the successful implementation of this shift (Secretariat General, 2003; Wiseman et al., 2014; World Bank, 2008). The education system in the region has not equipped students with the skills associated with a competitive economy (Mazawi, 2010). Therefore, improving the quality and efficacy of national education systems is crucial for the economic success of nation states in the Gulf region (Nolan, 2012). Traditionally, AGS governments have viewed diversification of the economy as a purely economic matter, but they have recently managed to link economic and labour market issues with that of education (Kirk, 2013).

As a result, AGS leaders recognised that education systems had to be reformed if they were to develop the human capital that would make it possible to create knowledge-based economies, and this was the main motivation for reforming the education systems in the region. Mazawi (2010) put forward the argument that ‘the overhauling of educational provision at K-12 and post-secondary levels is perceived as an important venue which would help propel Gulf societies into the global knowledge economy’ (p. 211).

Moreover, the development of a knowledge-based economy depends on the establishment of a system for 'building' the knowledge and skill capacity of AGS citizens and not 'importing' them from abroad (Wiseman et al., 2014). Wiseman et al. (2014) maintained that the 'system of importing knowledge-based expertise does not contribute to the sustainable shift toward a knowledge economy in the Gulf… When a knowledge-based economy is built upon a foundation of foreign or transitional labor and expertise, sustainable change cannot occur' (p. 4). In this sense, developing local capacity is required as well.

Therefore, each of the six countries in the Gulf region launched a long-term national vision prepared primarily by Western consultants (Ulrichsen, 2016a). Developing the human capital and reforming the education system were two of the top priorities of these visions. Although education reform in the Gulf region had started well before the launch of these national visions, the existing reform agendas were integrated into the new visions. In 2008, Bahrain launched 'The Economic Vision 2030' and Qatar launched 'Qatar National Vision 2030' (Ulrichsen, 2016a); Kuwait launched its 'New Kuwait 2035' around ten years later, in 2017 (New Kuwait, 2017). Currently, the paramount role of education ministries in the AGS is to achieve these visions (El-Kogali et al., 2017).

1.2.2 Education and Educational Challenges in the AGS

The previous section concluded that a shift towards a knowledge-based economy is needed for the AGS to address the economic challenges in the region. However, weaknesses in the education systems mean that they must be reformed if these goals are to be achieved. As the scope of this research is concerned with education reform—in particular, teacher policies reform—in this region, it is crucial to provide an overview of its education systems and the challenges facing them.

In recent years, education in the AGS region and the rest of the Arab world has become a topic of interest in Western academic literature. Most of what has been written about education in the AGS falls into the categories of either 1) education in the Arab world, or 2) Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regional studies (See: Chapman & Miric, 2009; Kirdar, 2017; Mazawi & Sultana, 2010; Rohde & Alayan, 2012; UNDP, 2003; World Bank, 2008, 2019). In reality, though, it is difficult to discuss and analyse the MENA states as one single region, mainly

because it includes low-income countries which face vastly different kinds of challenges in comparison to the rich Gulf countries.

Formal education in the Gulf region started in 1911 when Kuwait established the first formal school, long before oil was discovered in Kuwait in 1937 (Ridge, 2014). Still, oil has provided a significant advantage to the Gulf region in terms of education provision because since the 1930s, a good share of oil revenues has been spent on the education sector (Cammett et al., 2015).

During that era, Kuwait played a significant role in encouraging the rest of the AGS to also introduce formal education. This was not mere moral support; Kuwait went beyond this by building schools in a number of AGS, providing textbooks and school uniforms, and paying the salaries of some teachers (Ridge, 2014). Most teachers in the Gulf region's early schools followed the Kuwaiti curriculum, which was widely regarded as one of the most advanced in the Arab region, and 'Kuwaiti aid was a key catalyst for the development of education across the region' (Davidson, 2010, p. 63). Kuwait also led the way in the realm of higher education by establishing the first university in the AGS, Kuwait University (KU), in 1966, and many AGS citizens went to study in Kuwait (Al-Asfour, 2019).

The Gulf states adopted highly centralised education systems. Through the education ministries, the governments assumed all key functions, such as policymaking, financing, training and employing teachers, designing curricula, and regulating educational practices (El-Kogali et al., 2017; World Bank, 2008). Hence, the education ministries that were appointed by the rulers in these countries were, in effect, controlling the entire education systems.

On the other hand, some private and international schools also exist in the Gulf, dating back from even before the states established their education systems, but the states do not have as much control over them as they do with public schools. Private schools in the region are not funded by the governments; students must pay to enrol in them. In Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, the main different between public and private schools is that the private schools are self-governed; the state has limited control over them. They can hire their teachers and administrative staff directly, without referring to the government; also, they are not required to follow the state curriculum, with the exception of Arabic language and

Islamic Studies, which should be in agreement with the government curriculum. The private sector is not included in this thesis because teacher policies reforms were introduced basically for the public sector. The majority of the national students and national teacher workforce are in the public sector, not in the private sector.

In a short space of time, the AGS took major steps to make basic education accessible for all children by building schools, equipping them with learning materials, and increasing the number of teachers. All of the AGS provided free elementary and secondary schooling for their citizens, and some also provided higher education. As a result, there were dramatic increases in school enrolment, improvements in the literacy rate, and a narrowing of the gap between the number of boys and girls attending school (Al-Sulayti, 1999; Barber et al., 2007; Cammett et al., 2015). Clearly, the AGS did very well in regard to the quantitative aspects of education such as the number of schools, number of teachers, and learning materials. This was one of the great benefits of the oil revenues.

By providing more resources for education than other developing countries could, the Gulf region has been able to increase access to formal education for all children. The most important shortcoming, though, was that the focus has been on funding and increasing access rather than securing a high quality of education to meet the needs of the twenty-first century (Al-Sulayti, 1999; Barber et al., 2007; World Bank, 2008). Therefore, the AGS now face considerable challenges in terms of improving the quality of education, and its low quality is seen as the main hindrance to shifting the economy towards one that is knowledge-based (Alfadala, 2015; Barber et al.; Cammett et al., 2015; El-Kogali et al., 2017).

International organisations such as the World Bank, the OECD, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and others used the International Large-Scale Assessments (ILSAs) as indicators to measure the quality of education systems and to determine students' skills and knowledge levels worldwide, including in the AGS region (Mohamed & Morris, 2019). One of these ILSAs is the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

(TIMSS),[3] which all AGS participate in. As Table 1.1 illustrates, the TIMSS 2015 assessment showed that all of the AGS were far from meeting the international benchmarks (Mullis et al., 2016).

TIMSS 2015 illustrated that Kuwait's Grade 4 students ranked at the bottom in both Mathematics (49th out of 49 participating countries) and Science (47th out of 47). Moreover, Table 1.1 shows that the UAE and Bahrain performed much better than the rest of the AGS in these assessments. More than 50% of eighth-grade students in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, 48% of those in Oman, and 37% in Qatar did not even reach the low international benchmark in Mathematics (Mullis, Martin, Foy, & Hooper, 2016). This highlights the differences in student achievement among these similar countries, suggesting that they had different educational practices, but there is no research as yet that explains the reasons behind these variations.

Table 1.1

Arab Gulf States' Achievement in TIMSS 2015

	Mathematics Grade 4		Science Grade 4		Mathematics Grade 8		Science Grade 8	
	Benchmark (500)	Rank (49)	Benchmark (500)	Rank (47)	Benchmark (500)	Rank (39)	Benchmark (500)	Rank (39)
UAE	452	39	451	40	465	23	477	23
Bahrain	451	40	459	38	454	25	466	25
Qatar	439	41	436	41	437	28	457	26
Oman	425	43	431	42	403	32	455	29
KSA	383	46	390	45	368	39	396	35
Kuwait	353	49	337	47	392	33	411	33

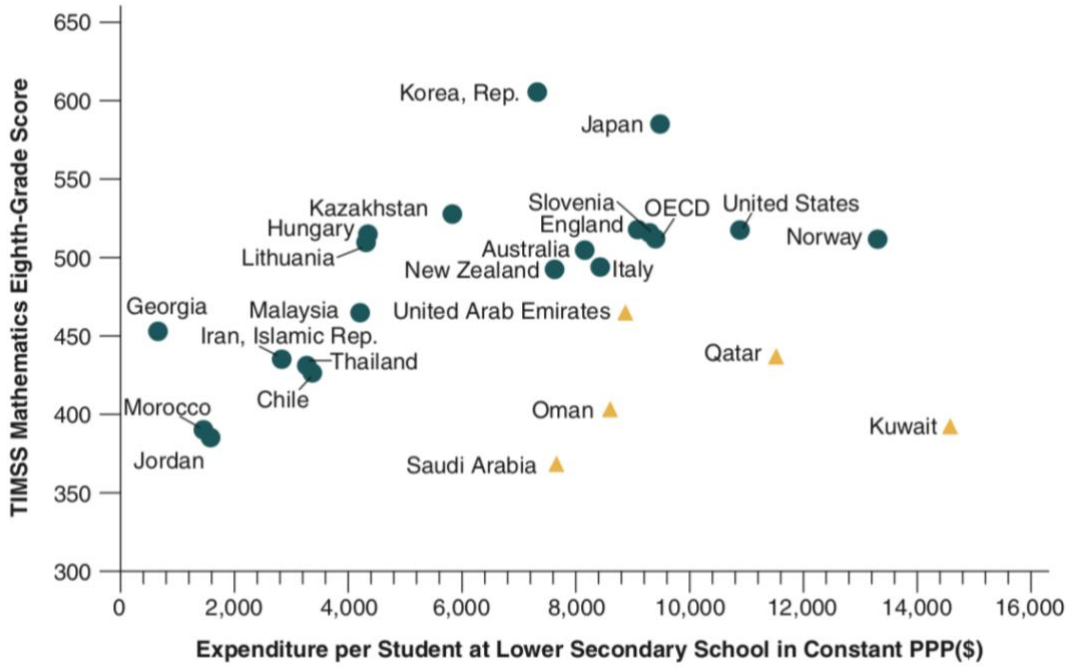
Despite huge public expenditures, the quality of education and learning outcomes remain low. Figure 1.1, which illustrates the expenditure on students in lower secondary school and their Mathematics achievements, indicates that increased spending did not lead to increases in the level of student achievement.

3 TIMSS is an international assessment conducted every four years by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, to examine the level of students in Grades 4 and 8 in Maths and Science.

For example, student expenditures in both Kuwait and Qatar were much greater than in the other countries, yet their achievements were weak in comparison with other countries such as England, Japan, New Zealand, and Hungary, where student costs were much lower. This means that the investment spending in the Gulf region was not directed to the right places, and students were not directly benefitting from those expenditures.

Figure 1.1

International Comparison of Expenditure per Student and Students' Achievement in TIMSS 2015 (El-Kogali et al., 2017, p. 14)



A number of researchers have studied the low achievement of Gulf students in the TIMSS. For example, Bouhlila (2014) sought to test the link between the family background of MENA students and their achievements in TIMSS 2007; this study showed that high socioeconomic status actually had a negative impact on student achievement because students who were born into wealthy Gulf families were not pushed to excel academically through studying. The research also demonstrated that the education systems in the region were not providing students with the skills they needed to succeed in the modern workforce. Another study found that one reason for the underperformance of students in the region was that the teacher training programmes were not effective in promoting student learning, although that was their desired educational output (Chapman & Miric, 2009).

Wiseman and Al-bakr (2013) found no direct association between teacher certification and student achievement in TIMSS 2007 in the AGS; although some required certification to join the teaching profession and others did not, they all earned low scores.

Alhashem and Alkandari (2015) investigated the low performance of Kuwait's students on the basis of the 1995, 2007, and 2011 TIMSS assessments, from the perspective of school supervisors. They revealed that the curriculum, teaching methods, and student assessments did not fully provide the appropriate knowledge that would enable students to achieve. They also found that teachers graduated from the educational colleges unprepared, foreign teachers were not as qualified as the system required, and there were insufficient opportunities for teachers' professional development due to the absence of formal programmes. The study ended with several recommendations for improving student achievement, such as reforming training and preparation programmes for teachers to make them more qualified for their teaching roles; instituting a system for teachers' professional development; and ensuring that school leaders stay up to date with the latest developments in curricula, teaching methods, and evaluation and leadership styles. Although this study focused only on Kuwait, it showed that low achievement in TIMSS was not something new in the AGS region.

Many international organisations—such as the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and other consulting agencies working in the Gulf region—have criticised the quality of the education system in the AGS and offered recommendations (Al-Sulayti, 1999; Barber et al., 2007; El-Kogali et al., 2017; Mazawi & Sultana, 2010; Rohde & Alayan, 2012; UNDP, 2003; World Bank, 2008). This has created significant pressure at the state level in the Gulf region to improve education quality. For example, the reports raised concerns that much of the money spent on education was going to teacher and administrator salaries, with less allocated for teacher training and preparation (Cammett et al., 2015; El-Kogali et al., 2017).

One recommendation was to focus more strongly on teacher quality rather than just increasing the quantity of teachers. As the quality of teachers is important for enhancing student performance, these countries were also advised to be more

selective in hiring teachers and to attract only the best to the profession (Barber et al., 2007). In the same vein, a recent report published by the World Bank stated that the main challenge facing the Gulf states was improving teachers' qualifications (El-Kogali et al., 2017). It found that teachers needed opportunities for development and motivation through incentives and career pathways, along with professional development to provide the knowledge and skills needed in the classroom. These reports and their findings justified the focus on teachers in the current research, as teachers' professionalism and quality may contribute to enhancing the quality and outcomes of the education systems in the AGS.

As education reform became a hot topic among policymakers in the AGS, it also became a socially sensitive and politically charged undertaking that was inextricably linked to highly politicised factors (Kirk, 2015); the direct involvement of the ruling families in leading the reforms will be discussed later in this thesis. Thus, it is particularly important to look at educational reforms, specifically of teacher policies, from a political perspective to understand how issues get onto the political agenda and how the policymaking process affects the introduction of such reforms.

Given the advice received from international consultant agencies such as McKinsey & Company and the World Bank (Barber et al., 2007; El-Kogali et al., 2017), the Gulf leaders have recognised that reforming and improving the quality of the education system is unavoidable if they are to achieve their vision of creating a new knowledge-based economic system. They now realise that reforming the education system is a fundamental step towards sustainable economic progress and that the system must be designed to 'produce a strong highly skilled and knowledgeable workforce that can compete globally' (Alfadala, 2015, p. 7). Therefore, the AGS governments decided to develop long-term strategies that emphasised improving and reforming the education system in the AGS and that encompassed all aspects of education, including curriculum, teacher policies, school management, and integration of technology.

To avoid international criticism of the quality of education in the region, and to achieve quick changes, the Gulf leaders engaged in a borrowing policy with reference to international agencies and consulting services. This has been the

main approach used to reform education in the Gulf region. The policy solutions were produced and packaged by international organisations and provided to the Gulf states to follow as a means of solving their educational problems (Alfadala, 2015; Donn & Al Manthri, 2013; Mazawi & Sultana, 2010; Rohde & Alayan, 2012). Thus, the Gulf leadership looked outside their borders to borrow policies that were well known and seemingly successful elsewhere, as a means of obtaining political legitimacy on the global scene (Wiseman et al., 2018). However, many scholars have criticised this approach of policy borrowing in the Gulf region (see for example: Akkary, 2010; Donn & Al Manthri, 2013; Kirk, 2015; Mohamed, 2019; Romanowski et al., 2018).

Donn and Al Manthri (2013) argued that policy borrowing in the Gulf region involved using outdated and costly educational products, which further 'weakens the educational performance, knowledge generation and hence, inevitably, the economic sustainability of these countries' (p. 12). They also contended that these policies did not necessarily fit well and might not resonate with the needs in the context in which they were to be implemented. They claimed that these consultant agencies promised much but delivered less, and that this was why there continued to be a problem with education systems in the region, no matter which educational policies were borrowed. Moreover, Mohamed (2019) found that the borrowed reforms had neglected the context variation, and that the borrowed process was used as a framing device that focused narrowly on the economic aspects. Furthermore, Romanowski et al. (2018) argued that the epistemological conflicts between the Arab learning style and the borrowed learning style could account for the limited success of these reforms.

Although there are many similarities among the AGS, each state also has its own contextual factors and socioeconomic and political dynamics that affect the process of enacting education reforms (El-Kogali et al., 2017). These variations among similar states have raised some differences in how each state introduced education reform in general, and teacher policies reform in particular. These differences make it worth looking at these states from an in-depth comparative perspective to identify the reasons behind these differences. As this chapter indicated at the beginning, the aim of this thesis is to study only one aspect of the reform agenda in the AGS, namely, teacher policies reform, in only three

countries—Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain—to understand the variations among them in introducing and implementing teacher policies reforms. The following section is concerned with reviewing the existing literature related to this area of research.

1.3 Literature Review of Education Reform and Teacher Policies Reform in the AGS

As mentioned previously, the topics of teacher policies and teacher reform have become of increasing interest to scholars and international agencies alike, and the literature in this field worldwide has multiplied in the past decade. Enormous comparative studies have been conducted by both academic scholars and international organisations to examine teacher policies and teacher reform from global perspectives (see, for example, Akiba, 2013b; Akiba & LeTendre, 2009, 2018a; Akiba et al., 2007; Musset, 2010; OECD, 2013; Oon Seng, 2015; Schleicher, 2011, 2016; Schwille et al., 2007; Tatto, 2007; Tatto & Mincu, 2010; World Bank, 2010). Moreover, the OECD started its Teaching and Learning International Survey series to 'provide valid, timely and comparable information to help countries review and define policies for developing a high-quality teaching profession' (OECD, 2013, p. 26). The aim of these studies and reports was to create general pictures of the global models of teacher reforms; some contended that the findings were significant because they came from high achiever countries and thus were evidence-based.

However, this researcher found that the study of teacher policies reform in the Gulf region is lacking in the areas of comparative education and regional studies of education, despite a few exceptions which will be presented in the following discussion. Akiba (2013a) argued that each country has its own interpretation of teacher reform models, due to major differences in their historical and political contexts. Therefore, the studies mentioned in the previous paragraph were excluded from this literature review because they did not include the Gulf region and did not look at policies on teachers or teacher reforms in the region. In other words, they might not contribute directly to this research due to the variation in the context, both politically and educationally.

The aim of this literature review is to place this thesis within the context of the existing literature and make the case for why further research is needed. This

section will therefore review the most recent work related to the topic of this research, highlighting the gaps and clarifying the position that this research occupies in the literature. The literature review contains three sections: The first section reviews the literature that compares the education reforms in the AGS. The second section focuses on literature written about education reform in Kuwait, Qatar, or Bahrain specifically. Finally, the third section considers literature that examines teacher policies or teacher reforms in these three countries.

1.3.1 Education Reform in the AGS

This section focuses on reviewing the literature that has examined education reform in the Gulf region, comparing either some or all of the six countries. In general, there is a limited amount of literature comparing education reforms in the Gulf region, which is a relatively new topic in the academic literature.

One of the most cited and comprehensive studies of education reform in the region was by the World Bank (2008). This study focused on the economic dimensions of investment into education in the MENA region, of which the AGS is considered a part; it referred to the economic growth in the region and the results of investments in education. The study assessed the education reform strategies and evaluated the outcomes according to how well students were being prepared to contribute to the labour market, given past reforms. The World Bank found that the education systems in the MENA region were not producing what the job markets needed, with the low quality of education cited as one reason why the relationship between education and economic growth was weak. However, the emphasis of this work was on looking at the education system and educational reforms from an economic perspective alone, while ignoring the value of education apart from work.

Moreover, the World Bank argued that past reforms had not focused comprehensively on all aspects of education. For example, the MENA region has not managed to develop teacher knowledge and skills, so even when teachers received the training they needed, they were unable to make use of that training to improve student outcomes. The study claimed that when education reforms were initiated in the region, they were typically launched through political or legal acts;

most of the education reforms in the region were driven by international consulting companies and were seen as ad hoc events.

The World Bank study documented the education system in the MENA region and its education reform between the 1960s and the 2000s, but it did not examine more recent education reforms introduced early in the twenty-first century, especially those reforms that took place in the AGS. Also, it focused on the MENA region in general, which prevented it from looking at individual countries in depth. Moreover, it is difficult to study and propose solutions for the MENA region in general because the political, economic, and social backgrounds vary from one country to another.

Some scholars have criticised the World Bank's work for proposing a singular road to reforming the education system in the MENA region, which 'despite the noted variations within the Arab world, [is] evidence of disregard for the differentiated national education systems' (Abi-Mershed, 2010, p. 3). Additional shortcomings are that the study was mainly descriptive, rather than analytical, and 'had less interest in theory building and contributing to comparative analysis' (Abdel-Moneim, 2016, p. 4).

From a political perspective, Abdel-Moneim (2016) focused on the survival of Arab regimes by examining their ability to reform. This study aimed to understand why reforms in the Arab states had failed and how political considerations had impacted their ability to engage in significant reform. He approached education in Arab countries 'as a policy arena where politics, as in any other policy arena, plays a major role' (p. 4). In doing so, he studied how the politics behind educational reform in the region had enabled these regimes to survive, especially after the Arab Awakening in 2011.[4] Abdel-Moneim found that the unsustainability of reforms in the Arab region could be attributed to the top-down approach taken, and that the reformed policies were implemented without

4 The Arab Awakening, also known as the Arab Spring, was a series of pro-democracy uprisings that swept through Arab countries—including Tunisia, Morocco, Syria, Libya, Egypt, Bahrain, and Kuwait—in 2011.

democratic openness. He argued that 'the regime's political and social context has an effect on the implementation and sustainability of policy reforms' (p. 4).

Abdel-Moneim's (2016) work used a comparative research approach to compare Egypt and Qatar as instances of education reform in the Arab region. He concluded with a compelling argument that the education reforms carried out in Arab countries were not truly aimed at improving education practice but were merely a response to international and domestic pressure calling for change. His argument showed that these regimes were not particularly interested in reforming education for its own sake; they simply wished to avoid being subjected to such pressures and desired to create 'a positive image of the regime abroad' (p. 3). This may explain the World Bank's (2008) finding of a weak relationship between education and economic growth. Nevertheless, it is hard to generalise any finding reached by comparing only two countries, and the finding of this research cannot easily be generalised to all Arab countries; for example, the reforms in the AGS were not seen as a response to domestic pressure.

Although the current thesis does look at teacher policies reform from a political perspective, its emphasis is on studying the policymaking process rather than understanding the survival of the regimes. The aim is to understand the process in more depth by looking at how the reform agenda was formed, who was involved, and how political support may have affected the implementation of the reform.

From a different perspective, Alfadala (2015) examined the implementation of education reform in Qatar, Abu Dhabi, and Saudi Arabia according to the documentary evidence. She concluded that education reform in the Gulf region remained unexplored in academic and policy research, and that the absence of this type of research made it difficult for policymakers to design and implement further reforms.

Alfadala (2015) argued that one of the challenges facing education reform in the Gulf region was the lack of clarity on implementation methods, which resulted in increased stress on all stakeholders, especially teachers. Teachers were not given enough time to understand the changes or to discuss and comment on the plan or the process of these reforms, and they were not educated to recognise the

benefits of the change. In other words, teachers were neglected and were not involved in the reform process. One of her recommendations was to raise teachers' standards to make them more capable of managing change and refining their skills.

Although Alfadala's (2015) research examined the implementation of the education reform in these three cases, it did not go into detail on the policymaking process, nor did it explain the variations among these three cases in reforming the education system. In the same vein, Leigh Nolan (2012) studied education reform in higher education in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai. Neither of these two works studied Kuwait or Bahrain, though, nor did they investigate teacher policies reform. This demonstrates the significance of the present research in filling this gap.

Kirk (2015) also sought to explore education reform, focusing particularly on the innovation that has occurred in the Gulf region and how these reforms supported or fostered it. He claimed that the top-down education reform model in the Gulf has decreased the level of freedom that leads to greater innovation, making it difficult if not impossible. He stated that the management of the Gulf's education systems was 'unwieldy, slow to change and reluctant to look beyond the historical paradigm of how they operate and organize as an institution' (Kirk, 2015, p. 83).

From a historical perspective, Kirk (2015) stated that the educational institutions in the Gulf region had been slow to change as they had often been reactive, rather than proactive, in introducing new ideas; importing educational systems from outside was deemed preferable to building innovative and indigenous systems of their own. Moreover, he assumed that the leadership in the AGS believed that importing these systems would be far easier and politically more acceptable to the national population. Kirk described the model of education reform in the Gulf region as one of replication rather than any true innovation.

Kirk (2015) proposed that giving teachers and educators more autonomy and freedom to experiment and to explore new ways of working, without allowing this to pose risks to their professional status or positions, might increase the level of innovation in the Gulf region. In this sense, his proposal was aligned with the recommendation that Alfadala (2015) ends with, namely, that to realise successful

education reform in the Gulf region, more effort must be made to improve teacher standards and teacher autonomy. Therefore, to gain an in-depth understanding of the teaching profession in the AGS, more studies are needed to investigate policies and reforms pertaining to teachers.

Like Kirk (2015), Mohamed (2019) also looked at the policy borrowing approach, doing a deeper critical analysis of this approach to reforming the education system in the six states, and she explained why this approach was not working well in the region. This study likened the policy borrowing approach to the buying and selling of education reform between these states and the consultants. She demonstrated the consultants' role in the policymaking process, where they operated as a 'shadow education ministry' in all stages of policymaking (Mohamed, 2019, p. 2). She argued that the consultants working in the region were not taking into account the context when designing the reform agenda; they usually addressed those matters that they could easily understand and fix, and the context was used merely as a framing device that focused narrowly on the economic aspects.

Meanwhile, Romanowski et al. (2018) argued that the epistemological conflicts between the Gulf region and its Western, borrowed reforms explained why the reforms in the region were not achieving their goals. They found that if the traditional Arabic teaching style were not changed, these borrowed reforms would not be effective. Therefore, they concluded that it was 'vital that educational policy makers and those who implement educational reform understand the role culture and context play in the educational reform and the borrowing process and begin to adapt rather than adopt educational policies and practices' (Romanowski et al., 2018, p. 23). Their conclusion led this researcher to examine the reform policymaking process to gain an in-depth understanding of whether policymakers recognised the context variation while adopting these reforms.

Furthermore, Akkary (2010) demonstrated that the reforms in the Arab region failed to follow any specific design or to adequately plan the implementation process, and this corresponded with what Alfadala (2015) found in her research. Akkary (2010) also argued that in order to have a positive impact on learning and schooling, reforms needed to be designed to reinvent educational practice and

search for new opportunities for growth. The article argued that there was a significant gap between the ambitious reform agenda and its implementation, due to a lack of professional capacity among those responsible for implementing the reform, and it is vital to examine the ways in which such a lack of professional capacity can affect the implementation. Both Akkary (2010) and Kirk (2015) proposed that the Arab region must reconsider their old approach and that a paradigm shift requires breaking free of the old, established approach.

The literature described above illustrates very clearly that the region is still struggling to reform its education systems. The review of this literature highlights two key issues: the borrowing of reforms and the lack of contextualising these reforms within both their national and local political cultures. This literature contributes to understanding the reforms undertaken in the AGS, but it focuses primarily either on the policy borrowing approach or on setting up some explanation for the outcomes of the reforms. Further investigation is needed to study the region's policymaking process in order to understand the variations among these states in reforming the education system.

1.3.2 Education Reform in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain

This section reviews the literature studying recent education reforms in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain. All these were conducted as single, not comparative, studies, with each one describing or analysing education reform in one of the three countries. Interestingly, there is much more literature available on education reform in both Qatar and Bahrain than in Kuwait, probably due to the lack of information and documentation about education reform in Kuwait. The section will begin with the literature regarding Kuwait, then Qatar, and finally Bahrain.

Research about the recent education reform in Kuwait is significantly limited. From a comprehensive perspective, Winokur (2014) stated that for the past 30 years, Kuwait's government has failed to restructure the education system because the borrowed policies and programmes were not contextualised. She suggested that either the politicians and policymakers did not have the appropriate educational background and theoretical knowledge, or they did not understand the implications of implementing borrowed policies and reforms in their local context. This might illustrate that the problem had to do not only with the way that Kuwait

borrowed its policies and reforms, but also with the educational leaders charged with leading the reforms. Still, more examination is needed to understand the circumstances that led to this failure.

Moreover, she argued that 'the system is cumbersome and results in delays in decision-making and lack of communication between the district offices and the minister and his undersecretary' (Winokur, 2014, p. 109); this was due to the highly centralised administration in the Ministry of Education (MOE). However, she did not provide specific information about the lack of communication or the delays in decision-making, whereas this current research will seek to contribute this type of information in depth.

Winokur (2014) argued that the MOE in Kuwait, as in other AGS, did not establish a commitment to, or ownership of, reforms and instead favoured borrowed global best practices over locally developed solutions, yet even these borrowed policies were never implemented. Of particular relevance to the current study are other factors that Winokur maintained were critical to understanding the outcomes of the reforms in Kuwait. She suggested that MOE's policymakers needed to build local capacity and work with experts who were aware of the context, so as to formulate policies that were more sustainable and could have greater impact.

From a different perspective, Alsaleh (2019) investigated instructional leadership in Kuwait's educational reform, and specifically the role of school leadership in this reform. She argued that opportunities for instructional leadership in Kuwait's educational system were limited due to its centralised system, in which most dimensions of school leadership practices were mandated by the MOE. Her research also found that school leaders were not given the opportunity to offer input into reform design. This calls for more investigations to understand who was involved in designing the reform agenda and why some stakeholders were not involved in this process.

Alkhater (2016), on the other hand, looked at Qatar's borrowed education reforms. She argued that despite the huge financial resources that were allocated to reform, as well as the unlimited political support, the Education for a New Era (EFNE) programme had been abrogated. 'All of the initial reform policies have

been completely reversed after causing unprecedented social controversy and after years of policy instability' (pp. 97–98), and the reform programme had been relegated to history. Moreover, Weber (2014) claimed that the EFNE had been chaotic at times and that national educators resented the RAND Corporation's lack of engagement with local educational specialists.

Both Alkhater (2016) and Barnowe-Meyer (2013) agreed that the reform programme was based on a number of assumptions and not on empirical research. Barnowe-Meyer (2013) claimed that policy borrowed from the American 'charter schools' was not seen as best practice even in the US, due to the lack of evidence confirming that charter schools performed any better than public schools; moreover, RAND did not disclose to the policymakers in Qatar that the model they were selling had experienced profound failures in its country of origin.

Brewer and Goldman (2010) had different thoughts on the education reforms in Qatar. They pointed out that the reform was exceptionally ambitious and attempted to modify many system elements at the same time, but they claimed that significant progress had been made since the full implementation of the reform. Unlike Alkhater (2016), Weber (2014), and Barnowe-Meyer (2013), Brewer and Goldman (who were part of the RAND team) highlighted some of the advantages that Qatar gained from implementing this reform. For instance, Qatar was the first in the region to establish a curriculum based on international benchmarks and to establish a national assessment.

Moreover, the status of teachers had improved, especially for those working in the state-sponsored independent schools, where their roles had been redefined. These teachers had begun to spend more time thinking about the goals of their lessons and how to improve learning outcomes, and they had started to receive a good amount of professional development, although the teachers in MOE schools were still receiving less. Nevertheless, Barnowe-Meyer (2013) reported that teachers in independent schools felt insecure about their jobs, worrying that they might lose them at any time because the operators of these schools could hire and fire employees at will.

The differences between Alkhater (2016), Weber (2014) and Barnowe-Meyer (2013), on the one hand, and Brewer and Goldman (2010), on the other

hand, may be attributed to the fact that their research was conducted at different times. Alkhater (2016) reported 13 years after the reforms were launched, whereas Brewer and Goldman (2010) examined the first three years after the reform's inception in 2001. Moreover, Alkhater (2016) and Barnowe-Meyer (2013) focused more on the independent schools' reform policies and examined them from the perspective of policy borrowing. This is unlike Nasser (2017), who provided an overview of the teaching profession's policies in a descriptive way, documenting what happened but ignoring the how and why.

Along the same lines, Kirk (2014) also focused on policy borrowing in Bahrain, which relied on Singapore's National Institute of Education (NIE) for 'expertise, curricula, methods, and materials that would offer an off-the-shelf education model' (p.129). He claimed, however, that the borrowing model had not had any significant impact because of the slow rate of contextualising a model that was not fit for purpose. This perspective also appeared in most of the literature reviewed above, regarding both the Kuwait case (Winokur, 2014) and the Qatar case (Alkhater, 2016; Barnowe-Meyer, 2013; Weber, 2014).

Although Kirk (2014) very briefly highlighted the 2008 establishment of the Bahrain Teachers College (BTC) to oversee the initial teacher preparation and provide in-service professional development, he left out a considerable amount of information about the rest of the teacher policies reform. In contrast, Haslam (2011) provided a more comprehensive study on educational standards and reform in Bahrain. His work was more descriptive than analytical, though, so it will be more useful to refer to it in Chapter 2 when presenting the education reform in Bahrain.

Furthermore, Hayes (2017) interviewed teachers and government representatives to evaluate the English language teaching policy that Bahrain borrowed from the UK. The teachers commented that policy borrowing in Bahrain was of no use to anyone. The government found it difficult to implement the policy due to resistance from students and teachers, and the general public felt that greater benefits could be found within the nation-state instead. Hayes (2017) contended that 'linking education to the economy should be "a matter of need" and that neoliberal ideas of learning for "export" and global career prospects have little value if this need is not met' (p. 186). She argued that having an economic vision

for global development and an effort to create an education system through policy borrowing did not make it a magnet that attracted everyone. However, this paper had its limitations, in that the author did not indicate when this policy was borrowed or who was in charge of the initiative.

Reviewing the literature above indicates that most of what has been written on education reform in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain has focused on the concept of policy borrowing. The policymaking process itself has not been examined at all in terms of understanding who controlled the process and how it was managed and handled. Furthermore, the literature did not employ a comparative analysis approach to identify variations in education reform in these three countries, and this demonstrates a gap that needs to be filled. Additionally, the research on education reforms in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain was often written by outsiders. As such, most of their assumptions and claims were based on their own interpretations, which might not accurately reflect the local context.

1.3.3 Teacher Policies and Teacher Policies Reforms in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain

This final section is concerned with reviewing the literature that studied teacher policies and teacher policies reforms in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain. This research focused on the concept of policies pertaining to teachers or emphasised one specific aspect of these policies. Based on my examination of the international academic literature, the discourse on teacher policies can be categorised into several key areas reflecting the important aspects of a teacher's career: initial teacher education, recruitment and selection, continuing professional development, career development structure, compensation and incentives, induction, and monitoring and evaluation (Akiba, 2013a; Akiba & LeTendre, 2018b; Oon Seng, 2015; Schleicher, 2011; Schwille et al., 2007; World Bank, 2010). Therefore, this review will focus on studies that examined these aspects in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain.

From a comparative perspective, Wiseman et al. (2018) examined teacher certification policy initiatives in the Gulf region. Their evidence showed that despite unique contextual factors, most education systems in the Gulf region established expectations for teachers that aligned with internationally validated models of teacher quality. They argued that the international education policy agendas 'have

had a significant influence on reform efforts in GCC countries. This global discourse has impacted educational reformers in the Gulf, who have responded to poor student performance on international assessments by concentrating their efforts on improving teacher quality' (Wiseman et al., 2018, p. 233). However, the researchers claimed that the teacher standards, and even those policies that are internationally legitimised, needed to be contextualised to be relevant to the regional context and local culture. Wiseman et al. (2018) found significant differences in teacher quality across the Gulf countries, with only Bahrain and Qatar requiring either teacher certification or licensing to join the teaching profession. This leads to the question of whether the implementation of teacher policies reform plays any role in the variations in teacher quality found across the region.

In the same vein, Wiseman and Al-bakr (2013) examined the impact of teacher certification on student achievement in the Gulf region, referring to TIMSS 2007 for data with which to build their argument. Although Gulf policymakers responded to low student performance by focusing on teacher quality as a key to educational reform, the researchers found no direct or consistent association between teacher certification and student achievement in the AGS. They argued that 'low scores on achievement tests in Gulf education systems may not be the fault of the teachers' (Wiseman & Al-bakr, 2013, p. 306) because in this region, teachers' qualifications and training were often not associated with their actual knowledge and behaviour. Finally, they claimed that teacher certification might not be the best way to determine teacher performance, and that these certifications were often conducted for political purposes rather than to actually measure teacher effectiveness. Yet, neither Wiseman et al. (2018) nor Wiseman and Al-bakr (2013) discussed the teacher policies reform in the region, even though these studies were conducted after the AGS had launched their reforms.

From a domestic perspective, Al-Asfour (2017) highlighted the challenges facing the teacher education programme at the College of Basic Education (CBE) in Kuwait's Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET). She argued that for the previous two decades, Kuwaiti educational policy reform had overlooked teachers in general, and specifically teachers' pre-service preparation programmes. One of the challenges raised in her article was the low quality of

students, with the CBE having recruited secondary school graduates with low academic performance. As a result, many candidates joining the college lacked the aptitude and prerequisites for becoming effective teachers.

Male and Al-Bazzaz (2015) expanded on this challenge by pointing out that the applicants joining the college were not being assessed for suitability for a teaching career. They attributed the lack of crucial teaching skills to the limited hours of teaching practice provided to CBE candidates before graduation. They reported on the progress of a joint project between the CBE and the UK's University of Hull to review the initial teacher education programme between 2009 and 2013. Progress was slow, and after the completion of Phase 1, a process of non-decision-making caused the project to be stalled and then suspended. Male & Al-Bazzaz (2015) argued that 'intervention at the higher levels of government is required in order to overcome the stagnation of this reform initiative' (p. 2). This demonstrated that the CBE was working in isolation from the MOE's education reform agenda, and that the project ended due to a lack of political will. The current research is interested in understanding these two issues—the lack of collaboration and the lack of political support—in more depth, including the reasons behind them.

A few years ago, this researcher examined teacher professional development in Kuwait by comparing its practice with that of Singapore (Alhouti, 2018). The article argued that formal teacher professional development was absent in Kuwait, and it recommended that the MOE take serious and urgent action to guarantee that its teachers received high-quality professional development. Still, an empirical study is needed to understand more about the absence of this practice among teachers and how it has affected their role. Alsaleh (2019) also argued that the existing teacher professional development did not meet the teachers' needs.

In regard to Qatar, the literature on teacher policies has focused on the teacher licensing system (Abu-Tineh et al., 2017; Ellili-Cherif et al., 2012) and national professional standards (Nasser et al., 2014; Romanowski & Amatullah, 2014). Abu-Tineh et al. (2017) examined the experiences of educators in Qatar with the licensure process. Using a survey study design, the researchers examined the teachers' and school leaders' perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of

the licensure system, professional standards, and professional portfolio. In general, they found that educators believed that the licensure system was improving their performance, that professional standards were useful tools for assessing professional growth and development, and that refining the portfolio for reliability and authenticity was important. In contrast, other participants considered the licensure process a burden, describing it as ‘stressful, depressing, challenging, and time consuming’ (Abu-Tineh et al., 2017, p. 231), and some found it difficult to complete their portfolios. The study concluded that educators needed opportunities to be involved and to play a critical role in designing and implementing the licensure system in order to ‘negotiate the contradictions and dilemmas of accountability measures in light of their own experiences’ (Abu-Tineh et al., 2017, p. 234). In this case, the educators were not part of the planning process.

Ellili-Cherif et al. (2012) found that policies pertaining to the licensure system used unclear terminology and procedures, ignored the opinions of local educators, encouraged unrealistic expectations, lacked consistency, and created resistance on the part of educators. Moreover, they found that policymakers had failed to involve stakeholders such as teachers, school coordinators, administrators, and even parents. They also argued that local culture needed to be taken into account before these imported educational policies could be implemented. However, neither study (Abu-Tineh et al., 2017 or Ellili-Cherif et al., 2012) can be generalised, due to the limited samples.

On the other hand, Nasser et al. (2014) investigated the degree to which teacher-developed curricula were aligned with national standards in Qatar. Romanowski and Amatullah (2014) explored teachers’ perceptions of and experience with national professional standards, presenting findings from 333 teachers who completed an open-ended questionnaire. The teachers thought that professional development was an effective framework for improving the quality of teaching and learning, yet they also raised some concerns regarding these standards. Given the arguments about the complexity of the standards and the lack of significant support, they felt that the standards were not linked with actual classroom practice and that they were adopted from outsiders without any examination to see whether or not they were suited to the Qatari context.

In the case of Bahrain, Haslam (2013) studied the establishment of the BTC and its role in improving performance in the school system. He argued that high-performing national teacher colleges serve to develop the social capital network, which in turn supports education reform. Moreover, Al Ajjawi (2015) examined the overall professional development policy in Bahrain and its association with Grade 8 students' Mathematics scores in TIMSS 2003, 2007, and 2011. The results illustrated that the overall professional development was positively associated with student achievement, although the author claimed that introducing the new professional development policy into the country in 2008 was not a significant factor in student achievement. She noted that investment in teacher professional development activities was beneficial, but that it must be monitored closely and evaluated periodically.

Reviewing the literature on teacher policies and teacher reforms demonstrates that teacher policies reforms in general were not examined as one all-inclusive aspect of the reform agenda; instead, most, if not all, of the literature focused on only one aspect of teacher policies. Furthermore, these studies were not conducted comparatively and hence did not investigate the variations among Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain in designing and implementing these reforms.

Moreover, the review makes it clear that teacher policies in Kuwait have not changed at all since the recent education reform was launched in 2010, while Qatar and Bahrain did implement new policies related to teachers. Despite dissatisfaction among some local educators, Qatar's teacher policies are still in effect, whereas Kuwait has yet to implement any reform in its teacher policies. Therefore, the current study is needed to understand the case of Kuwait, with respect to why teacher policies have not been more strongly aligned with the launching of the education reform.

1.3.4 Summary

The discussion above clearly demonstrates that there is a significant gap in the literature studying teacher policies reform in the AGS. Most of the literature has examined education reforms from the perspective of policy borrowing, and none have examined the policymaking process of the reform. The literature on teacher policies has neglected to take a comparative approach and has not looked at

teacher policies comprehensively. This fact makes the current study original insofar as this is an entirely new area of research in the region. The regional picture regarding teacher policies reforms is unclear, and there are many unanswered questions that require new research to reach a coherent understanding of the situation.

Therefore, the contribution of this thesis is to understand not only the variations among Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain in reforming teacher policies, but also the reasons behind these variations. Moreover, this study places emphasis on understanding why Kuwait was not interested in implementing teacher policies. The following section will outline the 'outcome of interest', which is concerned with the differences among Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain in designing and introducing teacher policies reforms; this will allow a more detailed presentation of the research problem.

1.4 Outcome of Interest

This research aims to compare the efforts of Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain in designing and implementing teacher policies reform. It is particularly concerned with analysing why Kuwait was less engaged in reforming teacher policies. An examination of the reforms in these three countries identified variations in the design of teacher policies reforms, and this piqued my interest to understand these in greater depth. The initial investigation made it clear that Bahrain and Qatar showed more interest in reforming teacher policies than did Kuwait.

The remainder of this section will summarise the education reform agendas and teacher policies agendas of the three countries, and further details will be discussed later, in Chapter 2. In light of the comparative logic of the Most Similar System Design (MSSD) that will be employed in this research, this section begins by presenting the positive cases, namely Bahrain and Qatar. These two countries are constructed as positive cases because both of them have successfully implemented teacher policies reform. This thesis defines success in a simple way; if a promised reform is implemented within the scheduled time frame, it is considered a successful implementation. The last part of this section will address Kuwait, which is construed as a negative case because it failed to implement teacher policies reform, in striking contrast to Bahrain and Qatar.

1.4.1 Positive Cases: Bahrain and Qatar

Bahrain and Qatar launched education reforms at around the same time in the 2000s; Qatar started the reform process in 2001, whereas Bahrain began four years later, in 2005. Both countries pursued the same goals in reforming their education systems, namely, to develop and grow their economies.

Both Bahrain and Qatar hired international consulting firms, McKinsey & Company and the RAND Corporation respectively, to create reform agendas and conduct diagnostic research into the causes of the weak performance of their educational systems. Both Bahrain and Qatar employed expert consultants to develop teacher policies as well as to design implementation strategies; Qatar engaged with numerous consultants from Australia, England, New Zealand, and the United States, but Bahrain collaborated only with Singapore's NIE.

In preparing the reform agendas, Bahrain and Qatar involved a large number of stakeholders, including the MOE and other governmental bodies. Moreover, individuals with a high level of authority, such as the Crown Princes in Bahrain and Qatar, personally provided strong support to the reform movement. Furthermore, both countries devolved the responsibility for reform to a quasi-governmental agency to oversee the policymaking and the implementation. Therefore, in Bahrain, the Education Reform Board (ERB) took the leading role in reforming the education system, in coordination with the MOE and other stakeholders.

Similarly, the leadership in Qatar recognised that the MOE was entrenched in the old education system and that, because it was responsible for the failure of that system, it was not capable of handling the new reforms. Therefore, they established the Supreme Education Council (SEC) and gave it legal authority over the MOE. The main aim of this new council was to play a significant role in education reform, and it was responsible for the practical success of the reform referred to as the EFNE, which laid out the design and implementation of K-12 education reform in Qatar.

The Bahraini and Qatari education reform agendas were very similar, as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. Here, it is important to emphasise that a considerable part of the reform agenda focused on strengthening the teaching

profession by reforming the current teacher policies to make them compatible with the new education system that was to be introduced. In terms of policy reform initiatives, both Bahrain and Qatar managed to develop initial teacher training, teacher selection policies, teacher professional development, and teacher performance management, even though they took different approaches.

For instance, Bahrain established the new BTC to replace the Education College at Bahrain University. In contrast, Qatar restructured the existing Education College at Qatar University, after abolishing the previous teacher programme because of its outdated structure. Qatar also established several initiatives such as the Teacher Preparation and Certification Program (TPCP) and a new post-bachelor teacher training programme.

In regard to teacher selection, Bahrain adopted a more aggressive process for selecting applicants to join the teachers college. In Qatar, the newly established Professional Licensing Office (PLO) took responsibility for registering teachers and awarding professional licences to those whose evidence of practice met the national professional standards.

Finally, both Bahrain and Qatar redesigned their teachers' professional development, basing them on clearly defined professional standards to ensure that teachers received the training they needed to develop their teaching practices. In summary, both countries have succeeded in implementing all the teacher policies reform initiatives that were included on their education reform agendas.

1.4.2 Negative Case: Kuwait

On the other hand, the development of education reform in Kuwait failed to keep pace with Bahrain and Qatar, especially in regard to policies on teachers. Kuwait initiated its reform later than Bahrain and Qatar did; it was a much slower process and ultimately was less successful in large part.

The Integrated Education Reform Program (IERP) was introduced as late as 2010, by which time both Bahrain and Qatar had already implemented most of the items on their reform agendas and had even gone on to evaluate some of the policies. The aims of reforming the education system in Kuwait were largely the

same as in Bahrain and Qatar; Kuwait wanted to improve the quality of schools and education practice as well to enable pupils to acquire useful skills.

Unlike in Bahrain and Qatar, though, the development of the reform agenda in Kuwait did not involve the key stakeholders; the MOE and the National Center for Education Development (NCED) worked in isolation from other stakeholders. Furthermore, unlike in Bahrain and Qatar, the responsibility for developing reforms remained with the MOE instead of being assigned to a quasi-governmental agency, so the Minister of Education was solely in charge of the reform. There was a considerable turnover of education ministers between 2003 and 2020, when 11 ministers were variously in charge, and also of the NCED leaders; these circumstances did not occur in either Bahrain or Qatar.

In contrast to Bahrain and Qatar, Kuwait did not conduct diagnostic research to examine its education system prior to launching the reform; its only diagnostic research was conducted by Singapore's NIE in 2013, but by this time, Kuwait had already launched its reforms, so the results were not used to inform them. Moreover, Kuwait worked solely with the World Bank, which was the only partner to design and implement the education reforms, including some of the teacher policies. As noted above, Bahrain and Qatar brought in expert consultants from teacher training institutions to develop their teacher policies.

Kuwait's education reform agenda was not much different from those of Bahrain and Qatar, but there was a significant difference in terms of reforming policies pertaining to teachers. Unlike Bahrain and Qatar, Kuwait has neglected to develop these policies. Teachers were barely mentioned in Kuwait's reform agenda; the only two initiatives introduced were teacher licensing and teacher standards, and even these have not been implemented in practice. Unlike Bahrain and Qatar, Kuwait did not address initial teacher training, teacher professional development, or teacher recruitment policies.

Against this diverse background of paths to develop teacher policies reform in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, this thesis attempts to explain why implementing teacher policies reform was successful in Bahrain and Qatar but not in Kuwait. This major question will be explored in this research by integrating a comparative MSSD approach with a qualitative approach. The comparative MSSD approach aims to

develop generalised explanations of large-scale outcomes through systematic comparative analysis that tests a set of contrasting empirical cases. Employing an empirical qualitative approach provides the further data necessary to examine some of the most important explanations behind the differences identified (Ragin, 2014). This study will attempt to answer the following question:

Why has Kuwait been less successful than Qatar and Bahrain in reforming teacher policies?

This study aims to identify and examine the main factors that prevented Kuwait from introducing and implementing teacher policies reform. The comparison among Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain will help to develop a mid-range explanation. Bahrain and Qatar are constituted as 'positive' cases as they share a common outcome, namely the introduction of teacher-related policies as part of their reform agendas. In searching for a set of interrelated common explanations that may have had a significant effect on this outcome, it was found that the two positive cases shared many distinct factors that were absent in the negative case, and this should make it easier to isolate relevant explanations. The positive cases in this study will not be discussed as extensively as the negative case because the main concern is to understand the reasons behind Kuwait's neglecting to reform teacher policies.

1.5 Purpose and Significance of the Research

First, this study will compare the approaches to designing and implementing teacher policies reforms in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain. To identify the similarities and differences among these three countries, it will study the teacher policies reform from a politics perspective so as to determine the policymaking process and to identify the state's interest in reforming education; it will do so by looking at the particular actors who were involved in the process and how the state managed to deliver and implement the reforms.

Second, the study will investigate why Kuwait has not prioritised teacher policies as part of the education reform projects and why it has made no changes to the relevant policies since adopting the reform agenda in 2010. When the country started to reform its education system, policies regarding teachers were

indeed included on the agenda, yet none of these policies has been implemented to date. This study aims to understand what led to this outcome.

Moreover, this study is significant in trying to fill a noticeable gap in the literature. This gap calls for research supported by empirical data that will help explain what was happening on the ground in terms of teacher policies in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain. This research also attempts to study teacher policies reform in these three countries from a political perspective, which seems to be an entirely new research topic in the region. Furthermore, the findings may raise awareness and cause policymakers in Kuwait to focus more strongly on the importance of reforming teacher policies.

1.6 Thesis Structure

This thesis is divided into eight chapters. This introduction forms the first chapter, which contains an overview of the research, the context of the study, a review of the relevant literature regarding teacher policies and teacher reforms relating to education reforms in the Gulf region, and the outcomes of interest. The chapter ends by highlighting the main purpose and the significance of this thesis.

The second chapter expands the outcome of interest in more detail. It presents the education reforms in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain in general, and teacher policies reforms in particular, to illustrate the similarities and differences in the reform of teacher policies in these three countries.

The third chapter provides the theoretical and conceptual framework. It starts by discussing the policymaking process in the Gulf region, to demonstrate the limitations of Arabian political theories that account for this policymaking process. The chapter presents two political theories that were found to be suitable for explaining the policymaking process in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain. To provide an overview of reforming education systems, it then discusses policymaking in education and education reforms.

The fourth chapter presents methodological considerations and the research design. It begins by justifying the need for a comparative approach and explaining how this helps in understanding the research questions. The comparative method of the MSSD is introduced and explained in more depth to

illustrate how the method was employed to choose Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain and to identify the explanatory factors. The methodological approach of the qualitative research, and its suitability for understanding the situation under investigation, is addressed. The chapter also discusses the data collection and analysis, as well as ethical considerations.

The fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters form the comparative analysis of the study and are concerned with answering the research question. These three chapters consider the implications of the MSSD in order to analyse the ways in which the explanatory factors are present or weak/absent in each case under investigation, and how these factors can explain the presence or absence of the outcomes of interest. Each chapter discusses one of the explanatory factors that were identified in the research; Chapter 5 discusses the motivation of the ruling establishments for reforming the education system, Chapter 6 discusses the stability of the administrations responsible for the reform, and Chapter 7 discusses the stakeholders' involvement in the reform process.

Chapter 8 is the closing chapter, which reflects on the analyses presented in this thesis. It starts by considering the research's main argument explaining the reasons behind the lack of implementing teacher policies reforms in Kuwait, and then it moves on to summarise the findings of the preceding chapters. It presents the contributions of this research to the literature, its limitations, and potential future areas of research. Finally, the chapter reflects on the significance of this study for Kuwait in moving towards successful reform implementation in the future.

Chapter 2 Teacher Policies Reform in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain

2.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 1, the Arab Gulf States (AGS) have invested very heavily in the education sector over the last two decades, providing free education for all their citizens. Yet, this high level of investment has not yielded returns in terms of the quality of education provided, and students still lack twenty-first century skills. To face these significant challenges, the AGS launched ambitious and comprehensive educational reforms to improve their educational outcomes and thereby develop their 'human capital'. The main motivation for these reforms was to move towards a 'knowledge-based economy' in order to decrease the over-reliance on oil and gas revenues and help build a sustainable economy in the region.

Numerous educational reforms were launched in many forms and with different targets, so studying and discussing every reform in the region would be a huge task that is beyond the scope of this thesis. In order to gain an in-depth understanding of the policymaking process, this study will focus particularly on teacher policies reform, which was one part of the comprehensive system-wide reforms that were introduced at the national level in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain.

Before moving forward in presenting the teacher policies reforms in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, it would be useful to provide here a short background about the teachers in these three countries. Teaching as a profession is not considered a high-status job in the region (Ridge, 2014) even though all teachers today are required to have a four-year Bachelor's degree (Wiseman & Al-baker, 2013). In Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, high-performing students in high school are not motivated to become teachers, and joining the college of education is typically not their first choice when seeking higher education (Brewer et al., 2007; EDB, 2006a; Male & Al-Bazzaz, 2015). Although several attempts and actions have been taken to make this profession more attractive, the figures still show that teaching is seen as a job for women and expatriate Arabs (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1

Public School Teachers by Nationality and Gender in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain in 2013/2014[5]

	KUWAIT	*QATAR*	*BAHRAIN*
Total	55,238	12,087	13,971
Males	15,933	2,914	5,265
Females	39,305	9,179	8,706
National	30,328	3,295	11,271
Expatriate	24,910	8,792	2,700*

Source: (GCC-Stat Center, 2017)

* The number of expatriate teachers in Bahrain was not available in this report; this number was taken from an educational official working in Bahrain.

Table 2.1 illustrates two main points: 1) that the majority of the teaching workforce in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain are female teachers, and 2) that in Kuwait and Qatar, the expatriate share of the teaching workforce is huge in comparison with the national workforce. In Qatar, expatriates make up 73% of the total teaching workforce, and in Kuwait, 45% of the teaching workforce are expatriates, while in Bahrain, the figure is lower at 19%. According to the data available from GCC-Stat Center (2017), Qatari male teachers form only 0.02% (219 teachers) of the entire teaching workforce. In Kuwait, there were only 15 Kuwaiti male teachers teaching English in primary schools in 2015-2016, in comparison with 177 expatriate male teachers (Ministry of Education, 2017).

Most expatriate teachers working in these countries are recruited from the wider Arab world, from countries such as Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Palestine, Morocco, and Tunisia. These teachers were trained in their home countries and subsequently recruited to teach in the region (Ridge, 2014), and this fact has consequences for the quality of their teaching, since they come from totally different teacher training institutes and have different teaching approaches. The

5 This statistic was used because it was the latest statistic available that included the three countries under investigation.

working conditions for these expatriate teachers are markedly different from those of the national teachers; in general, they work more and are paid less, and they do not have the same rights as national teachers (Ridge, 2014). For example, in Kuwait, national teachers have priority for appointments to leadership positions even when expatriates are more qualified for those positions.

As discussed previously (see Chapter 1), after oil was discovered and the states started to build their institutions, their populations were mostly illiterate; therefore, the AGS sought to attract a large expatriate workforce, mostly from Arab countries, to do the work. Teaching was one of the professions that the region was dependent on to expand the education system. Also, Ridge (2014) noted that at that time, 'There were not yet universities or teacher education programs in the Gulf, and as such, there were very few national teachers' (2014, p. 88). That is why this kind of job is considered to be a job for expatriates, especially for males.

Moreover, the education system in the region is highly segregated, with schools for boys staffed by men and schools for girls staffed by women. Since a large number of male teachers are required, and not many male citizens are motivated to join the profession, the majority of male teachers are expatriates who are brought in to fill the shortage. In Kuwait, for example, there were around 5,521 national male teachers and 24,807 national female teachers; on the other hand, there were 10,412 expatriate male teachers and 14,498 expatriate female teachers (GCC-Stat Center, 2017). In the Gulf region, males have many more employment options than females do; these include joining the defense or police forces, both of which pay more than teaching and require less education (Ridge, 2014). Male and Al-Bazzaz (2015) argued that females were pressured by their parents to choose teaching as a suitable job, for they can more easily balance work and family; also, many families would prefer for women to work in jobs that are not in a mixed gender working environment.

Many teacher policy reforms have been launched in the AGS to fix this issue of the low status of the teaching workforce and to attract more highly qualified youth to join the teaching profession. This chapter expands on the outcome of interest that was presented very briefly in Chapter 1; it presents the education reforms in general, and teacher policies reform in particular, in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, to

identify the similarities and differences in reforming teacher policies. To determine why Kuwait has not been successful in implementing teacher policies reform, a comparative approach will compare Kuwait with countries that shared somewhat similar political systems, economic challenges, and approaches to reform.

The presentation of the educational reforms below illustrates notable variations in teacher policies reform between Kuwait, on the one hand, and Bahrain and Qatar, on the other. This is especially true when it comes to the number of policies that each of them sought to reform, as well as their implementation (or lack thereof), and these variations must be understood in great depth.

To present the outcome of interest in more detail, this study relied on a wide range of primary and secondary literature that included policy documents, official government websites, consultants' reports, political and educational research studies, international reports, press articles, and news reports. Due to the inadequacy of policy documents related to educational reform in Kuwait, interviews with policymakers (PM) and faculty members (FM) in Kuwait were used to complete some missing information.

The following four main themes were established to present the education reform and teacher policies reform in each country:

- When was the education reform introduced and what was its aim?
- Who was responsible for the reform and who else was involved?
- What was the reform agenda?
- How were the teacher policies implemented?

2.2 Bahrain

Bahrain faced challenges similar to those in the rest of the AGS in terms of the low quality of the education system, and this was reflected in poor student achievement in international assessments such as TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) and PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study). Moreover, Bahrain was experiencing economic problems because its oil was starting to run out, and unlike the other AGS, the government could no longer maintain the same level of funding for education or other sectors. These

circumstances compelled Bahrain to become economically dependent on Saudi Arabia during the past century (Kinninmont, 2011).

In early 2000, the Economic Development Board (EDB), chaired by the Crown Prince, First Deputy Prime Minister HRH Prince Salman Bin Hamad Al Khalifa, was established as a public agency to support initiatives to enhance Bahrain's economy. The board's focus was on three main categories of reforms: economic, labour market, and educational (EDB, 2017). Therefore, educational reforms were only one component of wider economic reforms intended to prepare Bahrain for the twenty-first century by reducing its dependence on oil.

2.2.1 When Was the Education Reform Introduced and What Was Its Aim?

In 2005, the EDB collaborated with McKinsey & Company to prepare educational reforms aimed at improving the education system to meet the needs of the twenty-first century, by upgrading the skills and knowledge of Bahraini citizens to match the needs of the labour market and increase productivity. To ensure that Bahrain's citizens met international standards for global economic competition, the education reform was divided into three phases: diagnostic, strategic, and implementation of the reform initiatives (EDB, 2006a).

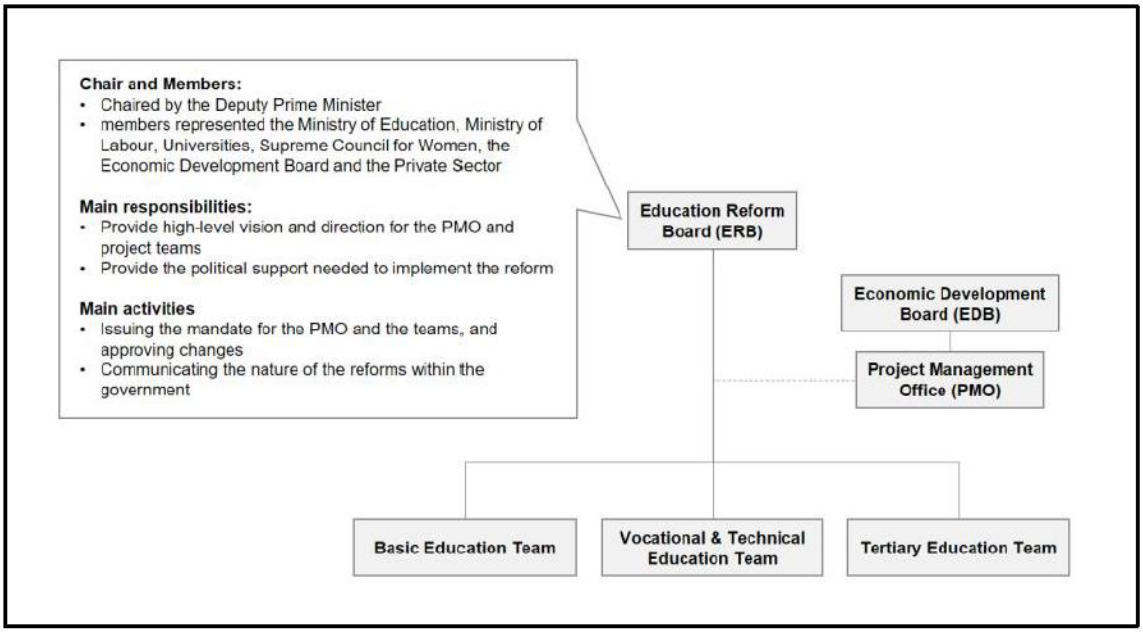
The EDB requested that McKinsey first analyse the education system to assess the performance level of students and to identify problems in the system. In conducting a diagnostic study, McKinsey worked with a team comprising representatives from the EDB, Ministry of Education (MOE), Ministry of Labour, University of Bahrain (UOB), and vocational educational providers. The diagnostic study, which took six months, involved several surveys with parents of students in both private and public schools, interviews with officials at the MOE and UOB, and school observations (EDB, 2006a). The report found that the two main factors contributing to the poor performance of Bahrain's education system were the curriculum, which was based on knowledge instead of skills, and the poor quality of teachers. This report was presented at a workshop hosted by the Crown Prince for around 200 key officials in Bahrain (EDB, 2006a).

2.2.2 Who Was Responsible for the Reform and Who Else Was Involved?

In early 2006, a reform plan for the education system started to be developed, and the Education Reform Board (ERB) was established with a mandate to oversee the development and implementation of the reform strategy. The ERB was led by the Deputy Prime Minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, and included the main education stakeholders in Bahrain, such as the Minister of Education, Minister of Labour, President of UOB, Chief Executive of the EDB, General Secretary of the Supreme Council for Women, Chairman of the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Second Deputy Chairman of the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry, along with a few members from the private sector. The ERB's main role was to lead the strategy phase and recommend initiatives that would offer the most potential for improving the education system (EDB, 2006a).

Figure 2.1

Bahrain's Education Reform Governance Structure (Mohamed, 2019, p. 178)



With that goal in mind, three working teams were established, as illustrated in Figure 2.1: the Basic Education Team, the Vocational & Technical Education Team, and the Tertiary Education Team (Mohamed, 2019, p. 178). Each team included members from the MOE, Ministry of Labour, UOB, Supreme Council for Women, and other public and private sector organisations. Members of each team travelled to several benchmark countries to deepen their understanding of other

education systems, and they carried out much of the research and work that led to the development of the strategy (EDB, 2006a; Mohamed, 2019).

2.2.3 What Was the Reform Agenda?

Based on McKinsey's analysis, the ERB proposed a number of reforms, prioritising four main initiatives to be implemented in the first two years: (1) creating an independent Quality Assurance Authority, (2) strengthening the teaching profession, (3) creating a polytechnic college, and (4) improving secondary vocational education. The final reform agenda was presented by the ERB and approved by the Prime Minister in September 2006, marking the start of the implementation phase for the first wave. After this approval, there were a number of press conferences and workshops at the MOE level to present the reform agenda (EDB, 2006a).

2.2.4 How Were the Teacher Policies Implemented?

The Bahraini leadership heavily stressed reforming and developing teacher policies because they believed that 'the quality of teachers is the most important factor that influences the quality of learning' (EDB, 2006a, p. 3). Thus, a large part of the reform focused on ensuring that Bahrain had the best possible teachers.

In order to strengthen the teaching profession, the EDB appointed Singapore's National Institute of Education (NIE) to work with the MOE and UOB to develop and reform teacher education and policies. Before starting its work, the NIE conducted a needs analysis study through surveys and interviews with teachers, school principals, and MOE officials. Their aim was to assess teacher education, including the development needs of new and trained teachers, and to review teacher competencies (Ministry of Education & NIE, 2007). They took a number of actions, including: (1) attracting and selecting better candidates for teachers, (2) creating a new teacher training college, (3) improving in-service teacher training, and (4) developing teacher performance management (EDB, 2006a).

Attracting and Selecting Better Candidates for Teachers

To ensure that top students in Bahrain would see teaching as a profession of choice, the Profile, Selection and Criteria Initiative (PSCI) set up a rigorous process

for selecting the applicants who would become teachers. Prior to the reform, there were no clear criteria for recruiting teachers; once prospective teachers completed their training at the UOB College of Education (COE), they went on to apply for a job in the MOE. The selection process was based simply on the date they applied and the date they graduated, without taking into account any teacher competencies (EDB, 2006a, 2008). The result was an oversupply of applicants who might not be the best candidates for a teaching position.

Bahrain now follows a rigorous process for selecting suitable teacher candidates. The selection process starts before they enter the teacher training college, with acceptance based on a specific set of criteria meant to attract the best of the best candidates. To be considered, the candidates' GPA should not be less than 80% at the time of graduation from secondary school (EDB, 2006b). They then undergo screening that includes submitting CVs, testing to measure academic ability (e.g., numeracy and literacy), and interviews conducted by school head-teachers and experts to evaluate their suitability for a teaching career. In addition, the PSCI team developed a publicity campaign called 'Raise Your Hand—Teach', which was targeted at students in secondary school and university (EDB, 2006a, 2008).

Creating a New Teacher Training College

Before the reform, pre-service teacher training was conducted in the COE at UOB. The College's training programmes and syllabus were overly focused on introducing students to the theory of teaching rather than providing them with practical teaching skills (EDB, 2006a). The analysis by the MOE and the NIE stressed that to 'achieve the goals of education reforms teachers and principals need to learn new roles and ways of teaching' (Ministry of Education & NIE, 2007, p. 22).

As a result, the COE was abolished and replaced in September 2008 by the new Bahrain Teachers College (BTC), modelled after Singapore's NIE to offer high-quality training programmes for incoming and current teachers and principals. The BTC came to be in charge of both the pre-service and in-service training of teachers and school principals to ensure that the programmes were consistent, that they comprehensively addressed teacher training needs, and that they

remained relevant to the actual needs of the school system as stipulated by the reform strategy (EDB, 2006a, 2008).

In contrast to the old COE programmes, the BTC shifted the focus to practical training and coaching, concentrating on teaching skills and knowledge. To ensure that only top-performing students would be trained, the BTC's candidates were evaluated based on their skills and potential before they were even chosen to enrol in the college (EDB, 2006a, 2006b). Bilingualism and academic ability were among the skills that entry-level candidates needed to possess so that they could handle the English-based reading and research materials recommended by the NIE (Haslam, 2011), but there was no further declaration of other prerequisite skills or potential needed for the BTC's candidates.

Improving In-service Teacher Training

Before Bahrain implemented its education reform, the MOE was responsible for all in-service programmes for teachers and school principals, but the diagnostic study found that the number and the quality of these programmes were inadequate. The teachers were receiving only three hours of in-service training annually, which was less than in most top-performing countries (EDB, 2006a).

The MOE worked closely with the NIE and the BTC to review and develop a systemic approach towards in-service training of teachers and school principals. To this effect, the MOE established the Professional Development Continuum Model (PDCM). This provided teachers and school leaders with a range of pathways and flexible options for upgrading their professional knowledge and practice, giving them the opportunity to select the training modules that they were interested in and that best fit their needs (EDB, 2008; Ministry of Education & NIE, n.d.).

The PDCM had the following intended outcomes: to upgrade subject knowledge, update teachers with pedagogical innovations in subject teaching, enhance teachers with new competencies in response to their needs and demands, and keep teachers and school leaders abreast of new developments and initiatives in education. It was also intended to educate teachers with research

and management skills and to improve teaching effectiveness through life-long learning (Ministry of Education & NIE, n.d.). In summary, the PDCM provided teachers with:

> a rich environment loaded with teaching materials and opportunities for creativity, exploration and discovery. The participants in PDCM courses are expected to be very proactive in their thinking and class participation. They are actively involved in contributing data, ideas, views, information, solving problems, analyzing and so forth (Ministry of Education & NIE, n.d., p. 11).

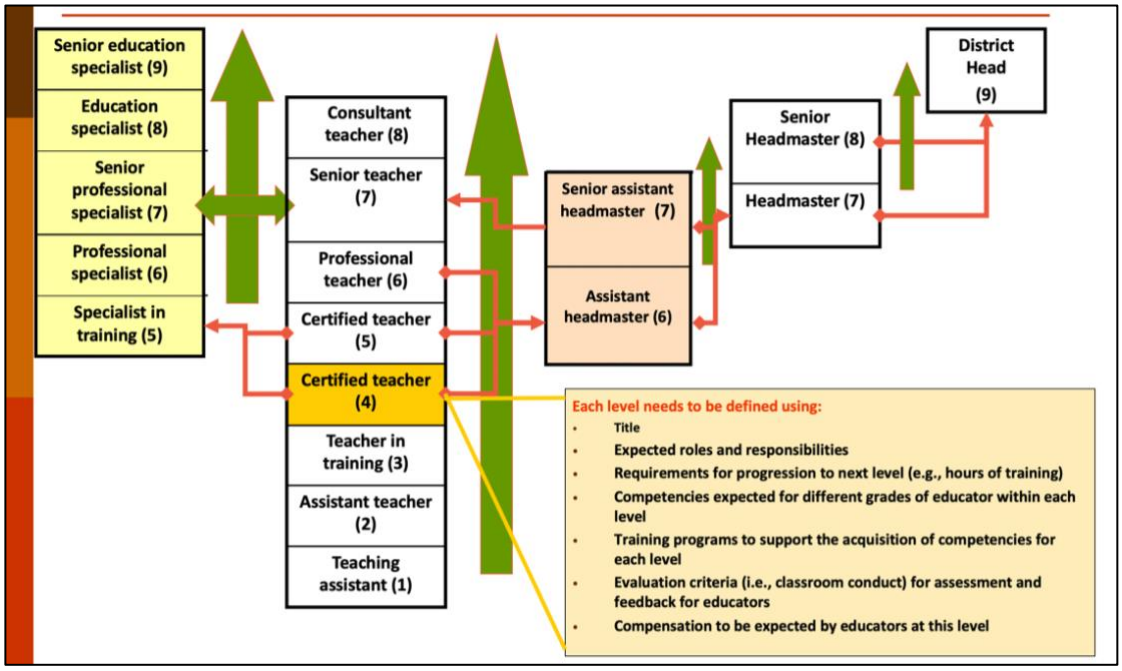
In this regard, the PDCM managed to shift the participants from being largely passive observers to becoming proactive. Currently, the BTC is responsible for delivering the PDCM programmes, and teachers and school principals are required to undertake 90 hours of in-service training each year (EDB, 2006a, 2010; Haslam, 2011).

Developing Teacher Performance Management

In 2004 (before the reforms), the MOE had established a new 'Teacher Cadre' policy regulating the educational career tracks and offering options for professional career advancement. This programme defined three different paths for all education staff in schools: the teacher path, the specialist work path, and the leadership path (Figure 2.2). The career paths had multiple grades covering all levels, from new teachers to senior teachers to consultant teachers to principals, with corresponding pay grades, and it offered teachers the flexibility to choose the path that fit with their skills. However, McKinsey's diagnostic study stated that teacher competencies were not defined in the Teacher Cadre, so the required training needed to be defined and linked with teacher competencies at each level (EDB, 2008, 2010).

Figure 2.2

Bahrain's Teacher Performance Management (EDB, 2008)



To address this, the MOE collaborated with the NIE in 2007 to define the competencies for every grade in each path of the Teacher Cadre and to determine the content of in-service training by linking the PDCM with the Teacher Cadre (Ministry of Education & NIE, n.d.). In addition to facilitating career growth, the Teacher Cadre also included a number of developmentally appropriate training programmes, based on the competencies of each grade in a path, that teachers must complete before moving from one grade to the next. It required 90 hours each year, 360 hours every four years, to move to the next level (Haslam, 2011).

2.2.5 Summary

As mentioned above, Bahrain was facing economic challenges due to declining oil production. This reality motivated them to embark on several types of reform, including education reform that heavily emphasised teachers and improving teacher policies and practices. Table 2.2 illustrates that Bahrain's rulers led the education reform but also involved a large number of stakeholders in the policymaking process.

Table 2.2

Summary of Bahrain's Education Reform

When	2005
Political sponsor	The Crown Prince (Sheikh Salman Bin Hamad Al Khalifa)
Institution responsible	Education Reform Board (ERB)
Oversight	The Deputy Prime Minister (Sheikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa)
Main consultant	McKinsey & Company
Teacher policies consultant	National Institute of Education (NIE), Singapore
Who was involved	- Minister of Education - Minister of Labour - President of University of Bahrain - Supreme Council of Women - Chief Executive of EDB - Private sector representatives - Chairman of the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Diagnostic study main finding	The curriculum was based on knowledge and not on skills, and the quality of teachers was poor
Reform agenda	1. Create a Quality Assurance Authority 2. Strengthen the teaching profession 3. Strengthen school leadership 4. Create a polytechnic college 5. Improve vocational education
Teacher policies reform agenda	1. Attract and select better candidates 2. Improve pre-service teacher training 3. Improve in-service teacher training 4. Develop teacher performance management
Implementation	- Launched the Profile, Selection and Criteria Initiative - Established the Bahrain Teachers College (BTC) - Professional Development Continuum Model (PDCM) - Developed Teacher Performance Management

Moreover, Bahrain relied on international consultants for advice on how to carry out reforms and how to design and implement teacher policies. Bahrain's reform agenda promised four main initiatives related to teacher policies, which they successfully managed to deliver. These initiatives were related to teacher selection through launching the PSCI project, pre-service training through establishing the BTC, in-service training through establishing the PDCM, and developing teacher performance management. Together, these four areas were considered to form a comprehensive project with regard to teacher policies.

2.3 Qatar

In general, the educational reforms in Qatar were not that different from those in Bahrain, especially when it came to the level of involvement of the royal family and stakeholders in the reform process, as well as the emphasis on teacher policies. Qatar was not facing the same economic challenges as Bahrain because it has the world's third-largest reserves of natural gas and is the largest exporter of liquefied natural gas; with its small population of around 300,000, Qatar has the world's highest per capita GDP (Tok et al., 2016). Nonetheless, economic diversification remains a top national economic priority for the Qatari monarchy (Wright, 2011).

Qatari leaders recognised that their education system, originally adopted from Egypt in the 1950s, was deficient in a number of key areas; it did not meet twenty-first century needs to provide productive citizens, especially in comparison with education models in other developed nations. They were concerned that the system was not achieving high-quality outcomes for students in the areas of academic achievement, college attendance, and success in the labour market (Alfadala, 2015; Brewer et al., 2007).

2.3.1 When Was the Education Reform Introduced and What Was Its Aim?

Qatar's leaders saw education as the key to economic and social progress, and they aimed to build a 'world-class' system to compete in the global economy by ensuring that the school curriculum was aligned with national priorities and international development goals. Therefore, the leadership acknowledged the need for system-wide reform to the K-12 education system. In 2001, the leader at the time, Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, commissioned the RAND Corporation—an American think tank—to review the existing system, recommend reforms, and devise a plan to implement them (Brewer et al., 2007).

The Qatari leadership convened a Coordinating Committee, which included high-ranking decision-makers, to collaborate with the RAND team to study and evaluate their education system. Sponsored by the Amiri Diwan (the working

palace),[6] its role was to arrange meetings with relevant constituents and help RAND's researchers to understand Qatar's social and cultural contexts (Brewer et al., 2007).

After gathering relevant information by observing schools, interviewing more than 200 individuals, and analysing documents, RAND and the Coordinating Committee produced an initial assessment that partially confirmed the Qatari leaders' assumptions that the nation's schools were failing to prepare Qatari students for modern life.

The team identified four main problems underlying the poor performance of the education system. First, the MOE lacked vision and had little capacity for growth and progression, due to its hierarchical structure and lack of communication. Second, the curriculum was outdated and rigid; it did not challenge the students or provide them with the knowledge and skills that Qatari leaders were looking for. Third, the schools did not have any autonomy or accountability. Finally, teachers were not of a high quality because of poor pre-service and in-service training, low pay and incentives, and a poor teacher allocation policy (Brewer et al., 2007).

2.3.2 Who Was Responsible for the Reform and Who Else Was Involved?

The RAND report stated that 'reforming the Ministry of Education would be a Herculean task for even the most dedicated internal change agents' (Brewer et al., 2007, p. 44) and that the MOE had no mechanisms for implementing changes or handling reforms. The Qatari leadership recognised that the MOE was part of the old, failing system that had become rigid, outdated, and resistant to reform efforts (Alkhater, 2016; Brewer et al., 2007). RAND's assessment concluded that system-wide reform was required to successfully implement change and that the solution was to form new institutions beyond the MOE structure.

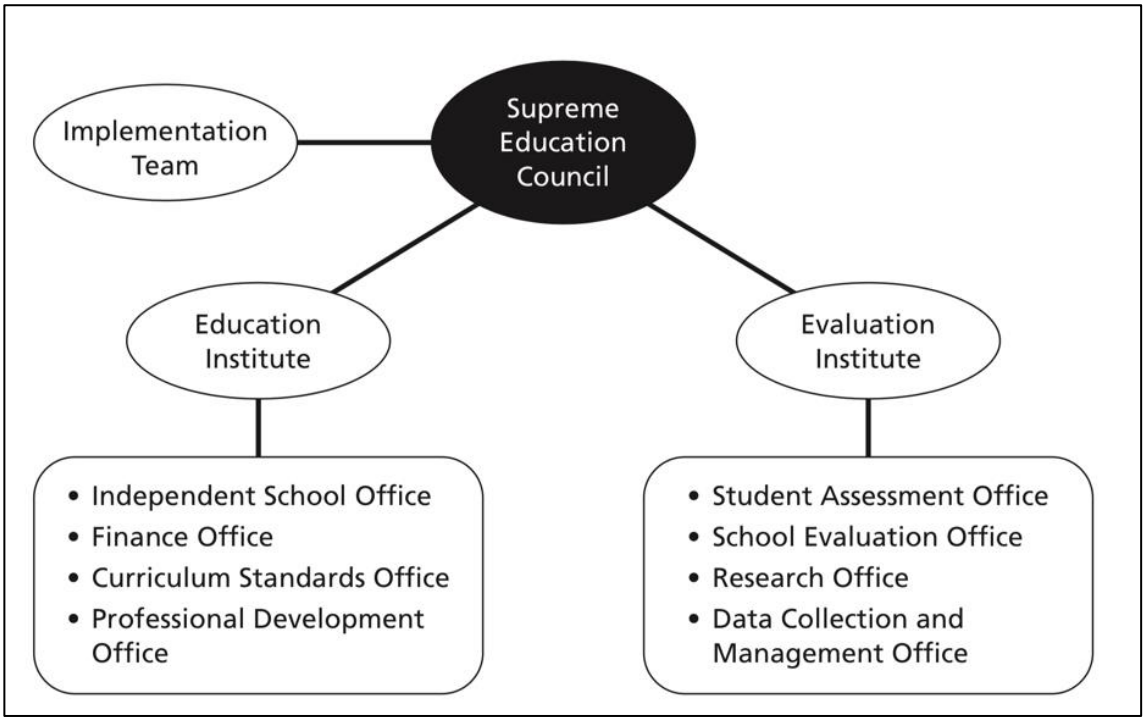
To this end, the Supreme Education Council (SEC) was established in November 2002 and given legal authority over the MOE as well as oversight of the

6 'The Amiri Diwan is the seat of rule of the State of Qatar. It is the sovereign body and the administrative office of HH The Amir. It acts as a nexus between His Highness and all governmental and non-governmental bodies internally and externally' (Amiri Diwan, 2021, para. 1).

Education Institute, the Evaluation Institute, and the Implementation Team. Figure 2.3 illustrates the structure of the SEC and lists the offices within the two institutes. The main aim of this council was to direct the reform of the nation's public schools and improve their overall quality, so it played a major role in implementing education reforms and was responsible for the practical success of the Education for a New Era (EFNE), which laid out the design and implementation of K-12 education reform in Qatar. The MOE thus became a stakeholder and policymaking entity (Brewer et al., 2007).

Figure 2.3

Qatar's Education Reform Governance Structure (Brewer et al., 2007, p. 71)



The SEC was chaired by the Crown Prince, His Highness Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani (who became the Emir in 2013), with Her Highness Mozah bint Nasser Al Missned, the First Lady, as vice chair. It also included six influential and committed individuals from government, business, and higher education, who represented the perspective of consumers of the K–12 system, including the MOE.

To ensure that stakeholders were engaged in the reforms, a communications office reported directly to the SEC, and it was charged with developing a communications strategy to present the new initiative to decision-makers, educators, and the broader society. It provided information on reform

progress and activities, oriented to the needs and interests of parents, students, teachers, principals, and the media (Brewer et al., 2007).

2.3.3 What Was the Reform Agenda?

After a process of deliberation and debate among the RAND team, Qatari leadership, and stakeholders, RAND proposed and described three different reform models:

- **Modified Centralised Model**: Requiring the fewest changes to the existing system, it would leave the MOE in charge of making most decisions but would emphasise more school autonomy, with limited parental choice.
- **Independent School Model**: Involving partial decentralisation, it would allow most decisions to be made at the school level and permit parents to choose from multiple types of schools; it would also set up an independent monitoring body.
- **Voucher Model**: A highly decentralised, fully privatised system.

The Qatari leadership chose the second option because they believed that given the failure of previous attempts, the reforms were not likely to bring about significant changes if the MOE retained authority. They asked RAND to establish a reform plan based on the Independent School Model and to develop an implementation plan with detailed task lists and timelines. The reform agenda also addressed curriculum standards, assessments, and professional development of teachers and school leaders (Brewer et al., 2007).

The RAND team collaborated with the Coordinating Committee to develop the EFNE reform plan, and they presented it formally to the Qatari leadership in June 2002. It consisted of: (1) a new organisational structure for the education sector, (2) the Independent School Model, (3) a standards-based curriculum, (4) national professional standards for teachers and school leaders, and (5) standardised pupil assessments. The Qatari leadership approved the plan, so the SEC and its associate institutes, the Implementation Team, and the other offices started working with the RAND team and other international consultants to develop and implement the reform's initiatives (Brewer et al., 2007; Nasser, 2017).

2.3.4 How Were the Teacher Policies Implemented?

To ensure that teachers would be qualified to work with the new school model, the Education Institute sought to develop training programmes that included professional development activities based on clear standards that were linked to the new curriculum and to pupil assessments. The EFNE reform project emphasised the importance of teacher quality for enhancing the standards and, especially at this stage, the need for teachers to be selected according to specific criteria and then to be trained well (Brewer et al., 2007). Accordingly, the EFNE contained a number of teacher-related initiatives, including teacher preparation, teacher standards, a teacher licensing system, and teacher professional development (Abu-Tineh et al., 2017; Al-Kaabi, 2017; Brewer et al., 2007; Ellili-Cherif et al., 2012; Romanowski & Amatullah, 2014; SEC, 2007).

Teacher Preparation

After the Centre for British Teachers (CfBT) designed a new standardised curriculum in May 2003,[7] the SEC asked RAND to work with the Education Institute to develop an initial teacher training programme to commence in September 2003. It also appointed the CfBT and the University of Southampton to design and implement the Teacher Preparation and Certification Program (TPCP) to prepare teachers for the new standardised curriculum by introducing a range of teaching strategies, methods for planning and assessment, and ways of incorporating learning technologies in the classroom. The programme also included an in-school teaching experience component (Brewer et al., 2007).

As part of the reforms, the COE at Qatar University had reformed its teacher training programmes and introduced two additional programmes, the Bachelor of Education in Primary Education and the Bachelor of Education in Secondary Education,[8] prepared in collaboration with Texas A&M University (Brewer et al., 2007). The aim of these new programmes was ‘to produce a cadre of teachers

7 This organisation has been renamed the Education Development Trust, but this thesis uses CfBT to match the policy documents which refer to it that way.

8 The COE was the first higher education institution in the State of Qatar and remains the sole entity for the preparation of teachers (College of Education, n.d.)

who have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to transform the vision of Qatar's Education Reforms into reality' (College of Education, 2019b, para. 2).

In addition, the COE established a new Department of Psychological Sciences, which made a significant contribution to Qatar's education reform plan, the EFNE (College of Education, 2019b). Qatar University also collaborated with Texas A&M to provide a post-graduate teacher training programme oriented towards teaching in accordance with the new curriculum standards (Brewer et al., 2007).

Teacher Standards

One key aspect of the reform agenda was the development of the Qatar National Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders (QNPSTSL). In 2006, the SEC requested Education Queensland International (EQI) of Australia to develop these standards. EQI engaged with different stakeholders in the Qatari education system—such as independent schools, private universities, School Support Organisations (SSOs),[9] Qatar University, and SEC officials—to solicit their input. According to the SEC, the actual education environment in Qatar and the goal of the reform initiatives were both taken into account in developing the standards (Al-Kaabi, 2017; Romanowski & Amatullah, 2014).

As explained by the SEC (2007), the QNPSTSL provided 'a common reference point to describe, celebrate and support the complex and varied work of teachers and school leaders in the new independent schools' (p. 1). The goal of these standards was to improve teaching practice, which would in turn have a positive effect on learning outcomes. The QNPSTSL comprised 12 interrelated standards that spanned the teaching career; Figure 2.4 shows the skills and knowledge found to be required for effective teachers and school leaders. The standards also provided a framework that identified and described specific tasks and requirements of teachers working in independent schools (SEC, 2007).

9 SSOs refers to a group of international experts including Multiserve (New Zealand), Mosaica (United States), and the CfBT; it was contracted by the SEC to support schools and help them implement suitable teaching practices (Brewer et al., 2007).

Figure 2.4

Qatar's National Professional Standards for Teachers (SEC, 2007)

1. Structure innovative and flexible learning experiences for individuals and groups of students.
2. Use teaching strategies and resources to engage students in effective learning.
3. Foster language, literacy and numeracy development.
4. Create safe, supportive and challenging learning environments.
5. Construct learning experiences that connect with the world beyond school.
6. Apply ICT in managing student learning.
7. Assess and report on student learning.
8. Apply knowledge of students and how they learn to support student learning and development.
9. Apply teaching/subject area knowledge to support student learning.
10. Work as a member of professional teams.
11. Build partnerships with families and the community.
12. Reflect on, evaluate and improve professional practice.

As a response to the issuance of the QNPSTSL, the COE invited its education partners and other stakeholders—including the MOE, the SEC, and administrators and teachers from several independent schools—to discuss the further development of the QNPSTSL in regard to its own conceptual framework, which contained eight-unit learning outcomes aligned with the new QNPSTSL (College of Education, n.d.).

Teacher Licensing System

In alignment with the QNPSTSL, the SEC's Evaluation Institute worked with New Zealand's Cognition Education Group in 2007 to establish and implement the country's first ever licensing policy for teachers and school leaders. The Professional Licensing Office (PLO) was established in the same year to oversee the registration and licensing system; it became responsible for the quality of teachers' and school leaders' practices and for ensuring that teachers and school leaders met the standards set out in the QNPSTSL. The PLO established three professional levels for teachers: entry, proficient, and advanced. The licensing policy was an essential part of the reform, and licensed teachers had to demonstrate their professional qualifications and build capacity across schools by moving among different schools (Abu-Tineh et al., 2017; Ellili-Cherif et al., 2012).

In 2008, the professional licence officially became a requirement for all teachers and school leaders working in the independent schools. To obtain a licence, teachers had to complete a portfolio that included evidence of their practice, with each item linked to a particular standard in the QNPSTSL. Upon

earning the full licence, teachers and school leaders were eligible for monthly financial rewards in recognition of their efforts to achieve ‘excellent practice’, and they had to renew the license every three years by submitting an updated portfolio (Abu-Tineh et al., 2017; Al-Kaabi, 2017; Ellili-Cherif et al., 2012).

Teacher Professional Development

From the beginning, RAND recognised that if teachers and school leaders were to work in accordance with the reforms’ initiatives, they needed to undergo professional development that was based on clear standards and linked to the new curriculum and assessment system. To this end, the Professional Development Office (PDO) was established under the SEC’s Education Institute to provide professional development programmes for teachers, school leaders, and school operators in the independent schools. Its role was to ‘conduct needs assessments for professional development, designing activities and programmes, and identifying appropriate outside providers’ as well as ensuring that the professional development programmes were aligned with the QNPSTSL (Brewer et al., 2007, p. 75).

With the establishment of the new Independent School system, it was recognised that developing a strategy for ensuring an adequate supply of highly qualified and well-trained professionals was fundamental to the success of the system. Thus, the Education Institute engaged with the CfBT to provide standards for implementation and support in professional development training for teachers and instructional leaders, in coordination with SSOs and their professional development plans, and also with staff from the Education Institute and Curriculum Standards Office. During the first year, the SSOs worked closely with teachers in each Independent School. Furthermore, the Education Institute established a teachers’ Internet network to facilitate sharing of their teaching practices and curriculum materials (Brewer et al., 2007).

As a result, teachers in the independent schools – both Qataris and non-Qataris – received substantial professional development, in sharp contrast with the situation in the MOE schools ‘where early-career Qatari teachers receive small amounts of professional development, and non-Qatari teachers are not eligible for any professional development’ (Brewer et al., 2007, p. 160). In addition, the

Education Institute played an integral role in supporting teachers and school leaders through professional development opportunities based on the QNPSTSL, especially after establishing the licensing system (SEC, 2007).

2.3.5 Summary

The education reform in Qatar demonstrated a wide range of similarities with the case of Bahrain, especially when it came to reforming teacher policies. Although Qatar was not facing the economic challenges that Bahrain was facing, the Qatari leadership was still passionate about diversifying the economy by moving towards a knowledge-based economy.

As Table 2.3 indicates, Qatar's rulers were actively involved in the reforms; the Emir, his Crown Prince, and the First Lady were all main actors who provided unlimited political support. The MOE was not in charge of the reform; instead, the reform was supervised by the SEC and involved numerous national and international stakeholders. Qatar relied on five different international consultancies to deliver teacher policies reform, with each one assigned to design and implement one of the teacher-related initiatives. Like Bahrain, Qatar managed to implement all of the teacher-related projects on its reform agenda.

However, a number of criticisms surfaced regarding how the EFNE projects were implemented, and all the projects have since been re-evaluated. The main shift in 2002, from the MOE to the SEC, was reversed in 2009, when the Ministry of Education and Higher Education again took the lead on education affairs (Alkhater, 2016; Al Meezan, 2009; Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2019). In providing some explanation for this shift, Alkhater (2016) argued that the EFNE faced several policy issues, such as the 'complexity that surrounds educational policy borrowing', the 'interdependence between policy design and policy implementation', the 'unintended consequences of the policy itself or of the other related policies which lead to counterproductive results', and finally, the 'shortage of results-based and test-based assessment' that the EFNE was built on, which she claimed 'can give a false sense' if there is too much reliance on these results (pp. 122–123).

Table 2.3

Summary of Qatar's Education Reform

When	2001
Political Sponsor	The Emir/ Ruler (Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani)
Institution Responsible	Supreme Education Council (SEC)
Oversight	The Crown Prince (Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani)
Main Consultant	RAND Corporation
Teacher Policies Consultant	- Education Queensland International (EQI) of Australia - The Centre for British Teachers (CfBT) - University of Southampton - New Zealand Cognition Education group - Texas A&M University
Who Was Involved	- The First Lady, Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser - Qatar University - Qatar Petroleum - Ministry of Education - State Audit Bureau - Qatar Chamber of Commerce & Industry - Chairman of the Executive Team of the Education Development Project
Diagnostic Study's Main Findings	The MOE lacked vision and growth, the curriculum was outdated, schools were without autonomy and accountability, and teachers are not of high quality.
Reform Agenda	1. Independent School Model 2. New organisational structure for the education sector 3. Develop the curriculum standards 4. National professional standards for teachers and school leaders 5. Develop the assessment system
Teacher Policies Reform Agenda	1. Teacher preparation 2. Teacher standards 3. Teacher licensing system 4. Teacher professional development
Implementation	- Established Professional Development Office (PDO) - Teacher Preparation and Certification Program (TPCP) - Issued the QNPSTSL - Established the Professional Licensing Office (PLO)

It is important to note that all the reformed teacher-related policies are still in place today. Currently, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education is responsible for the QNPSTSL and issuing teacher licences (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2017), and it has worked with the COE, which took responsibility for the design, preparation, and presentation of all professional development training based on the national professional standards for teachers, twenty-first century teaching skills and competencies, and teachers' job descriptions (College of Education, 2019a).

2.4 Kuwait

The development of education reform in Kuwait occurred in sharp contrast to that in Bahrain and Qatar, especially regarding the policy actors and the teacher policies reform, which were ultimately unsuccessful in large part. Although Kuwait has the oldest education system in the AGS, dating back to 1911 when the first formal school was opened, and it took the lead in supporting the rest of the AGS in their transition to formal education (see Chapter 1), it has struggled much more than the rest of the AGS to improve the quality of its education system (Al-Shehab, 2010; World Bank, 2008). Winokur (2014) argued that this was due to the government's failure to develop its education system over the past 30 years, which meant that students were not receiving an education that would adequately prepare them for the future. Moreover, Kuwait's participation in TIMSS assessments since 1995 illustrated that the performance level of its students was much lower than the rest of the AGS students. Alhashem and Alkandari (2015) highlighted some of the reasons for this low performance (see Chapter 1).

Even though Kuwait, unlike Bahrain and Qatar, did not conduct a diagnostic study of its education system before establishing its reform agenda, it did engage international consulting agencies on different occasions for advice on both its education system and economic matters. These included McKinsey & Company, Tony Blair Associates, the British Council, the CfBT, and Singapore's NIE. All these consultants agreed that the education system needed to be developed and reformed to meet urgent economic and social goals (Blair, 2009; British Council, 2007; CfBT, 2007; McKinsey & Company, 2007; NIE, 2013).

2.4.1 When Was the Education Reform Introduced and What Was Its Aim?

In 2010, the MOE and the World Bank agreed on the Education Technical Cooperation Program to develop the education system in Kuwait. The Minister of Education at the time, Dr Moudi Al-Humoud, stated that 'launching this agreement with the World Bank will allow Kuwait to benefit from the knowledge and experience of this premier international institution and from its global expertise in the education field'. She added that 'this agreement provides support to the Ministry of Education in the area of formulation and the implementation of reforms program' (KUNA, 2010, para. 2).

The agreement between the MOE and the World Bank formed the Integrated Education Reform Program (IERP), which was divided into two phases. The first phase was to last five years, from 2010 to 2014; the second phase began in 2015 after the Minister of Education, Dr Bader Al-Issa, signed a new five-year agreement with the World Bank (Al-Dulaimi, 2016; World Bank, 2014). The first phase was a continuation of work begun in 2003, when a World Bank team conducted a public expenditure review and focused on strengthening the MOE's information system and involvement in assessments by:

> Establishing national indicator reports and an Education Monitoring and Information System (EMIS) to increase the amount of reliable data, introduce alternative approaches to education budgeting and finance, and strengthen both national and international learning assessments. (World Bank, 2015)

This project was called the Kuwait Education Indicators and Assessment Project. Once it was in place, the focus of the MOE and the World Bank shifted towards improving the quality of the general education system through the IERP project, which aimed to improve the quality of schools and education practice and thus to enable pupils to acquire useful skills (World Bank, 2015).

Kuwait's government allocated a large budget for the IERP of around 182 million Kuwaiti dinars, equivalent to 500 million GBP (New Kuwait, 2019). The purpose of the reform was to improve the quality of schools and education in Kuwait, enabling citizens to acquire the skills needed in the modern age to play their role in achieving sustainable development in the state (Al-Dulaimi, 2016; World Bank, 2014).

It should be noted that this was not the first attempt at reforming Kuwait's education system in the twenty-first century. In 2008, the MOE announced the 'Education Reform Based on School Improvement' under the administration of the Minister Nouriya Al-Subeeh. It comprised 15 different reform projects, two of which focused on improving teachers' pre-service and in-service training (Ministry of Education, 2008). After that government resigned, though, the reform lost momentum and was never implemented (Interviews with FM03, FM12). This thesis will focus on the IERP project that appears to have survived and been integrated into the New Kuwait Vision 2035.

2.4.2 Who Was Responsible for the Reform and Who Else Was Involved?

In 2006, the government of Kuwait established the National Center for Education Development (NCED) based on a proposal from the Minister of Education at that time, Dr Adel Al-Tabtabai, to help the MOE develop its education system. According to the law that established the NCED, it is to be led by a director who is appointed by the Minister of Education and confirmed by the Board of Trustees; the board is chaired by the minister, who is the supreme authority in supervising the affairs of the centre (Alturki, 2006). Since then, the MOE and NCED have collaborated with the World Bank to oversee education reform in Kuwait (World Bank, 2014).

However, since the establishment of the NCED in 2006, there has been a large turnover in its administration. The centre also faced challenges from the MOE in regard to its structure and its calls for more autonomy. While the latter was refused, the controversy delayed its official launch until 2010, when the centre was officially opened and the Minister, Dr Moudi Al-Humoud, appointed a director for it (Interviews with FM12, PM04, PM08).

Between 2010 and 2018, two directors were appointed to lead the NCED, but since 2018, it has been led by two acting directors (Alfadly, 2018); as of this writing, the Minister of Education has still not appointed a permanent director. In addition, the MOE itself has experienced a high turnover at the ministerial level; from 2003 until the time of this writing – around 16 years – the MOE has been led by 11 different ministers, with some holding the position for only a few months (Council of Ministers General Secretariat, 2019).

2.4.3 What Was the Reform Agenda?

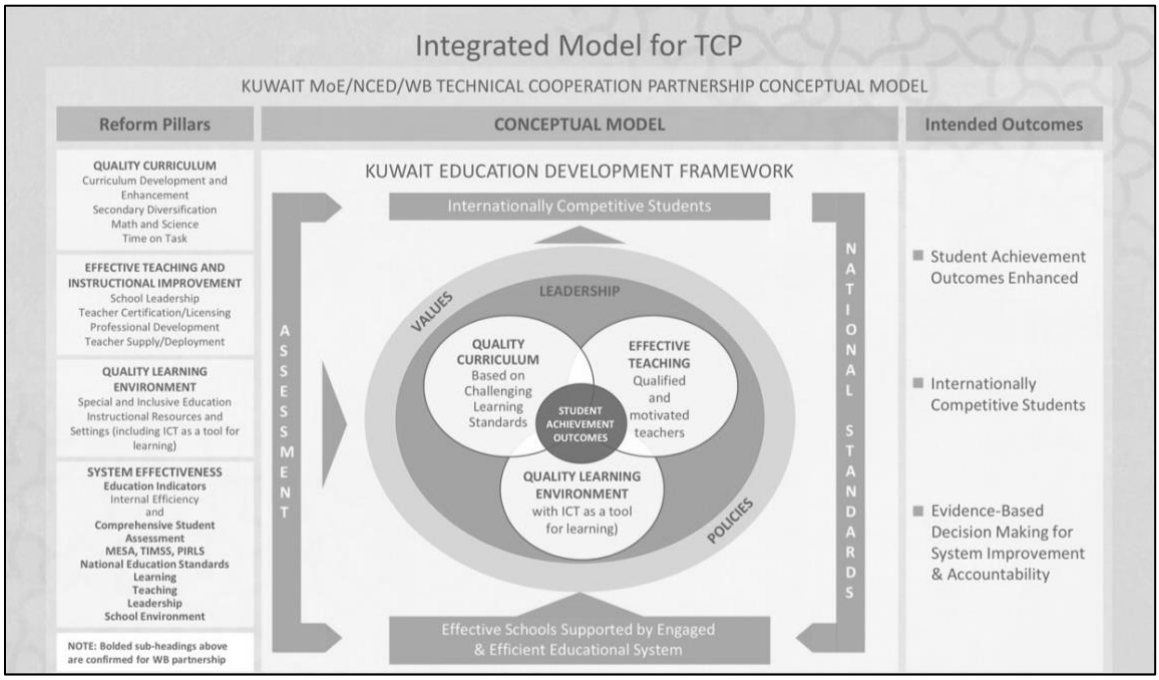
Kuwait's education reform agenda was not significantly different from that of Bahrain or Qatar, but theirs were based on evidence collected during an assessment of their education system. In Kuwait, the agenda was based on a comprehensive conceptual model provided by the World Bank (Figure 2.5). It focused on four key areas (under each of which were a number of initiatives): a quality curriculum, effective teaching and instructional improvement, a quality learning environment, and system effectiveness (World Bank, 2014). Once the MOE adopted this integrated model, the model formed Kuwait's education reform

agenda, and the MOE, NCED, and World Bank worked together to deliver its features, which included:

(1) **developing a competencies-based curriculum**; (2) diversifying secondary education; (3) **improving school leadership**; (4) licensing teachers; (5) special and inclusive education instructional resources and settings; (6) promoting ICT as a tool for learning; (7) **developing education indicators**; (8) **developing a comprehensive student assessment programme for Math, English, Science, and Arabic (MESA)**; and (9) **developing national standards for learning, teaching, leadership, and school environments** (Ministry of Education, 2013; World Bank, 2014).

Figure 2.5

Kuwait's Integrated Education Reform Conceptual Model (World Bank, 2014, p. 11)



Based on the World Bank (2014) report, the reform initiatives (the projects in boldface above) were confirmed as part of the World Bank partnership with the MOE and NCED, and a contract was signed between the MOE and World Bank to deliver them (Interviews with PM01, PM04), while the rest were divided between the MOE and NCED. For instance, the teacher licensing was part of the NCED's responsibility (SCPD, 2018), while promoting ICT as a tool through the 'Tablet Project' was part of the MOE's responsibility (Interview with PM01).

It is important to note that not all of the projects listed above were implemented, although some were fully implemented, including the competencies-based curriculum for Grades 1–12 for 12 subjects, including the National Curriculum Framework and teaching plan; the national assessment MESA; the technical support for school leadership policy reform on school restructuring, including job descriptions; and administrative procedures (World Bank, 2014). In addition, the MOE distributed more than 80,000 tablets to schools (KUNA, 2015) at a cost to the government of around 26 million Kuwaiti dinars (Alhamady, 2018).

2.4.4 How Were the Teacher Policies Implemented?

In regard to teachers, only two initiatives were included in the reform agenda: the teacher licensing project and the teacher standards (which were part of a wider project to develop national standards). However, neither the MOE nor the NCED issued any detailed information about these two projects.

As a result, there is no information available on what this licensing system looked like, who was in charge of it, what teachers needed to do to obtain the licence, or other related topics. There is also a lack of data on teacher standards, for neither the MOE nor any other official body issued documents listing these standards or explaining how they would be used. All that was available were press announcements promising that the policies were ready and would be implemented soon. This section discusses these two teacher policies, which have yet to be implemented.

Teacher Licensing

This section will present the announcements and promises of official policymakers, in both the MOE and the NCED, from 2011 until the date of this writing (Table 2.4). The timeline of the teacher licensing project, from the first MOE announcement until 2020, confirms that this policy has not yet been not implemented.

Table 2.4

Official Announcements and Promises of the MOE and the NCED in Regard to Kuwait's Teacher Licensing Project

YEAR	ANNOUNCER/ACTOR	ANNOUNCEMENT/ACTION
2011	Minister Al-Mulaifi	Established a committee led by the Undersecretary of Public Education, Mona Al Logani, and including the deans of both education colleges, to study the teacher licensing project.
2013	Minister Al-Hajraf	'The licence will be implemented in 2015, and no longer will teachers practice teaching without obtaining the licence'.
2013	The MOE	Published the IERP document stating that the teacher licensing would be fully implemented in 2014/2015.
2014	MOE Undersecretary Al-Wateed	Met with the NCED and the World Bank to discuss the teacher licensing project and announced that the project would be implemented in early 2015.
2015	NCED Director Al-Khayat	'The licence project is approved and will be implemented soon'.
2016	NCED Director Al-Mukhaizeem	'The teacher licensing is ready and will be implemented in April 2017'.
2016	Minister Al-Issa	'The MOE is continuing to prepare the teacher licensing'.
2017	Minister Al-Fares	Signed a memorandum of cooperation with the National Center for Assessment in Saudi Arabia to collaborate with the NCED to design the licensing system.
2018	MOE Undersecretary Al-Athary	'The teacher licensing is in the final stages'.
2019	Minister Al-Azmy	'The achievement of the teacher licensing project reached 69%, and the implementation will be in March 2020'.
2019	MOE Undersecretary Al-Harbi	Led a meeting at the MOE with the NCED to discuss the challenges facing the project and prepare a new executive plan.
2020	Minister Al-Harbi	'The implementation of the teacher licensing needs a long process'.

During the preparation of the teacher licensing project, there were six Ministers of Education, four undersecretaries of public education, and four directors of the NCED who were engaged directly in the project (Figure 2.6). Whenever the minister and administration changed, substantial changes were made in regard to who was involved in the policymaking process, affecting both the stakeholder involvement and the consultant adviser. The design was constantly being revised, from drafting to finalisation; as soon as it reached the implementation phase, new players arrived on the scene, and the project started over from the beginning (as can be seen in Table 2.4 and Figure 2.6).

Moreover, the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (GSSCPD) stated that the licensing project was facing several challenges which affected its implementation: first, financial constraints related to a delay in adopting the budget; secondly, administrative constraints related to the slow pace of the documentary cycle of contractual procedures; and lastly, technical problems related to project delays caused by modifications needed to comply with the memorandum of cooperation signed with the Saudi National Center for Assessment (SCPD, 2018).

Teacher Standards

The teacher standards project was part of the technical assistance component of a joint effort by the MOE, the NCED, and the World Bank to develop national education standards for Kuwait. The writing group, which first came together for five days in November 2012, consisted of teachers, teacher educators from the MOE, and members of the Kuwait Teachers Society (KTS). After two more writing workshops, the group had completed the first draft. The final draft of the framework was expected to be ready in June 2013 after a process of consultation and validation (Ingvarson, 2013). The standards were intended to be used for accreditation of teacher education programmes, registration of new teachers for full entry to the profession, and advanced certification of teachers (Ingvarson, 2013, para. 4).

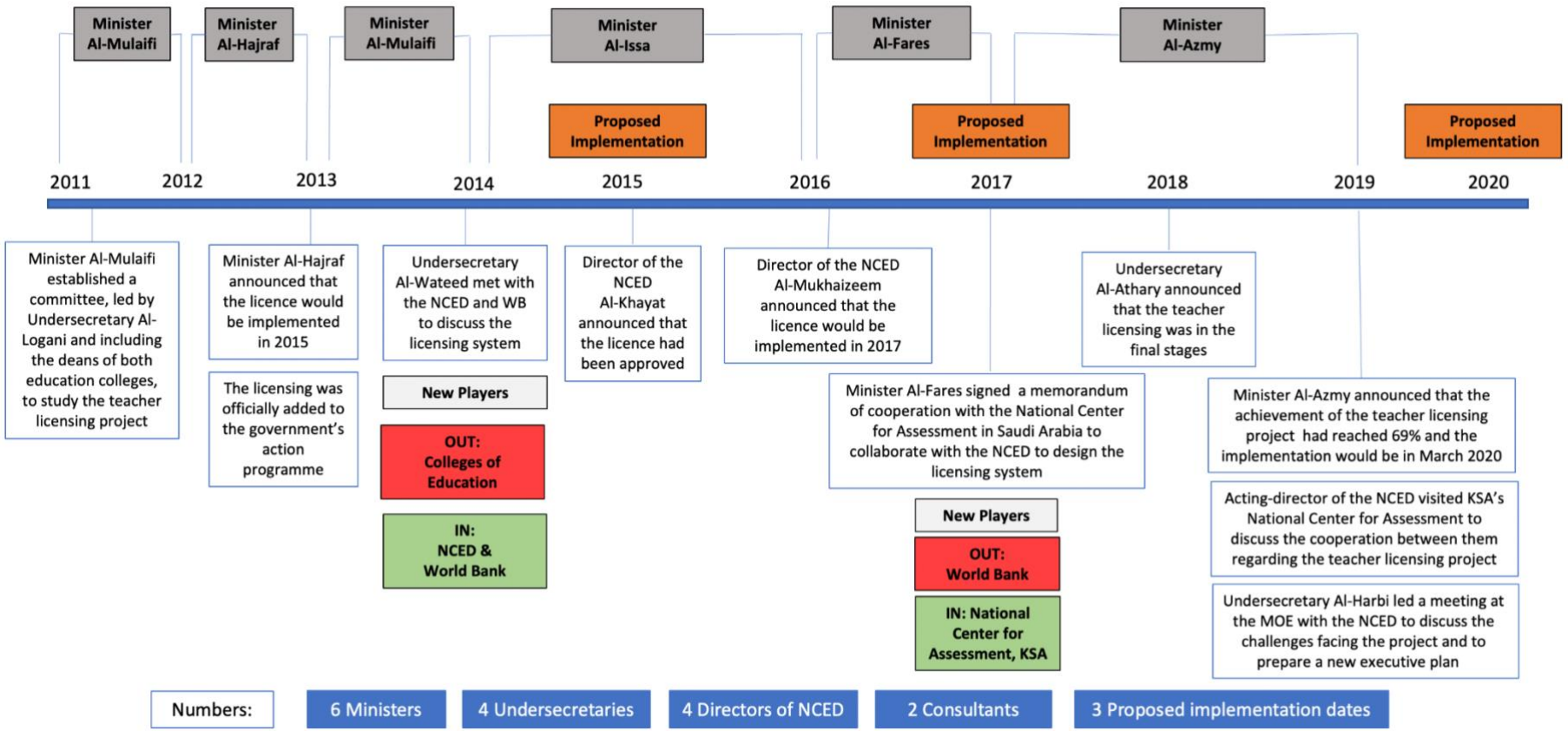
According to Ingvarson (2013), the leader of the National Teaching Standards Writing Group, the standards were written in such a way that they:

> indicated what kind of evidence might be gathered to show that a teacher had met the standards. At this stage, the standards only indicate what teachers should know and be able to do. Methods for gathering evidence about a teacher's performance and methods for assessing whether that performance meets the standards will need to be established before the standards are fully developed (para. 6).

More information about teacher standards is not available, and the MOE has not announced when these standards will be implemented.

Figure 2.6

Kuwait's Timeline for the Teacher Licensing Project



2.4.5 Summary

The case of Kuwait demonstrates a sharp contrast with the cases of Bahrain and Qatar, mostly in terms of reforming teacher policies. Although Kuwait shares many commonalities with Bahrain and Qatar, the way it handled and managed its education reform looks different. Table 2.5 shows that the reform was not allocated to a quasi-government body; instead, the MOE was responsible for the reform, even though its administration was not stable. In addition, the MOE and the NCED were working in isolation from others, not involving other stakeholders in the reforms.

Table 2.5

Summary of Kuwait's Education Reform

When	2010
Political sponsor	No Sponsor
Institution responsible	Ministry of Education
Oversight	Minister of Education
Main consultant	World Bank
Teacher policies consultant	No consultant
Who was involved	- MOE - NCED
Diagnostic study main finding	No Diagnostics
Reform agenda	1. Develop a competencies-based curriculum 2. Diversify secondary education 3. Improve school leadership 4. Teacher licensing 5. Special and inclusive education instructional resources and settings 6. Promote ICT as a tool for learning 7. Develop education indicators 8. Develop a comprehensive student assessment programme for Math, English, Science, and Arabic (MESA) 9. Develop national standards for learning, teaching, leadership, and school environments
Teacher policies reform agenda	1. Teacher licensing 2. Teacher standards
Implementation	No implementation yet

Kuwait did not conduct a diagnostic study to determine the main reasons behind the low performance of its education system. Its education reform agenda promised to reform only two policies related to teachers, but it failed to implement even those. The purpose of this thesis is to provide an explanation for this failure.

It is essential to mention here that since the writing of this thesis began, many things have changed in reforming the education system in Kuwait. Projects that had already been implemented—such as the competency-based curriculum, the tablet project, the national assessment project, and the technical support for school leadership—were all cancelled without explanation (Alhamady, 2018; Alturky, 2019). Moreover, in December 2020, the Minister of Education, Soad Al-Harbi, sent an official letter to the GSSCPD to suspend all the reform projects and omit them from the development plan. This highlights the failure of reforming Kuwait's education system in general, although this thesis focuses specifically on the lack of implementation of the teacher policies reform.

2.5 Summary: Similarities and Differences in Designing and Implementing Teacher Policies Reforms in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain

As Chapter 1 discussed, Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain have a strong degree of commonality in their political systems (which are semi-constitutional monarchies), cultural and historical backgrounds, economic status and challenges, and major shortcomings in education. Table 2.6, which summarises and compares education reforms across the three countries, illustrates that they also share some similarities in terms of reforming their education systems. They all began around the turn of the millennium, hiring external international consultancies and relying heavily on them to develop and deliver the reform initiatives, and the reform agendas were developed as a set of comprehensive reforms to their education systems. Finally, all of the reforms were justified by the need to improve the quality of the education systems to meet the countries' economic aspirations.

However, the data presented above reveals one major difference in the reform programmes, namely, that Kuwait did not focus on teacher policies to the extent that Bahrain and Qatar did. As of now, Kuwait has not implemented either of the reforms related to teachers, and it remains to be seen if it ever will, whereas Bahrain and Qatar managed to implement teacher policies successfully on the whole.

In Kuwait, unlike in Qatar and Bahrain, none of the members of the royal family was involved in the process. Also, Kuwait did not undertake a diagnostic study of its education system before setting its education reform agenda, and nor did the World Bank. Because both Bahrain and Qatar did so in the early days of the reform process, they were able to recognise that teacher policies had to be reformed. Both countries introduced policies related to initial teacher training and preparation, teacher professional development, teacher selection, and teacher performance management; thus, they managed to cover most policies pertaining to teachers. Kuwait, on the other hand, introduced only two policies, teacher standards and teacher licensing, while ignoring other issues related to teachers.

In contrast to Bahrain and Qatar, Kuwait did not assign the education reform to a quasi-governmental body. It left the MOE in charge of handling the reform, even though the MOE was experiencing huge turnover in its ministerial and administration bodies. Moreover, the MOE did not involve other stakeholders in the reform process, unlike Bahrain and Qatar.

This research aims to understand why these differences exist and why Bahrain and Qatar, which are so similar to Kuwait, managed to focus more on reforming and implementing policies related to teachers, while Kuwait was less successful in doing so. The next chapter will set out the theoretical and conceptual framework for the research, beginning with an introduction to the policymaking process in the AGS, and an explanation of the political theories that will be drawn upon to analyse what was presented in this chapter.

Table 2.6

Education Reform in Bahrain, Qatar, and Kuwait

Country	*Bahrain*	*Qatar*	*Kuwait*
When	2005	2001	2010
Political sponsor	The Crown Prince Sheikh Salman Bin Hamad Al Khalifa	The Emir/Ruler Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani	No political sponsor
Institution responsible	Education Reform Board (ERB)	Supreme Education Council (SEC)	Ministry of Education
Oversight	The Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa	The Crown Prince Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani	The Minister of Education
Main consultant	McKinsey & Company	RAND Corporation	World Bank
Teacher policies consultant	National Institute of Education (NIE), Singapore	- Education Queensland International (EQI) of Australia - The Centre for British Teachers (CfBT) - University of Southampton - New Zealand Cognition Education group - Texas A&M University	No consultant
Who was involved	- Minister of Education - Minister of Labour - President of University of Bahrain - Supreme Council of Women - Chairman of the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry - Chief Executive of EDB - Private sector representatives	- First Lady, Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser - Qatar University - Qatar Petroleum - Ministry of Education - State Audit Bureau - Qatar Chamber of Commerce & Industry - Chairman of the Executive Team of the Education Development Project	- Ministry of Education - NCED
Aims	- Bahrain no longer can depend on oil and gas revenues - Increase the productivity of its workforce	- Create a knowledge-based economy - Build a world-class education system that supports the country's economic and social development and meets its	- Improve the quality of schools and education in Kuwait to enable citizens to acquire modern skills so as to play their role in achieving the country's sustainable development

		ambitious aspirations towards competing in the global economy	
Diagnostic study	Yes, by McKinsey & Company	Yes, by RAND	No
Reform agenda	1. Create a Quality Assurance Authority 2. Strengthen the teaching profession 3. Strengthen school leadership 4. Create a polytechnic college 5. Improve vocational education	1. Independent school model 2. New organisational structure for the education sector 3. Develop the curriculum standards 4. National professional standards for teachers and school leaders 5. Develop the assessment system	1. Develop a competencies-based curriculum 2. Diversify secondary education 3. Improve school leadership 4. Teacher licensing 5. Special and inclusive education instructional resources and settings 6. Promote ICT as a tool for learning 7. Develop education indicators 8. Develop a comprehensive student assessment programme for Math, English, Science, and Arabic (MESA) 9. Develop national standards for learning, teaching, leadership, and school environments
Teacher policies	1. Attract and select better candidates 2. Improve pre-service teacher training 3. Improve in-service teacher training 4. Develop teacher performance mgmt	1. Teacher preparation 2. Teacher standards 3. Teacher licensing system 4. Teacher professional development	1. Teacher licensing 2. Teacher standards
Implementation	- Launched the Profile, Selection, and Criteria Initiative - Established Bahrain Teachers College - Professional Development Continuum Model (PDCM) - Developed teacher performance management	- Established Professional Development Office (PDO) - Teacher Preparation and Certification Program (TPCP) - Issued the QNPSTSL - Established the Professional Licensing Office (PLO)	No implementation yet

Chapter 3 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

3.1 Introduction

This study is concerned with understanding policymaking in reforming the education system in the Arab Gulf States (AGS); thus, it is vital to discuss and review political science theories to develop a conceptual framework to guide the analysis. As discussed previously (see Chapter 1), the aim of reforming the education systems in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain was to overcome the economic crises that these countries were facing, by developing a parallel economic system based on knowledge rather than oil. This shift was needed to improve their human capital and supply a workforce with the knowledge and skills that would make them more productive and hence more competitive. This decision was made by the political bodies in these three Gulf countries in the early 2000s, and this thesis will investigate the policymaking process in light of this economic decision and its impact on education policy reform across the three countries.

This chapter begins by discussing the policymaking process in the AGS and demonstrating some of the limitations of Arabian political theories that are typically used to explain it. Thereafter, the chapter discusses the policymaking process from different perspectives, as presented in the international literature, and focuses on two main theories: the Institutional theory and the Multiple Streams theory. It will show that these two theories are useful for analysing the policymaking process in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, but it will also acknowledge their limitations, which stem from their being developed in different country contexts. Finally, the chapter ends with a discussion about policymaking in the education sector in the AGS, referring to international literature to gain a deeper understanding of the process. The ultimate aim of this chapter is to develop a conceptual framework to draw upon for analysing the educational reforms, and specifically the teacher policies reforms, in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain.

3.2 Policymaking in the AGS

The political systems in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain are all headed by monarchs and considered semi-constitutional monarchies, as declared in their constitutions. Prime Ministers and cabinet ministers are appointed by the rulers, not elected by the people, and most of the key positions of the state are held by the monarchs'

family members in a form of organisation that Herb (1999) termed a ‘dynastic monarchy’. The AGS also established bureaucratic structures under their monarchies, in an action that changed them from ‘traditional authoritarian’ to ‘modern bureaucratic authoritarian’ states (Alnaqeeb, 2006).

Historically, the traditional rule in Kuwait was an accommodation between the ruling Al-Sabah family and the leading merchants. When the latter chose Sabah the First as their ruler in 1752, they agreed that he would handle the daily affairs of the society, while they would control commercial activities and support him financially; in return, he would consult with them on major decisions (Alnajjar, 2000; Roberts, 2011). However, in 1896, Sheikh Mubarak Sabah Al-Sabah, known as Mubarak the Great, imposed a more centralised and authoritarian style after seizing power from his brother through assassination. To secure his rule, he allied himself with Britain, which granted him a stipend (Alnajjar & Selvik, 2016; Roberts, 2011). This agreement between Sheikh Mubarak and Britain made Sheikh Mubarak the first Al-Sabah ruler to act independently of Kuwait’s powerful merchants (Roberts, 2011).

The merchants recognised the threat to their strength and influence and started to form a social movement which laid the ground for establishing the Consultative Council in 1921 to select the next ruler (Alnajjar & Selvik, 2016; Roberts, 2011), yet the Council was ‘soon crippled by bickering and dissolved by the ruler’ (Roberts, 2011, p. 93). A new movement took place in the 1930s which paved the way for the establishment of the first Legislative Council in 1938, but when the merchants attempted to exercise control over army and oil revenues, the ruler at that time dissolved this body (Alnajjar & Selvik, 2016; Roberts, 2011). With the discovery of oil and the resulting total transformation of economic activities in the late 1930s, the power of the ruler increased markedly, and the merchants’ role was transformed, making them dependent on the ruler (Alnajjar, 2000).

The situation in Bahrain was slightly different from that of Kuwait. Bahrain was indirectly ruled by Britain, and it was the seat of Britain’s imperial administration. Most of the key elements of the economic and political systems were formed and controlled by Britain. Bahrain’s current ruling family, Al-Khalifa, came to power in 1738 and managed to bring peace and security to Bahrain, albeit with strong support from the British Royal Navy (Kinninmont, 2011). Britain not only

protected and secured the trade routes between the Gulf and India, but they also interfered in Bahraini domestic affairs, as when they asked Sheikh Issa Al-Khalifa to step down after fifty-four years in favour of his son Sheikh Hamad bin Issa Al-Khalifa. Moreover, Britain kept Al-Khalifa's rule protected from any external power; in return, the Al-Khalifa family refrained from 'fighting to regain territories they had once held on the nearby Qatari peninsula' (Kinninmont, 2011, p. 33). Hence, between 1830 and 1957, all major decisions in Bahrain, both external and domestic, were taken either by the British Political Agent or in consultation with the British adviser (Kinninmont, 2011).

In Qatar, Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al Thani became the ruler following the withdrawal of the Ottomans in 1913. He made the decision to sign a protection agreement with Britain, which 'allowed Qatar to establish a more formal external security arrangement which allowed for a degree of security and autonomy in its domestic affairs' (Wright, 2011, p. 116). The price paid for the British security was that the ruler of Qatar ceded its foreign affairs to Britain, while retaining autonomy over its domestic decision-making. With the protection of Britain, the Al Thanis have maintained their position as rulers of Qatar until today (Wright, 2011). The formation of Qatar's political structure came about only in the 1960s, during the reign of Sheikh Ahmad bin Ali Al Thani. Its provisional constitution, which established the Council of Ministers and the Advisory Council, the first of its kind in Qatar, was written in the 1970s. The Advisory Council members were appointed by the ruler through recommendations from key members of the ruling family (Wright, 2011).

Given the circumstances, these ruling families can be best understood as establishments, especially after the shift from a clan state to a modern state after their nations gained independence in the 1960s and 1970s.[10] Therefore, throughout the rest of this thesis, the term 'ruling establishment' will be used instead of 'ruling family'. This term encompasses the Emir, Crown Prince, and Prime Minister, as well as certain high-ranking individuals who work closely with the Emir as consultants. The reason for rejecting the term 'ruling family' is that

10 Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain were all under British protection before becoming fully independent. For Kuwait, this occurred in 1961; for Qatar and Bahrain, it was in 1971 (Kinninmont, 2011; Roberts, 2011; Wright, 2011).

these families in the AGS are large, and family members do not all have equal power or access to decision-making. Moreover, there are high-ranking people who are not members of the royal family but who nonetheless enjoy considerable access and power to influence the decision-making process. This term is adopted from the Kuwaiti political scholar Shafeeq Ghabra, who in his recent book referred to the Emir as the 'Emir establishment' (*Muasasat al-Emir)* as a way of showing that ruling was not an individual practice by the ruler alone (Ghabra, 2017).

Several political reforms have taken place in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, leading to a more democratic political system and increasing public participation in policymaking by establishing elected legislative institutions (Khalaf & Luciani, 2006; Nonneman, 2006). Alnaqeeb (2006) remarked that the reasons behind this shift and the adoption of some liberal democratic practices were a matter of survival. They were undertaken to maintain legitimacy, especially with international pressure towards democracy being promoted by the US and other Western countries in the early 1980s. Khalaf and Luciani (2006) stated:

> All of the reformists in the GCC admit behind closed doors that they are grateful for some of the subtle diplomatic pressure exerted by the US in the fields of social and political reform. At the same time, almost all reformist voices act independently of foreign pressures on the national political stage. (pp. 9–10)

Kuwait was the first country in the Gulf to establish an elected legislative institution, the National Assembly, after issuing a constitution in 1962 and holding the first parliamentary elections in the region in 1963 (Alnajjar, 2000). The social movements of the 1920s and 1930s in Kuwait, and the later establishment of the Consultative Council and then the Legislative Council, as discussed above, planted the seeds for the establishment of the fully elected parliament. By the time Kuwait got its independence in 1961 and subsequently issued its constitution, political participation had already become part of its political culture (Alnajjar & Selvik, 2016); this may explain why Kuwait was the first and the only Gulf state to have an elected legislative institution. Still, there has been vigorous debate about the effectiveness and the power of the National Assembly, and this will be addressed later in this section.

After Kuwait introduced a law giving its citizens the right to establish professional associations, many professionals—such as teachers, engineers, and

lawyers—applied to register their associations through the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour. The Kuwait Teachers Society (KTS) was established in 1963, and others followed. Professional associations were prohibited by law from interfering in politics, though, and they had no formal access to policymaking because of their limited power; hence, their role was restricted to providing some social services to the society.

In 1973, Bahrain followed the experience of Kuwait and drafted its first constitution, which provided for a fully elected parliament (Herb, 2002; Kinninmont, 2011). After only two years, though, in 1975, the ruler 'grew exasperated at the legislature's refusal to agree to a restrictive law on public security' (Herb, 2002, p. 46) and dissolved the parliament, leaving Bahrain without a parliament (Kinninmont, 2011). Following political reforms, a new constitution was introduced in 2002, and public participation was given a role in the policymaking process again, but in a totally different manner. Bahrain established a bicameral system, with the main legislative body comprised of two houses: the upper house, or Consultative Council (*Majlis al-Shura*), where the members were appointed by the ruler, and the lower house, or Council of Representatives (*Majlis an-Nuwab*), where the members were all elected.

Any disagreement between the elected house and the appointive house was to be resolved by a vote of all members of both houses (Herb, 2002), which meant that the elected house had less power than the 1973 parliament had. Despite the political reform, the ruling establishment still held ultimate power; it gave up none of its privileges, and it retained control over economic resources and political institutions (Khalaf & Luciani, 2006; Kinninmont, 2011).

Qatar, on the other hand, was different. Its new constitution, which took effect in 2005 after a public referendum in 2003, contained promises from the ruling establishment to hold elections for the Consultative Council. Since then, the election has been postponed several times, which means that the ruling establishment has assumed the main power in Qatar's political decision-making (Tok et al., 2016) by appointing both the cabinet and the Consultative Council. The appointed Consultative Council is, together with the cabinet, responsible for the legislative process (Wright, 2011).

A number of scholars have questioned the effectiveness of the democratic movement in the region and the power of these legislative institutions to influence decision-making (Alnaqeeb, 2006; Herb, 2002, 2004; Hertog, 2010a, 2010b; Khalaf & Luciani, 2006). Some have argued that parliaments in the region serve merely as window dressing for liberalisation, without any real democratisation (Alnaqeeb, 2006; Herb, 2002); this fits with the term used by Lührmann et al. (2020) in their recent democracy report that labelled Kuwait and Bahrain 'electoral autocracies'. Hertog (2010b) argued that the rentier system had a negative impact on democracy. He also claimed that opposition movements in the AGS had been absent or 'purely ephemeral phenomena', arguing that there were no labour, bureaucratic, or other interest groups that could veto major decisions (Hertog, 2010a, p. 285).

Moreover, Alnaqeeb (2006) examined the level of democracy in the Gulf and how Western ideologies of democracy might be incompatible with the cultures of other societies. He compared the democratic experience of Turkey, the only Muslim democracy in the Middle East, with that of Kuwait, the first and perhaps the only country in the Gulf that was experimenting with participatory democracy through an elected parliament. Alnaqeeb (2006) highlighted a number of facts about the democracy experiment in Kuwait in order to justify his claims and to answer the question he posed, 'How likely is democracy in the Gulf?'. For example, Kuwait's constitution gives the ruling Emir veto power over the parliament, which means that all legislation needs his approval to be passed into law. Furthermore, one-fifth of the parliament's members are cabinet ministers who function as full Members of Parliament (MPs) even though they are not elected. He argued that these factors prevented Kuwait from having a full parliamentary system and made the royal family more powerful by giving them full control over decision-making. He summarised the experience of democracy in Kuwait by stating:

> The Kuwaiti version of "participatory democracy" exhibits a parliamentary process that cannot form a government or override the veto power of the ruling amir. The parliament also has a permanent prime minister with changing ministers who continually revolve in and out of office and who maintain a permanent parliamentary majority. Thus, an oppositional movement cannot structurally be confrontational. We see the many workings of the technology of control. While Kuwait may manifest the trappings of democracy, it clearly lacks the participation of a democracy. (Alnaqeeb, 2006, p. 136)

This statement indicates how the ruling establishment controls the power of the government through a democratic practice. While Alnaqeeb (2006) focused on Kuwait, this may also explain the situation in other Gulf countries, especially those, such as Qatar, that still do not have a democratic process. Alnaqeeb (2006) concluded that the Gulf rulers had successfully established a complex and effective technique for controlling policymaking decisions. This makes the policymaking process in the Gulf states somewhat exceptional and difficult to understand.

Before moving forward, the discussion of the National Assembly's situation in terms of its effectiveness and its power to influence decisions, will be expanded upon, for two reasons. Firstly, Kuwait's parliamentary process is considered the only such long-standing process in the Gulf region (Alnajjar, 2000). Its fully elected parliament makes Kuwait an exception among the AGS; hence, some scholars tend to overstate its political power (see, for example: Herb, 2013, 2014; Hertog, 2010a; Olver-Ellis, 2020).

Secondly, over the last few decades, Kuwait has been steadily moving in the wrong direction (Bandow, 2017), lagging behind other Gulf states in formulating a comprehensive national development vision (Ulrichsen, 2016b). Numerous reports and research studies have pointed out that Kuwait was lacking in development and implementing reforms (Carvalho et al., 2017; Kerr, 2020; Olver-Ellis, 2020). 'Given the availability of Kuwaiti resources and the number of failed projects, it appears unlikely that the failure is pure coincidence' (Hertog, 2010a, p. 282). This thesis does not attempt to provide a holistic explanation for this failure in all sectors; instead, it concentrates on explaining only one aspect in one sector, that of teacher policies reform.

Scholars who were interested in comparing the level of development in the region and explaining Kuwait's failures typically focused solely on one variable, namely, the elected parliament, and blamed it for any failures (Herb, 2009, 2014; Hertog, 2010a, 2012; Olver-Ellis, 2020; Ulrichsen, 2016b). Herb (2014) claimed that what set Kuwait apart from its neighbours was its political system (p. 142). In another article, Herb (2009) described Kuwait's parliament as 'the strongest in the Gulf and among the strongest in the Arab world' (p. 379). These claims will not be refuted in depth here, but a later discussion will illustrate that Kuwait's political

system, with its elected parliament, is to a large extent similar to those of its neighbours, and the lack of implementing teacher policies reform cannot be attributed to its having an elected National Assembly.

Alnajjar (2000) argued that despite the long-standing experience of the parliament in Kuwait, this experience is imperfect because Kuwait stands between a 'semi-authoritarian' and 'semi-democratic' system (Ghabra, 1994, p. 102). As noted above, the parliament cannot form a government or override the veto power of the ruling Emir (Alnaqeeb, 2006). At the same time, any individual MP can offer an interpellation motion to grill any cabinet minister, including the Prime Minister, and only a simple majority of the elected members is required for a vote of no-confidence in a minister or non-cooperation with the Prime Minister (Ghabra, 1994). This has resulted in a 'hybrid system', divided uneasily between an elected parliament and an appointed government led by the royal family (Ulrichsen, 2014), creating an ongoing political crisis (Alnajjar & Selvik, 2016). Herb (2014) argued that the political structure is unique:

> This is, no doubt, because the form of monarchical rule in Kuwait is uncommon in the modern world; a regime type in which an elected legislature has some authority over a mostly authoritarian executive is not a constellation that occurs frequently. (p. 50)

Because the National Assembly cannot form a government itself, MPs use their constitutional right to question cabinet members and subject them to votes of no confidence. At the same time, the ruling establishment 'felt that their authority and legitimacy should not be questioned' (Ghabra, 1994, p. 104). Alnajjar and Selvik (2016) pointed out that between 2006 and 2011, a 'total of twenty-eight cabinet members had to face parliament interpellation and twenty-two of these were ruling family members' (p. 94). No minister has ever lost a vote of confidence, although a number of them have resigned before the vote was taken (Herb, 2014).

Moreover, scholars have argued that some members of the royal family have interfered in the National Assembly, seeking more power (Alnajjar & Selvik, 2016; Ulrichsen, 2014) by lending their 'financial, social, and political capital to the journalist, MP, or whoever serves as mouthpiece' to weaken an internal rival and fulfil their own political ambition (Alnajjar & Selvik, p. 99). This has had a significant impact on the relationship between the National Assembly and the government, resulting in destabilisation of the system.

Since Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah became the ruler in 2006, he suspended several governments, appointed three different Prime Ministers, and dissolved the parliament several times.[11] Even the electoral system was modified twice; the later change was by an Emiri decree in 2012 to have more control over the National Assembly and reduce its role (Alnajjar & Selvik, 2016; Herb, 2013). Since then, the government has maintained a majority in the parliament, with no real opposition, and nothing has been implemented or reformed.

In Kuwait, the cabinet is chosen by the Emir, irrespective of the parliamentary majority, with key positions monopolised by the royal family. The Emir also has the right to dissolve the parliament whenever he believes it is out of control and to change the electoral system to gain more control over election outcomes. Therefore, this research concludes that the political system in Kuwait is not really so different from those in the rest of the Gulf region, as the major positions and decisions are controlled by the ruling establishment, and the role of the parliament is limited.

It is evident from the above discussion that public participation in policymaking is extremely limited in the AGS. The ruling establishments in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain hold nearly all the power to formulate policy, and they allow little room for the political institutions they created to engage in true democratic participation. This fact is crucial to understanding who is involved in education reform, as well as the interests of reformist leaders in these countries in modernising the education system in general. The results reflect the level of implementation of specific policies, such as those pertaining to teachers.

Most of the academic literature has focused on policymaking processes in the developed or democratic world; research into the policymaking process in the AGS is minimal and has largely escaped international attention (Khodr, 2014; Thompson & Quilliam, 2017a). Most of this literature has described the political status of the AGS or the historic and economic background of their political systems and the role of the royal families; it has largely ignored the provision of a detailed understanding of the policymaking process. (See, for example, Cammett

11 During the writing of this thesis, the Emir Sheikh Sabah passed away in September of 2020, and his brother, Crown Prince Nawaf, took over as the ruler of Kuwait.

et al., 2015; Davidson, 2011b; Herb, 2010; Kinninmont, 2011; Milton-Edwards, 2011; Peck, 2002; Roberts, 2011; Ulrichsen, 2016a; Wright, 2011.)

However, these descriptive works applied Western political theories, developed by Western scholars, in an environment vastly different from that of the Gulf. Employing these frameworks in a different context might generate some limitations in understanding the process of policymaking, and this complicates the task of studying the policymaking process. Khodr (2014) argued:

> Drawing on existing theoretical frameworks designed with a Western system of democracy in mind, particularly that of the United States, proves to be rather limited. This is due to both the uniqueness of the policy-making process as well as the nature of the political system in the GCC. (p. 275)

Applying Western political theories may limit our understanding of the political context and the policymaking process in the Gulf region in general, and in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain in particular. Tok et al. (2016) demonstrated that Western theories that had been employed to understand the policymaking process in Qatar and other Gulf states were inadequate for providing this understanding.

One of the theories used most frequently to explain the policymaking process in the AGS is that of the ‘rentier state’. Basically, this theory argues that the huge revenues from oil and gas are used to buy the people’s acquiescence, and that this harms democracy (Beblawi, 1987, 1990; Luciani, 2012). Beblawi (1987) argued that the Gulf monarchies exemplified this theory in the best way, with the revenue from oil and gas captured by the state and distributed among the population. Public goods were then disbursed as symbols of the ruler’s benevolence, and because the citizens received these benefits without taxation, they were not motivated to demand political participation.

Luciani (2012) stated, ‘The availability of resource rents accruing from abroad strengthens the incumbent’s chances to retain power, through either coercion, use of government expenditure to buy off opposition, or simply better opportunities to deliver services and engage in populist policies’ (p. 4). The analyses based on this theory focus on the oil and gas revenues that Gulf monarchies use to gain unaccountable political power; thus, these monarchies can be described as authoritarian states. The monarchs distribute the oil and gas

revenues to the citizens as public goods, so citizens are unwilling to advocate public participation or question the government.

Although most of the literature about Gulf political systems has been rooted in this theory, Hertog (2010b) claimed that in fact, there 'is still no unified theory of rentier states, and the micro-foundations of rentier systems in particular have gone largely unexplored' (p. 282). This led some Gulf scholars to criticise the reliance on this theory for understanding the political context of the region.

For example, Tok et al. (2016) claimed that the 'rentier state theory' that researchers applied to the context of Qatar did not actually explain the policymaking process accurately. They argued that the reality in the Gulf states is not as simple as the rentier theory makes it out to be, and that the theory ignores the fact that these revenues were distributed in the form of programmes such as health services, education and schooling, universities, transportation, and providing jobs for citizens. These programmes were provided through certain policy processes and regulations that the rentier state theories failed to address. A newer theory, which describes the state of Qatar as a 'transformative state', acknowledges that time is needed to examine the ultimate success of such a state.

Likewise, Abdulkhaleq Abdulla, an Emirati political scholar, argued that the rentier state theory that had long dominated the literature on the Gulf states was helpful in understanding the formative years of these states and the initial phase of the oil boom, but that the theory had lost its power to describe and explain the peculiarities of the current Gulf states. He asserted that the Gulf region of the twenty-first century was totally different from that of the twentieth century, and its current issues and challenges were very different. The current AGS have 'long gone beyond the stereotypes of the capital surplus and rentier economy, and those of the docile citizens and the benevolent Gulf monarchies' (Abdulla, 2010, p. 4). The use of this theory fails to describe the contemporary political situation in the Gulf and lacks an explanation of the policymaking process, thereby creating some theoretical confusion in understanding the policymaking process in the region.

Alnajjar and Selvik (2016) provided an extraordinary example of the limitations of the rentier state theory in sufficiently explaining the political status in Kuwait. In 2011, at the beginning of the Arab uprisings, the Emir, Sabah Al-Ahmad

Al-Sabah, ‘surprised all Kuwaiti citizens with a gift of 1000 dinars (US$3546) and a free food grant for one year’ (Alnajjar and Selvik, 2016, p. 39). According to the theory, this is how a rentier state ruler would respond to political turbulence and seek to strengthen their power. In fact, the Emir’s handout could not prevent the growth of political discontent, and in 2012, thousands of protestors took to the streets to demand a full and actual constitutional monarchy (Alnajjar & Selvik, 2016). This is a clear example of the rentier state theory not working very well to explain events on the ground, because the reality is not so simple. Therefore, this thesis argues that the rentier state theory is no longer valid for explaining the policymaking process in the AGS in general, and in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain in particular.

Some scholars have tried to study policymaking in various Arab Gulf countries. For instance, Khodr (2014) examined and compared the principal actors in the policy processes in Qatar and Kuwait, both inside and outside governmental bodies. She claimed that the assumption that the royal families made all the decisions was unfounded and misleading. She showed that non-royal citizens, and even non-citizens, played an informal role in the policymaking process; these included members of the media, tribes and elite families, research institutions, civil society, and others, which she collectively named the *diwaniya* in Kuwait and the *majalis* in Qatar.

Khodr (2014) contended that all these parties played a crucial, albeit informal, role in influencing policymaking in both countries, and she referred to two main political theories—one by Kingdon (2003), which was concerned with multiple streams, and the other by Berry and Berry (2007), which was concerned with policy innovations and diffusion frameworks—to identify and examine the participants in the policymaking process in Qatar and Kuwait (Khodr, 2014).

Nevertheless, there are problems with Khodr’s (2014) argument. First, she focused on the actors in the policymaking process rather than the policymaking process itself, so although it is important to look at the actors, this leaves a gap in the literature in terms of understanding the policymaking process. Second, she argued that the royal family did not have exclusive control over all policy decisions and that other actors also influenced decision-making, but she did not provide sufficient evidence for this argument. It would have been helpful if she had cited

examples of policy decisions in both Qatar and Kuwait that were influenced by the public only.

Moreover, her assertion contradicts what has been argued in many different kinds of literature in the field. For example, Thompson and Quilliam (2017a) wrote that ‘GCC governments are often accused of not being transparent in their decision-making. In addition, they are perceived to be unable, or unwilling, to respond to their citizens’ needs and aspirations’ (p. 2).

Finally, Khodr’s (2014) references to Kingdon’s and Berry and Berry’s theories support the claim, made at the beginning of this chapter, that there is no single political theory that might be applicable to the unique context of the Gulf. If there were a theory that could explain the complexity of policymaking and policy participation in the Gulf region, she would have used it in her analysis. Because of the limitations of those political theories that were developed to fit the context of the Gulf, she referred to Western political scholars to understand the political participation in policymaking in Kuwait and Qatar. This current study has adopted the same approach, owing to the shortcomings in political theories that were established to understand the policymaking process in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain.

Furthermore, a recent book, edited by Thompson and Quilliam (2017b), acknowledged the limitations of the literature addressing the policymaking and decision-making processes in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). However, most of the discussions in this volume centred around identity, e-government, gender issues, and the role of non-governmental organisations in the development of civil society. None of these provides answers about how policies are formed in the GCC countries.

On the basis of the previous discussion, this research had no choice but to refer to international political theories to understand the variations among Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain in designing and implementing teacher policies reforms, while acknowledging the limitations of applying these theories in this context. Although this may raise various problems, there may also be some benefits. Despite their context variations, these three countries look similar to countries elsewhere in the world when it comes to the specific policy dynamic of generating and establishing institutions, developing policies, designing reforms, and implementing and

coordinating programmes. Despite the differences in political culture and social context, it can be demonstrated that there are some similarities, such as the political system, stakeholders, government programmes, and reform agenda. Therefore, referring to well-established and well-examined political theories from different contexts may help to provide an understanding of the policymaking process in the context of this research.

3.3 Theories in Policymaking and Policy Implementation

Policy studies developed as a sub-discipline of Political Science in the late 1950s and early 1960s to understand policy and the policymaking process. This is a well-established research field, including in the field of education, and there are a number of reasons to conduct policy studies. First, it may develop fundamental knowledge that can inform policy recommendations. Second, it helps understand the challenges of implementing policies (Portnoi, 2016), and this is relevant to the current study, which is concerned with the challenges that face Kuwait and prevent it from implementing teacher policies reform. Moreover, policy research may provide useful information to help policymakers with their decisions, as the main goal of this type of research is to 'identify choices, or courses of action, that lead to optimal decisions to resolve identified problems' (Heck, 2004, p. 11). This is where the link lies between the educators who are studying the policies and the politicians who are in charge of legitimising education policies.

The term 'politics' may refer to different phenomena, such as the exercise of power, the science and the role of government, and the making of collective decisions (Heywood, 2013). However, public policy involves government decisions on different aspects, such as government programmes, and these decisions may lead to action or non-action (Weible, 2014). The policies that result from such decisions are often focused on problems and solutions identified by those in positions of power (Heck, 2004). This is why it is essential to look at education reform in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain from a political perspective, to understand how these countries differed in their design and implementation of teacher policies reform, as these reforms were formulated and presented as government programmes. Thus, this research aims to examine how policy is made and by whom, for this may give us a basis for understanding the variations among the

three countries in their implementation of the relevant policy reform. Heywood (2013) clarified the link between policies and the state:

> The state falls on almost every human activity. From education to economic management, from social welfare to sanitation, and from domestic order to external defence, the state shapes and controls; where it does not shape or control it regulates, supervises, authorizes or proscribes. (p. 56)

Therefore, knowing who controls and rules the state answers the question of who controls the policy and handles the policymaking process. Based on what was discussed above, this thesis assumes that the ruling establishments control the main areas of human activity, of which education is one. It is they who have the power to support policies and move them to the implementation level.

The policymaking process in most developed countries involves multiple actors, both state and non-state, such as the state government, communities, policy implementers, individuals, think tanks, international consulting agencies, interest groups, and lobbyists. These actors often have competing agendas, and 'policies, or reforms, have various purposes and functions, depending on who proposes them, and which groups have influence at a given time in history' (Portnoi, 2016, p. 145). Still, the government plays a major role in the policymaking process, with policies usually formulated at a high level of government, so the involvement of multiple actors does not mean that they all have equal access to the policymaking process (Heck, 2004; Portnoi, 2016). What is important is that all main stakeholders are involved in the process, as contemporary views of policy implementation and impact focus more on understanding who is responsible for implementing policies than who is creating them (Heck, 2004).

The idea behind involving the stakeholders and interest groups at the outset of policy formation is that their engagement may make implementation much easier and make the policy more acceptable to those who will be expected to implement it (i.e., teachers). Because 'a linear model of policy implementation does not work, and… government edict alone cannot produce desired changes' (Taylor et al., 1997, p. 16), excluding stakeholders from the policymaking process may create resistance to change and result in a failure to implement new policies.

Because the policymaking process is complex and messy, rather than straightforward and predictable, it is also necessary to involve key players from certain interest groups. Policies take time to be formed, tested, and implemented in a way that makes it possible to identify their effects; in other words, a certain period of time is needed for them to unfold (Cairney, 2012; Heck, 2004). Some scholars have estimated that it takes four to seven years for a new policy to be implemented and achieve results (Louis & Miles, 1990), although this may vary based on the type of policy and the level of change that it aims to achieve. The complexity of the policymaking process means that studying and understanding policy is not an easy task, but it is a worthwhile one.

To understand the complexity of policymaking and gain an understanding of policy interactions, researchers have generally applied one or more theories (Heck, 2004; Weible, 2014). Education reform is similar to other public policy arenas, in that education reform policies move from idea to implementation to evaluation in a dynamic process (Portnoi, 2016). Therefore, this study will review different types of policymaking theories to understand the policy actions that have taken place in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain.

Since political research gained a position in the academic field, political scholars around the world have suggested different theories to understand the political processes of governments and other authorities; most of these theories can be found in the literature (see for example: Portnoi, 2016; Sabatier & Weible, 2014). Introducing and discussing all these theories would not be appropriate here and would go beyond the scope of this research. Also, as discussed above, some of the political theories do not match the way policies are formed in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, and therefore, applying them would not help in understanding the policy dynamic.

For example, the group theory and the public choice theory focus on the influence of groups—such as political parties, unions, interest groups, and others—that are involved in the policymaking process. From a theoretical perspective, individuals become more powerful in the policymaking process when they form alliances, and according to group theory, policymaking is about a struggle between groups (Portnoi, 2016). Such groups are not permitted in the AGS, and there is no political environment for this type of participation (Alnaqeeb,

2006), so even groups that do exist (e.g., the professional associations in Kuwait) do not have access to the policymaking process.

For these reasons, the rest of this section will focus on two different political theories that may provide insight into the policymaking process in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain and identify the variations among these three countries in reforming and implementing teacher policies. These are the Institutional theory and the Multiple Streams theory.

3.3.1 Institutional Theory

The Institutional theory has its roots in post-World War II political science, when a number of comparative political scholars focused on state processes, highlighting government structures and actions that affected decision-making by facilitating or impeding the policymaking process in specific contexts (Amenta & Ramsey, 2010; Portnoi, 2016). This theory claims that some issues identified at a higher level are used to explain processes and outcomes at a lower level, but the theory avoids the individual level of society in explaining the policymaking process. In general, it focuses more on the systemic and structural aspects of states and political systems at a macro-political level.

An institution may be either an organisation of the polity or a structure of the political system, and it may be either formal or informal (Amenta & Ramsey, 2010; Portnoi, 2016). In studying and analysing public policies, institutional theorists determine who is involved in formulating policy, i.e., which groups are part of the policymaking process and which are not (Portnoi, 2016). Therefore, the Institutional theory looks at the policy actors and the role of the state and/or government in developing policy: who holds the power and who has the right to choose which other interested groups will be involved in legitimising the policies. It also considers the structure of public bureaucracies and their power and efficiency in handling reforms (Cairney, 2012).

On the other hand, Binder et al. (2008) describe ‘institution’ more broadly, identifying different types of institutions, such as the state, civil society, constitution, federal institutions, legislature, bicameral assemblies, public bureaucracies, welfare state, local government, and so on. All types of institutions around the world are included, which indicates that there is no agreement on a

single definition of ‘institution’ (Cairney, 2012). Regardless of how these institutions are defined in each state, though, there is agreement on what institutional theorists are studying, which is the policy formulation at a high level of state power and how this influences decision-making.

In this sense, the Institutional theory claims that the state is responsible for policymaking and policy decisions, regardless of its form, i.e., whether it is a federal state, constitutional state, monarchy, or something else. What is most important here is to study how the institution acts on the policymaking process, who is involved and who is not, and the fundamentals of the process, because the state or government institution is the arena in which policymaking takes place.

In terms of the policymaking process in the AGS, the ways in which policy decisions are formed are close to the descriptions in the Institutional theory. The government, appointed by the monarch, is responsible for all policy decisions. It looks after its own interests regarding policies under consideration, and by centralising and controlling the policymaking process, it ignores individuals by granting them limited access. Therefore, the Institutional theory will help determine how the ruling establishment was involved in the policymaking process for education reform in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, and the level of support and interest in this reform.

However, the Institutional theory does not explain how policy is developed and formed; it focuses on the level at which the policy process occurs, not on the process itself. Therefore, the Institutional theory alone will not suffice for understanding the overall story of the policy process in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, nor will it explain what has prevented Kuwait from implementing the teacher policies reform that it planned and promised. Thus, combining the Institutional theory with the Multiple Streams theory may help to reach a deeper understanding.

3.3.2 Multiple Streams Theory

The next political theory that will be discussed here is the Multiple Streams theory. Since it was developed by Kingdon in 1984, it has proven useful for explaining the policymaking process in different nations, both in single-case studies and in comparative applications across time or countries (Zahariadis, 2014).

Public policymaking, in general, is a set of processes that involve setting the agenda, specifying alternative choices, deciding among alternatives, and implementation—but success in any one of these processes does not guarantee success in the others (Kingdon, 2003). Setting the agenda is the first and most important stage in the process. Kingdon's theory sought to understand how specific issues come to be given priority over others on the government agenda, how governments narrow their choices from a wide range of alternatives to a very few options, and what leads governments to change their agenda from time to time. He relied heavily on the motivation within the state to implement certain policies. Thus, the concern in this research is similar to that of Kingdon's, namely, to understand how and why teacher policies reform became a priority on the agendas of Bahrain's and Qatar's governments but not on Kuwait's.

According to Kingdon (2003), the agenda 'is the list of subjects or problems to which government officials, and people outside of the government closely associated with those officials, are paying some serious attention at any given time' (p. 3). He identified two main factors that might affect agenda setting: first, the active participants, and second, the process by which an agenda item rises to prominence. The active participants are the primary source of the agenda, and they include the president or ruler, legislative institutions, bureaucrats, and some forces outside the government, such as the media, interest groups, political parties, and the general public. Their contributions and involvement may affect the agenda.

However, it is not enough to study the players involved in a policy. Kingdon aimed to understand the game itself, a goal that is reached by studying the process in depth. To understand and examine the process, Kingdon based his model on three main streams: problems, policies, and politics, where each of these streams might serve as either an impetus or a constraint in the policy process. These three streams will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

The Multiple Streams theory is also used to explain how policies are made by a government under conditions of ambiguity, which happens in 'organized anarchies' (Kingdon, 2003; Zahariadis, 2014). In developing his theory, Kingdon (2003) drew on the garbage can model developed by Cohen et al. (1972), which described decision-making in organised anarchies. Three major indicators can be

used to classify governments or organisations labouring under the condition of anarchy:

(1) Fluid participants: According to the theory, participation in a government or organisation is deemed fluid when the turnover is high. Legislators come and go over time, which affects the stability of the entity; participants drift in and out of decision-making; and high-level civil servants and bureaucrats often move from one public entity to another, or to the private sector (Kingdon, 2003).

(2) Problematic preferences: Policymakers do not always know what they need; they may fail to define their preferences, and their objectives are not consistently clear. They often indicate their preferences through actions, but an organised anarchy is ‘a looser collection of ideas than a coherent structure, it discovers preferences through action more than it acts on the basis of preferences’ (Cohen et al., 1972, p. 1).

(3) Unclear technology: The processes that turn inputs into products in an organisation such as a university or a government are unclear. The members of such an organisation may be aware of their individual roles and responsibilities, but they do not always realise how their roles fit into the general mission of the organisation. The boundaries of official power in terms of making legal decisions are not always clear, and battles between members in different departments or agencies are commonplace in an ambiguous government. Most actions are guided by past experience, and members of such a government often learn by trial and error (Kingdon, 2003; Zahariadis, 2014).

Therefore, choosing between alternatives is difficult for a government that is in an anarchic condition, owing to a lack of clarity in identifying problems and preferences. The staff members find it difficult to identify and define problems, they cannot easily distinguish between relevant and irrelevant issues, and it is hard for them to determine the causes of a problem. As a result, the government will fail to come up with effective solutions, so the problems will remain unresolved and may become more complex and harder to solve in the future. Most of the decisions are made with the intention to deflect attention away from policymaking participants, pushing the government to formulate its agenda based on the interests of these policymaking participants. Kingdon (2003) focused his attention on understanding

how this is done, which led him to develop the Multiple Streams theory(Kingdon, 2003). Each of the three streams will be discussed separately in the following sections.

3.3.2.1 The Problem Stream.

Problems are numerous conditions or issues that are identified by policymakers or citizens which stimulate the policymakers to do something. These problems may be identified through indicators, dramatic events such as crises or disasters, or feedback from existing programmes. Some problems receive priority because of how they are framed or defined by participants—i.e., they are presented as deserving more attention than other issues. The perceptions of a problem can change quickly, though, and the government can raise its priority within the agenda to start the problem-solving process.

When policymakers decide to classify a condition as a problem, this may be based on their own values, or it may be a result of comparing their current situation to a previous situation or comparing their performance with that of other countries. Presenting the issue effectively may help pressure the state or government to pay attention to a specific problem and incite the public to support the agenda, thereby making it more attractive to other policymakers. Having this opportunity makes all the difference, and a failure to define the problem will not help in attracting attention or raising awareness. In the real world of politics, governments face many difficult problems at the same time, making it difficult to concentrate on all of them. Consequently, policymakers often prefer to deal with problems that they are able to solve easily, even if those are not the problems that *must* be solved.

3.3.2.2 The Policy Stream.

This stream is concerned with the ideas that win the battle in the previous stream of problems and get accepted by the policymakers. A number of specialists—such as bureaucrats, academics, researchers, professionals, and consultants—who are interested in a single policy field may suggest ideas and solutions for the problems available in this stream, and this results in a number of actions, including generating, debating, and redrafting proposals in communities of specialists. At this stage, a large number of policy initiatives is reduced to a shortlist of policy proposals that are deemed worthy of consideration.

Reaching this level does not mean that the idea or proposal is ready to move forward in the policy process, though; some ideas may remain unchanged, but others may disappear. As in the previous stream, if the government feels that implementation will be difficult or may cause it trouble, or it is unsure how to do it, then an initiative may struggle to survive and may ultimately disappear. At this level, the main roles for the specialists are to have a viable proposal relating to the problem and to maintain the attention of the government because without this, the proposal will lose political interest.

3.3.2.3 The Politics Stream.

In this stream, policymakers have the motive and the opportunity to turn a proposal or a solution into policy; most of the actions take place in the political body that is responsible for formulating and establishing policies. The government monitors the national mood and the voices of interest groups in setting its agenda. However, turnover in the administrative bodies or in key positions responsible for the proposal in question may significantly affect the motivation to change. As Kingdon (2003) argued, the involvement of governmental actors may change the agenda in two ways: 'either incumbents in positions of authority change their priorities and push new agenda items; or the personnel in those positions change, bringing new priorities onto the agenda by virtue of the turnover' (p. 153). This may affect matters in quite a dramatic way, and changing key players within the government may be a significant factor in motivating change.

3.3.2.4 Policy Windows.

Policy windows are said to be open, permitting choices to be made, when the three previous streams come together at a critical moment; this is a separate stream of problems, policies, and politics. Kingdon (2003) defined this stage as an 'opportunity for advocates of proposals to push their pet solutions, or to push attention to their special problem' (p. 165), i.e., as an opportune time to launch an issue. Windows are the context in which policy is made, and they are opened by persuasive problems or by events in the political stream. When the window is open, policy entrepreneurs must immediately take the opportunity for action. If they miss it, the opportunity is lost and they must wait for the next one, the timing of which cannot be predicted.

The term ‘policy entrepreneur’ refers to an individual or a group of corporate actors who take advantage of opportunities to influence policy outcomes to further their own or their organisation’s interests. Not all entrepreneurs are successful, but the greater their access to policymakers, and the greater their ability to spend time and energy pushing their proposal, the greater their chance of success.

It is now clear how the Multiple Streams theory may provide more details from studying the policy process of a government, for it is concerned with understanding the way a government sets its agenda, and it examines the way a government defines and prioritises its problems. It takes into account the role of the specialist community in developing ideas and formulating policy proposals by narrowing them down from a range of alternatives to just a few. It also examines political actions where a government has a clear motive for planning the policy, and how the stability or change in the administration may affect the agenda, thereby causing it to lose its motivation to solve the problem. It concludes with the concept of the policy windows that are opened when all three streams come together, and the role of policy entrepreneurs in taking advantage of these open windows to push for initial actions and launch their proposals.

One observation regarding this theory is that Kingdon developed this model after conducting research to understand the policymaking process in the United States, and this is clear from the way he presents the theory in his book, referencing the president, the Congress, and so on. Still, it can help to a large degree in understanding how policy was made regarding teacher policies reform in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain. Zahariadis (2014) noted that the theory had been applied to more than 30 different empirical research studies from all over the world since 2003, of which four were in the field of education and four were on reforming policies. Moreover, this theory has already been used to compare and examine the participants in the policymaking process in Qatar and Kuwait (Khodr, 2014).

This thesis combines the two theories, the Institutional theory and the Multiple Streams theory, to guide its analysis and gain an in-depth understanding of the policymaking process in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain. The objective is not to test these theories, but the analysis will draw upon them, considering the variations in context. These two theories help to further analyse and understand the explanatory factors, namely, the state’s motivation for reforming the education

system, the stability of the administration that is responsible for the reform, and the stakeholder involvement.

3.4 Education Policymaking and Education Reform

Following the previous discussion about public policymaking, this section aims to understand policymaking in education and the role of the state and other stakeholders in this process. Education is not a standalone concept; it is influenced by social, political, and economic change. Taylor et al. (1997) defined several areas which are necessary for understanding education policies; according to them, educational policy researchers need to:

> understand the context in which a policy arises, to evaluate how policy-making processes are arranged, to assess its content in terms of a particular set of educational values, to investigate whose interests the policy serves, to explore how it might contribute to political advocacy, to examine how a policy has been implemented, and with what outcomes and so on, then it is clear that policy analysis cannot be located in any particular disciplinary tradition. (p. 20)

Understanding how educational policies are formed and planned provides a basis for examining teacher policies reform in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, and, by extension, for identifying variations among the three countries. It will also help in analysing the outcomes of interest in this research. This section is not concerned with educational policies made at the local level, for instance, by schools or local authorities; instead, it is concerned with the policies set by higher authorities in the government, including the Ministry of Education (MOE). It addresses policymaking and education reform in K-12 only, as the research is looking at teacher policies reform.

Education policymaking in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain is not much different than the public policymaking in the AGS, which was discussed above. The education policymaking in the region is highly centralised; the Ministers of Education, who are appointed by the ruling establishment, control all of the policymaking processes and retain full authority over this area (El-Kogali et al., 2017), while excluding ground-level stakeholders such as teachers and school leaders from participation in the policy process.

In most AGS, the royal families became directly involved in education reform, providing the momentum necessary to overcome internal resistance. In

that sense, Nolan (2012) argued that ‘education reform has been largely formulated and implemented by each regime with little broader societal participation, which has often provoked an intense backlash’ (p. 33). This demonstrates that the ruling establishments have played a major role in the education reform process, whereas public participation has been minimal.

The AGS rely heavily on policy borrowing as an approach to formulating education policies. Since the 1940s and 1950s, Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain have borrowed and transferred their entire education systems, along with most of their education policies, from Egypt and other Arab states (Alfadala, 2015; Ridge, 2014). This was due to the shortage of human capital and professional educators in the region at that time.

Owing to the scarcity of literature discussing education policymaking in the Gulf region, this study relies on international literature to discuss and understand the education policymaking process and to integrate the political theories adopted in this research, namely, the Institutional theory and the Multiple Streams theory, into education policy and education reform in the AGS.

Education has moved to the top of the political and economic agendas in many countries around the world because of the undeniable importance of education for individual development, economic growth, and national productivity, as well as the development of strong civil societies. Policymakers view education as a primary solution to many social problems, as education is perceived as being related to many other fields (Heck, 2004). This may explain the interest of most governments in providing a good education for its citizens, and this is where the link between policymakers and educators comes into play, making educational policymaking highly politicised.

Moreover, governments around the world, including in the AGS, have strong incentives to design, control, and operate the education system for their societies. This means that the education systems reflect the governments’ intentions. Therefore, the politics of education are reflected in the education system, and a clear understanding of the education system is not possible without understanding the political system that controls the education policies and its practices (Bell & Stevenson, 2006; Moe & Wiborg, 2017).

Therefore, developing education policy can be seen as a dialectic process, i.e., one that is both continuous and contested. It is the systematic process, rather than any set of random activities, that allows differential access to the power involved in shaping and forming educational policies (Bell & Stevenson, 2006). This means it is about the power that formulates education policies according to either self-interest or national interest, depending on the values of those individuals who have access to the process. Consequently, to understand the education policy system in a specific context, we need to understand the structure of power and its interests within the politics of education. Moe and Wiborg (2017) argued:

> Any serious effort to understand the world's education systems needs to study, for any given nation, how power is structured within the politics of education—who wields political power, how they wield it, what their interests are, what the relevant coalitions are, how their power and interests connect with the party system and the larger apparatus of government, and more generally, how the type of political system and its institutions shape the way power and interests find expression in the political process. And all this needs to be done, of course, across nations and over time in order to provide for an enlightening comparative understanding of education systems throughout the world. (p. 4)

This quotation from Moe and Wiborg (2017) touches on the main pivot of this study: to study education reform from the viewpoint of political power, which is a rather new endeavour in relation to education in the AGS. To understand the way in which education is being reformed in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, it is essential to identify who controls the policymaking power in regard to education policies, who is involved in the process, and what their aims and interests are. In addition, it is necessary to understand the institutions that are responsible for proposing and implementing educational reform and the power they wield. In this way, the research may be able to determine in more depth the variations among these three countries in reforming and implementing teacher policies, and the comparative approach will help identify and explain these variations.

It is true that most educational policies are formed within a context that is beyond the schools themselves. Education policies and education reforms 'are often designed by a relatively small group of technocrats at the top rungs of leadership' (Bruns et al., 2019, p. 30). Although their capacity to carry out the reforms may impact the way policies are designed and implemented (Akiba, 2013a; Bruns et al., 2019; Harris & Jones, 2018), 'policy implementation, rather

than policy selection, is the key to promoting and sustaining educational improvement' (Harris & Jones, 2018, p. 195). Therefore, looking at the capability of those responsible for carrying out the reforms is crucial to understanding how the reforms are designed and implemented.

Due to the complexity and contentiousness of reform in general, and teacher policies reform more specifically, Bruns et al. (2019) pointed out the importance of having champions in government to drive the reforms forward. These champions are often well connected to a large policy network, including stakeholders both inside and outside the education sector, and the involvement of stakeholders encourages buy-in of the reforms and helps 'smooth the path for reform implementation' (Bruns et al., 2019, p. 34). Hence, stakeholders' involvement in the policymaking process makes them active, rather than passive, implementers of policies (Bell & Stevenson, 2006).

Accordingly, involving educators in the process of making policies that affect schools and schoolteachers may increase their understanding of the government's agenda for the new policies that they aim to implement. As most education policies end up being applied in schools, it is vital that they are explained to the teachers, assistants, school principals, and others who will be expected to put them into practice. Some scholars argue that a failure to fully understand policies will likely result in a failure to successfully implement them (Bell & Stevenson, 2006; Bruns et al., 2019; Taylor et al., 1997).

In general, governments find themselves significantly involved in policy change or reform due to three types of conditions: (a) political conditions, meaning a shift in public opinion; (b) moral or ethical conditions, referring to circumstances in which the government must take a stand; and (c) economic conditions, when the free market economy produces uneven results (Portnoi, 2016). Hence, policies are presented in order to achieve objectives or to solve problems (Bell & Stevenson, 2006). In the AGS context, education reforms were presented to solve the problem of relying on oil revenues and to improve the human capital for a move towards a knowledge-based economy. This solution was influenced by the international organisations and consultants who played a role in the education reforms (see Chapter 1).

The globalisation movement in the 1960s and 1970s illustrated the role of international organisations (Brown et al., 1997) and increased their power to become international interest groups involved in formulating education policies and education reforms. The interest of this thesis is to discuss the international dimension of education policy and education reform in terms of globalisation. It is not concerned primarily with evaluating the impact of the globalisation movement on formulating international education policies; its focus is to highlight the international pressures and their impact on the state's agenda for reforming the education system.

The discussion at the beginning of this chapter stated that Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain were centralising most public policymaking, including that of education policy. When it came to education reform, there were actually several international organisations and consulting firms involved in the policymaking process as consultants, advising the governments on formulating educational policies. As presented in Chapter 2, the World Bank, the RAND Corporation, and McKinsey & Company worked closely with the policymakers in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain respectively to develop the education reform agendas. According to Kingdon's (2003) theory, these organisations and consultants were actors from outside the government who might promote a specific agenda; moreover, they might act as policy entrepreneurs who use their resources and knowledge to support specific policy agendas.

It is extremely important to include these international organisations in the conceptual framework for this research, so that their activities can be analysed. The concern here is to demonstrate how they gained access to education policymaking in the AGS. To do that, it is necessary to highlight their roles and influence in light of the globalisation phenomenon and how this reflects the situation in the AGS.

In the era of globalisation, international organisations and NGOs have become more involved in national education systems. Since the formation of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which signalled a new era for global policymaking in education, globalisation has opened the way to influence and transform educational practices and set global educational

standards (Mundy et al., 2016). The two main movements which illustrate this involvement are UNESCO's Education for All and the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP's) Millennium Development Goals. As Williams and Cummings (2005) argued, these two movements gave international organisations the opportunity to observe how each state was working to reach certain goals, and this brought about increased international participation in managing and financing education practices around the world.

The globalisation movement has driven education policy to strive to meet nationally developed economic and development goals. One result of such a focus has been to view education as the main factor in increasing the economic growth and competitiveness of citizens, thereby following a trend in Western and global ideology towards the 'knowledge economy' (Ball, 2017; Zajda, 2010). Adopting the goal of a knowledge economy influenced the AGS to develop public policies that would meet this goal (Kirk, 2014; Nolan, 2012). This was highlighted very clearly by the Gulf rulers when they met in Qatar in 2002 to discuss the challenges facing education in the AGS; these challenges were imposed by various changes and new developments on the international scene in addition to the need to develop a knowledge-based economy (Secretariat General, 2003).

On this basis, therefore, multinational businesses and organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank, the European Union (EU), the World Trade Organization, and the International Monetary Fund, as well as other think tanks and consultant firms, took the opportunity to play a significant role in influencing education policy in the AGS, as Mohamed (2019) argued. The result of this massive growth in the knowledge industries, which has had deep effects on nations and educational institutions, is that they have influenced the thinking of policymakers in many countries (Zajda, 2010), including the AGS.

This means that education policies were 'being done in new places, by new actors, beyond boundaries of the nation-state' (Ball, 2017, p. 33). These organisations influenced education policy by publishing a massive number of reports promoting various recommendations gleaned from outstanding education systems, in an attempt to persuade individual governments to implement these practices (Mohamed, 2019; Winokur, 2014).

Hence, ‘it is often difficult to distinguish between what is local and what is global because such a distinction is not absolute’ (Al-Asfour, 2016, p. 73). In an era of globalisation, education policymakers today can easily network with policymakers beyond their own state, including in international organisations. These networks have resulted in the creation of an emergent global education policy community (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). They are what Ball (2012) called ‘policy networks’, which generated:

> a diverse range of participants which exist in a new kind of policy space somewhere between multilateral agencies, national governments, NGOs, think tanks and advocacy groups, consultants, social entrepreneurs and international business, in and beyond the traditional sites and circulations of policy-making. (p. 10)

Consequently, governments are networking with these agencies to help them develop and reform their education policies. Or, as Lawn (2006) framed it, international organisations engage in ‘soft governance’, relying on soft influencing tools such as networking, conferences, seminars, consultations, advisory groups, and publications. The policy network and soft governance involve actors drawn from outside governmental organisations in order to create a space around the government’s interests and try to overcome problems of states’ legitimacy. Today, ‘international education in particular can have a large influence in imposing ideologies among local policy actors and academics’ (Al-Asfour, 2016, p. 74).

As part of this international community, the AGS are influenced by these globalisation movements, and their governments are caught in these changing forces, feeling the winds of globalisation (Al-Sulayti, 1999; Kirk, 2014). Globalisation offered an opportunity for the AGS to ‘eliminate bureaucracy’ and improve the economy through restructuring (Al-Sulayti, 1999, p. 271). Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, who, along with other AGS, were in a position to develop and grow, used this opportunity to seek the assistance of foreign experts—whether individuals, international organisations, or business consultancy firms—to help them develop the infrastructure needed and specified by a modern economy (Kirk, 2014). The aim of collaborating with these foreign experts was ‘[in] keeping with the move to a more international outlook, and embracing the discourse surrounding global competition and development’ (Kirk, 2014, p. 137).

In short, the AGS rely upon foreign experts and international organisations, keeping them too close to the policymaking process, because they believe that these foreign experts—individuals or organisations—are particularly eligible to integrate and transfer the globalisation discourse into the local context, by virtue of their having the know-how, resources, and relationships needed to develop a modern state that can survive global competition. Having the financial assets makes it easier for the AGS to pay these experts for the services they provide. This practice can be observed through all the state sectors, of which the economy and education may be the most important (Mohamed, 2019).

In most countries around the world, the phenomenon of globalisation successfully moved education reform to the top of the political and economic agenda, and it influenced the reform agendas (Nitta, 2012). One of the effects of the globalisation forces on education reforms was to push the education systems towards ‘efficiency, accountability, and profit-driven managerialism’ (Zajda, 2010, p. xix). As a result, the restructuring of education systems has become a global concern that reflects the new emerging paradigm of standards-driven education reform.

One example of the effect of globalisation on education systems and reforms is the rise of International Large-Scale Assessment (ILSAs) by the OECD and the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement. These international assessments have notably driven most of the discussion and decisions about reform and provided a significant opportunity to learn from other countries that earned higher international rankings (Sahlberg, 2016).

This emphasis on ILSAs highlighted the opinion of public policymakers that a fundamental basis for evaluating international competitiveness was to be benchmarked against these international assessments. Moreover, participation in these assessments and announcement of the results offered a compelling way to influence public policy and justify decisions regarding education reform (Kirk, 2014). With the availability of the comparative data that the international organisations provided based on these assessment results, many countries were shopping around the world to acquire educational ideas and practices from other countries ranked at the top of these assessments, one of which was Singapore (Christine at al., 2003).

Like many other nation states, the AGS wished to take part in these international assessments, and their education reform has clearly been influenced by the agendas of global movements. The AGS in general, and Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain in particular, have become actively engaged in the competition in global education and in reforming their education systems to be more globally competitive. Therefore, education reform has become a hot issue on the agenda of the AGS cabinets (Al-Sulayti, 1999; Kirk, 2014).

In a competitive environment, the preferred option for those who have enough wealth is to buy into the education model of their choice. The AGS have invested a huge amount of their wealth to borrow education reform agendas from what are perceived to be high-performing or best practice models. The AGS leaders believed that working with foreign experts, both consulting firms and international organisations, could speed up the establishment of new educational structures without having to start from scratch, as it would be quick and inexpensive to establish reform in this way (Kirk, 2014); this notion was shared by many politicians around the world who were more 'interested in a borrowed policy's political symbolism than its details' (Halpin & Troyna, 1995, p. 307). As a result, the policy solutions and education reform agendas were produced and packaged by these international organisations and provided to the AGS to develop their education systems (Alfadala, 2015; Donn & Al Manthri, 2013; Mazawi & Sultana, 2010; Rohde & Alayan, 2012). This may explain why Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain gave these international organisations access to their policymaking circles even though some scholars have criticised this approach of policy borrowing (see Chapter 1).

This criticism of policy borrowing in the AGS by some scholars (see, for example: Donn & Al Manthri, 2013; Kirk, 2015; Mohamed, 2019) agrees with the argument of Halpin and Troyna (1995) that education policy borrowing is rarely successful. Those scholars, although looking at different contexts, came to the same conclusion that 'political, historical and socio-cultural settings of education policy formulation, development and implementation are fundamental inasmuch as they help both to keep certain policies "in place"' (Halpin & Troyna, 1995, p. 304). Because context is critical in education reforms, Phillips (2000), as well as Mills and McGregor (2016), insisted on policy learning rather than policy borrowing.

They contended that learning about and from other systems requires a depth of analysis and understanding, and it also requires ‘time that is often not conducive to such policy cycles’ (Mills & McGregor, 2016, p. 113). This led to the conclusion that the AGS need to engage more in policy learning, rather than policy borrowing, from those foreign experts when it comes to reforming the education system and teacher policies.

Hence, globalisation processes have thereby created new types of power and complex forms of influence over national educational systems and education reform agendas, ‘creating new and more globalized education policy discourses and a more formalised global policy architecture’ (Mundy et al., 2016, p. 4). In both developing and developed countries, education is undergoing a rapid and fundamental transformation that is altering and reshaping educational structures and practices (Baker & Wiseman, 2009). This process of restructuring and reshaping is firmly at the heart of public policy around the world, which demonstrates and justifies the use of political theories to explain the policymaking process in reforming the education systems.

Education reform, like most other reforms in the state sector, is a politically charged and socially sensitive process. The main role of the state’s leadership is to manage this process so that the reform itself, and nothing else, is the focus of change (Kirk, 2014; Nolan, 2012). The involvement of the state’s leadership in supporting and managing education reform may provide stability in the transformation process and enable the education reforms to generate some positive results.

3.5 Summary

The chapter began with the argument that the policymaking process in the AGS is still controlled by the ruling establishment, with few opportunities for public participation. The establishment of legislative institutions created a few opportunities for public participation, but these institutions lacked genuine power. It was challenging to find a political theory that could account for the policymaking process in the AGS, so in the absence of suitable theories, there was no choice but to refer to international literature to determine which theories might be useful for this research.

Despite the limitations in selecting appropriate theories, some relevant theories were found that might explain the policy process in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, each of which has a dynamic policy process. Each country has managed to establish a bureaucratic system, has a formal government that is responsible for developing policies and designing programmes, and has launched long-term strategic reforms, including economic and education reforms, to shore up its welfare system. Accordingly, they share many similarities with other countries around the world that are not otherwise similar in political or social aspects.

Therefore, the Institutional theory and the Multiple Streams theory are useful for analysing the policymaking process in the AGS. As noted above, the ruling establishment in each of the three countries maintains responsibility for policymaking and policy decisions, and the principal concern of the Institutional theory is to highlight the actions and interests of persons or groups in power that have affected policy decisions.

As the Institutional theory does not provide an explanation for how policy is formed and developed, Kingdon's Multiple Streams theory has been included to provide a more complete picture. In Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, different national programmes and reforms were undertaken through various policy processes, so Kingdon's theory is useful for examining the processes in these three countries. The Multiple Streams theory can explain the ambiguity of the government policymaking process, and this is applicable to Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain because of the lack of transparency in their policymaking process. Moreover, this theory is used to explain how certain policies are given priority on the government agenda while others are not. This research seeks to understand how teacher policies reform became a priority on the government agenda in both Bahrain and Qatar but not in Kuwait, and these two political theories (the Institutional theory and the Multiple Streams theory) helped identify the explanatory factors, which will be presented in the next chapter. The theories helped narrow down the analysis to the factors that actually mattered in the policymaking process and that may have accounted for the lack of implementation, which can be related to the absence of the outcome of interest.

The chapter also discussed education policymaking and reform, to illustrate how political theories can be integrated into education reform. In short, the

literature on education policy asserted that education policy and reform have moved to the top of the political agenda in most countries, and that governments have strong incentives to redesign their education systems. Understanding the structure of power that controls policymaking can help in understanding the education policy system in certain contexts.

Furthermore, education reforms are developed through a systemic process with differential access to power for shaping and forming education reforms. Therefore, education reform is a political matter as much as anything else, and employing the Institutional and Multiple Streams theories helps in understanding the education reform process in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain.

To demonstrate the significant influence of international organisations and consultant firms on education practices, the chapter ends by examining the globalisation phenomenon and its influence on education policies and reforms around the world. This was done to understand how those organisations gained access to the policymaking process in the AGS and thus were able to press for their reform agendas. Based on the literature, this study maintains that the AGS have found it much easier, cheaper, and quicker to involve foreign experts who have the knowledge and experience to integrate a globalised discourse into their context and help them to become more competitive—and having the financial resources makes it easier for them to rely on these experts.

Chapter 4 Methodology and Research Design

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the theoretical and conceptual framework that will guide this research. Starting with a presentation of the policymaking processes in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, it demonstrated the limited public participation in the policymaking process and the centralisation of most of the policymaking. Due to the absence of any comprehensive political theory designed to explain the policymaking process in the Gulf states, two political theories—namely, the Institutional theory and the Multiple Streams theory—were combined to analyse the policymaking process in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain.

This research aims to compare teacher policies reform in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain to identify the variations in reforming these policies and to understand the underlying reasons why Kuwait has made less progress on reforming teacher policies than Qatar and Bahrain have. Therefore, this research study seeks to answer the following research question:

Why has Kuwait been less successful than Qatar and Bahrain in reforming teacher policies?

Thus, this chapter presents the methodological considerations and the research design for addressing the question outlined above. The chapter is divided into five main sections: the first section addresses the justification for comparative analysis; it discusses the comparative methodology, namely the Most Similar System Design (MSSD), that will be used to compare Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain. The second section addresses the methodology of this research and presents the methodological basis for answering the research question. The third section explains the method of data collection, including the interviews and the sampling design. The fourth section details the methods of data analysis, and finally, the fifth section discusses ethical considerations.

4.2 Comparative Analysis

My interest in this topic arose when I was studying education reform in Bahrain. I noticed that Bahrain's education reform, which started around 2004, focused on teachers and policies relevant to teachers, and that Bahrain put a surprising level

of effort into reforming teacher policies as part of its general reform agenda. I then started to look at Qatar, where, as in Bahrain, the education reform agenda was most concerned with developing teacher quality. In Kuwait, though, teacher policies were hardly mentioned in the education reform agenda. This contrast attracted my interest, and I started my initial investigation to look at the education reforms in these three countries.

The initial investigation demonstrated that not only were teachers rarely mentioned in Kuwait's education reform agenda, but the country also failed to implement those reform initiatives that were specifically related to teachers, although other initiatives, such as curriculum reform and integrating E-learning, were implemented. Furthermore, this initial investigation demonstrated that the three countries designed and introduced teacher policies reform differently (see Chapter 2).

This experience was the springboard for conducting this research. Given the similarities and challenges the three countries shared, the concern was why Kuwait was not implementing teacher reforms. What were the reasons that led to different approaches in introducing and designing teacher policies reform?

By comparing Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, and by looking in-depth at the similarities and differences among them in designing and introducing teacher policies reform, this research seeks to better understand what happened and why. By comparing these three countries with one another, this study seeks to identify key factors that were absent in the case of Kuwait which may have prevented the country from implementing reforms on teacher policy.

Tilly (1984) argued that understanding the variations among the cases under examination, and their consequences, is the most pressing reason for undertaking a comparative study. Researchers must look at these variations comparatively, over substantial blocks of space and time, to understand what real alternatives to their present condition exist. Tilly (1984) claimed that 'systemic comparison of structures and processes will not only place our own situation in perspective, but also help in the identification of causes and effects' (p. 11).

Moreover, most comparative research seeks explanations for important outcomes, usually by focusing on a small number of cases. The researchers avoid

generalising their findings beyond their case countries to provide universally applicable knowledge (Mahoney & Rueschemeyer, 2003). This research concurs with this limitation, as it seeks not to generalise beyond the three countries under study, but rather to gain a clearer understanding and propose an explanation for the outcomes related only to the cases being studied.

By examining the similarities and differences among Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain in regard to teacher policies reform, this research seeks to explain the reasons behind the variations among the countries in the outcomes of interest, and to identify some of the most important factors that have prevented Kuwait from implementing teacher policies reform. The next section discusses the comparative approach that will be used to compare Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain.

4.2.1 Method of Most Similar System Design (MSSD)

This research will employ a case-oriented, comparative approach which is concerned with investigating a relatively small number of cases, also called small N-studies (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003; Ragin 1994, 1999, 2014; Scokpol and Somers 1980). The case-oriented, comparative method requires the careful selection of contrasting cases that reflect the research strategy and also fit the research problem (Lijphart, 1975). When it comes to the selection of cases, the case-oriented approach is rooted in John Stuart Mill's (1891/2002) methods: the 'method of agreement' and the 'method of difference', each of which utilises a different comparative logic. Recently, these methods have come to be known as the Most Different System Design (MDSD), and the Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD), respectively (Landman & Carvalho, 2017; Przeworski & Teune, 1970). The MDSD compares systems that are different, sharing no common features but having similar outcomes. In contrast, the MSSD compares systems that are similar, sharing common features but having different outcomes, and it seeks to identify the key feature that is different among the similar cases and thus could account for the observed outcomes.

The basic logic of these two systems – MDSD and MSSD – is that the MDSD looks at countries which have different features but share the same key explanatory factors as well as the outcome of interest. On the other hand, the MSSD looks at countries that share common features. Some share the same key explanatory factors, and some do not, but those that lack these key explanatory

factors also lack the outcome of interest (Landman & Carvalho, 2017); therefore, 'the presence or absence of the key explanatory factor is seen to account for this outcome' (Landman & Carvalho, 2017, p. 75). The main contrasting point between these two methods is that the MSSD uses negative cases to reinforce conclusions that were drawn from positive cases. In both systems, the presence of the key explanatory factor is associated with the presence of the outcome of interest (Landman & Carvalho, 2017).

The MSSD seeks to control for those factors that are similar across the countries under investigation, while focusing only on those factors that are different and thus may account for the outcomes. The countries under investigation share the same basic features, and some share the same key explanatory factors, but any country without these key explanatory factors also lacks the outcome of interest. Thus, the presence or absence of these explanatory factors is seen as accounting for this missing outcome. The features common to all countries are held constant; they do not vary although the key independent and dependent variables vary across countries (Landman & Carvalho, 2017). The MSSD is based on the belief that 'systems as similar as possible with respect to as many features as possible constitute the optimal samples for comparative inquiry' (Przeworski & Teune, 1970, p. 32).

The MSSD method allows the researcher to first treat each case individually, understanding it in isolation, before comparing whole cases with each other to analyse the presence or absence of variables and identify what might count as an important variable (Ragin, 2014). The goal of this approach is 'to advance knowledge of cases and to use this knowledge to advance theoretical understanding' (Ragin, 1994, p. 303). Given its focus on studying the underlying complexity of circumstances in each country under investigation, it would be difficult to sustain the same level of attention across a large number of countries (Ragin, 2014). Employing the MSSD method in this research helps to understand how each country designs and implements teacher policies reform and, subsequently, the reasons behind the implementation practices of individual countries.

In the MSSD approach, understandings and explanations are interpretive accounts of how conditions come together to produce outcomes in specific cases.

However, in comparative studies, interpretive work is treated as a type of empirical social science that attempts to account for certain sets of comparable outcomes or processes that were chosen for study owing to their value for current institutional arrangements or for social life in general (Ragin, 1994, 2014).

The logic of this method requires the selection of positive cases (which demonstrate a strong presence of the issue under investigation) and negative cases (which demonstrate an absence or weakness of the issue under investigation). The application of this logic would, therefore, be to identify common instances of a political outcome in a set of positive cases and then to determine which conditions invariably precede its emergence; the conditions that satisfy this requirement can thus be regarded as the cause. The aim is to use the negative case to reinforce causal explanations drawn from the positive cases. Hypotheses relating to each of the explanatory factors are then developed and tested on each of the countries in succession. When they are present in the positive cases and absent from the negative cases, there are grounds for arguing that they are causally related to the outcomes being investigated.

Table 4.1

Application of the MSSD Method

		Bahrain (Positive)	Qatar (Positive)	Kuwait (Negative)
Key Features	Political System	Semi-constitutional	Semi-constitutional	Semi-constitutional
	Economic Status	High income	High income	High income
	International Consultant	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Comprehensive Reform	Yes	Yes	Yes
Explanatory Factors	Motivation of the Ruling Establishment for Reform	Motivated	Motivated	Unmotivated
	Stability of the Administration	Stable	Stable	Unstable
	Stakeholder Involvement	High	High	None
Outcome (Implementing Teacher Policies Reform)		**Implemented**	**Implemented**	**Not implemented**

Table 4.1 illustrates the application of the MSSD method. The factors identified as relating to the outcome of interest are: (1) the motivation of the ruling establishment for reforming the education system, (2) the level of stability in the administration that is responsible for the reform, and (3) the degree to which stakeholders are involved in the reform process. These factors were found to be common to the positive cases (Bahrain and Qatar) and absent from the negative case (Kuwait), and the hypothesis here is that these factors are strongly related to the outcomes being investigated. This research examines these factors and tests the extent to which they can explain why Kuwait decided not to introduce and implement teacher policies reform in the wake of the education reform in 2010. In examining these factors, a qualitative methodology was employed to collect data relevant to educational reforms in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, and then the data was analysed using the two political theories discussed in Chapter 3. Each of these three explanatory factors will be discussed in more detail in the upcoming chapters.

It is important to note here that the causality that social sciences research seeks to demonstrate is markedly different from that in the natural sciences. In social sciences research, causality is understood as a conjunction of events, and attention is directed towards understanding how the different causes combine to produce an outcome (Ragin, 1994). Ragin (1999) explained:

> Causation is typically understood conjecturally. The goal of this type of analysis is to identify the main causal conditions shared by relevant cases. Causal conditions do not compete with each other as they do in correlational research; they combine. The way in which they combine or "fit together" is something that the researcher tries to discern using his or her in-depth knowledge of cases. (p. 1142)

This research does not aim to establish causality, which is difficult if not impossible; instead, it looks for some key explanations for the absence of the outcome of interest. While these are not conclusive, because there might be some factors that were not discovered due to the limitations of the MSSD, this study argues that these explanatory factors (see Table 4.1) are closely related and can explain why Kuwait has not implemented teacher policies reform.

Therefore, MSSD was chosen as the most suitable method for this study and was employed in this research to compare Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, as these three countries share common features such as language, religion, politics,

economics, and many others discussed previously (see Chapter 1). Despite their similarities, the countries experienced different outcomes when it came to implementing teacher policies reform. Moreover, as all three are located in the same geographic region, namely the Gulf region, the MSSD is well-suited for this study because focusing on countries in one specific region effectively controls for those features that are common to them, while highlighting those features that are not common (Landman & Carvalho, 2017, p. 75).

Following the MSSD logic requires the selection of positive and negative cases, and the three countries selected meet this requirement. Qatar and Bahrain constituted positive cases because they shared a common outcome which demonstrated strong implementation of teacher policies reform; in contrast, Kuwait constituted a negative case, demonstrating the absence of such implementation.

Although the discussion above is sufficient to justify comparing Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, it also shows how the MSSD method was employed to choose the three cases. Some may ask why the rest of the Arab Gulf States (AGS)—Saudi Arabia, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)—were not included in the comparison. While it is true that these states share many common features with Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, and they may be appropriate for using the MSSD method, there are several reasons for omitting them.

First of all, this research never intended to study teacher policies reform in the Gulf region, or to provide an explanation for the variations among all the AGS in designing and implementing teacher policies reform, although this would be an interesting topic to investigate in a future research project. Instead, this research aims to understand why Kuwait was less successful than the others in implementing teacher policies reform. The comparative approach was employed to provide an explanation for the outcome and to identify the factors that enabled Qatar and Bahrain, but not Kuwait, to implement this type of reform. This comparative phase guided the empirical phase of the research and helped achieve a greater understanding of this issue in regard to Kuwait.

Secondly, there is considerable variation among the AGS geographically. Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain are much smaller than the others, which makes a

considerable difference in the number of schools and teachers, and this in turn shapes the role of the Ministry of Education (MOE) and its affairs.

Thirdly, the form and role of governments in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain are also similar. Each has a Prime Minister who acts on behalf of the ruler and has the ultimate authority to lead the cabinet and decide policy, in a manner that resembles a constitutional monarchy. In Saudi Arabia and Oman, in contrast, the rulers – the King and the Sultan respectively – also act as the Prime Ministers, leading the cabinet and establishing policies themselves. The UAE has a federal government; consequently, each emirate has its own education system, which may be different from the others. Hence, having the same political system and form of government makes the comparison of Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain more appropriate.

Finally, adding more countries might negatively affect the ability to meet the conditions required for the MSSD method, as this approach works better when the number of relevant cases is relatively small. Ragin (2014) argued that as 'the number of cases and the number of relevant causal conditions increase, however, it becomes more and more difficult to use a case-oriented approach' (pp. 49–50); he continues by stating that as 'the number of cases increases, the likelihood that any given causal relevant characteristic will be common to the entire set decreases' (p. 55). Therefore, this research compares only Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain to effectively manage the comparison process according to the case-oriented approach and to keep the relevant causal factors to a manageable number.

It is important to acknowledge that the MSSD, like any method, has strengths and weaknesses. Part of its strength is that it works very well in regional research such as this one, and it makes it easy to distinguish the common factors from the explanatory factors so that the researcher can focus on identifying how the explanatory factors are related to the outcome of interest. On the other hand, the inability to include more countries is considered a weakness of this method, as mentioned previously. Also, it is not easy to claim that the explanatory factors identified are the only factors that can explain the presence or absence of outcomes, as there may be other factors that were not targeted or discovered. In an attempt to compensate for this weakness, the explanatory factors have been contextualised and linked with each other; also, a range of data and documents

were used to try to ensure that these explanatory factors were closely related to the outcome of interest.

4.3 Methodology of the Qualitative Approach

To answer the research question in this study, three explanatory factors were identified using the comparative technique, and then a qualitative approach was employed to examine these factors in further depth. The qualitative approach helps researchers to answer 'How', 'What', and 'Why' questions (Neuman, 2006). The purpose of this approach is to 'gain an interpretive, empathetic understanding, and [is] an attempt to capture the meanings that research subjects attribute to their own particular, yet whole, situations' (Fairbrother, 2014, p. 75). This research attempts to understand the whole situation of the education reform process in Kuwait, in order to understand some of the most important reasons behind the neglect of policies pertaining to teachers. As politics and policy actions are often deeply personal and contextual topics, and certain beliefs and issues cannot be understood by a quantitative survey approach, a qualitative approach was deemed appropriate for understanding the political actions and their outcomes.

The great advantage of employing a qualitative approach is that it offers rich details. Fairbrother (2014) argues:

> Qualitative research tends toward providing rich, deep, detailed descriptions. Such details contribute to explaining participants' perspective and developing an understanding of the meanings they attach to the phenomena of interest. At the same time, qualitative researchers go beyond pure description to analyse, interpret, and offer explanations of complex situations and phenomena. (p. 76)

Moreover, a qualitative approach allows the researcher to become an 'insider' and to discover issues under investigation (Blaikie, 2000), and only an insider can clearly understand the underlying circumstances of Kuwait's situation. Qualitative research seeks to understand the situation as it is, by attempting to capture what people say and do (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

In fact, Ragin (2014) argued that the comparative research field has a long tradition of qualitative work that is stronger and richer in providing in-depth understanding than is its quantitative counterpart. This confirms the

appropriateness of combining the qualitative approach with the MSSD approach in the comparative phase.

Therefore, the qualitative approach was judged to be suitable for this research, and this approach helped to fulfil the research aims. It also helped in gaining an in-depth understanding from people in positions of power in Kuwait about what happened on the ground, what challenges were encountered in regard to implementation, who had the power to promote certain policies, and who prevented these policies from being implemented.

4.4 Method of Data Collection

Both documents and interviews served as primary sources of information, with secondary documents serving as a supplementary source. Each of these methods was used to collect specific data.

To collect data relevant to designing and implementing education reform and teacher policies reform in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, the research drew on a wide range of primary and secondary documents. The primary documents included policy documents, official government websites, and consultants' reports, whereas the secondary documents included political and educational literature, international reports, press articles, and news reports. These documents were selected carefully and comprised the main source of data. As Lin (2016) stated, 'documents can foster your understanding of contextual characteristics and causal relationships leading to background meaning to support the analysis, interpretation and audits of data' (p. 171).

Reviewing and analysing these documents uncovered rich data about how each country had designed and implemented teacher policies reform, and it identified the similarities and differences among countries in reforming teacher policies; this helped to determine what accounts for the variation among them in terms of implementation. It also uncovered the factors that might explain Kuwait's apparent inability to implement teacher policies reform over the past 10 years.

These documents were relied upon because they contained enough data to explain the entire reform process and to provide details of the policies related to teachers, such as how they were reformed, who was involved, and when the

reforms were implemented, specifically in the cases of Qatar and Bahrain. However, Kuwait was different because there was insufficient documentary evidence. The MOE and the World Bank (the consultant adviser for Kuwait's education reform) were contacted, but neither was able to cooperate. Therefore, policymakers were asked about this missing information in their interviews, and their responses were used to fill in the story.

These documents were selected carefully, and only documents related to education reform in general, or teacher policies reform in particular, were analysed. The documents, some written in Arabic and some in English, were read thoroughly, and Arabic-language statements that were relevant to the study were translated into English. To confirm that the translations accurately reflected the original statements, both the original Arabic statements and their English translations were reviewed by a colleague who knows both languages and also understands the context of the AGS and education reform in the region.

Each country was studied separately to gain insights into how it reformed its teacher policies. Next, all statements related to the country were compared to develop a picture of how each country designed and implemented teacher policies reform, and to identify explanatory factors for Kuwait's lack of implementation.

After collecting the relevant data and identifying the explanatory factors which account for the lack of implementation of teacher policies reforms in Kuwait, semi-structured interviews were conducted to understand the underlying circumstances and how they affected teacher policy implementation. The reason this method of data collection was used for Kuwait only is that this research aims to understand more fully the reasons behind Kuwait's lack of implementation. Qatar and Bahrain were excluded from this step because they successfully implemented these types of reforms. Still, interviews in Bahrain and Qatar may have contributed significant insights into the research, but travelling around two more countries would have been expensive and time-consuming, and there was a limited amount of time to complete the research. Also, it would not have been easy for the researcher to gain access to high-level policymakers in either Bahrain or Qatar.

Interviews are frequently used to collect qualitative data, which makes this method popular among both educational and political researchers (Harrison, 2001; Robson, 2011). The interview method ‘is a flexible and adaptable way of finding things out... asking people directly about what is going on’ (Robson, 2011, p. 280) to attain in-depth understanding.

In a semi-structured interview, the researcher usually has a list of topics or issues to be discussed with the interviewee, but it allows more freedom to sequence questions and to probe further according to the participant’s response (Robson, 2011). This method allows the interviewees to use their own words and develop their thoughts, which benefits the researcher in understanding complex issues. The benefits of this method have led some scholars to argue that it may be the ‘richest single source of data’ (Gillham, 2000, p. 65).

Thus, it was decided to use semi-structured interviews to collect data relating to education reform and teacher policies reforms in Kuwait. The interviews explored the attitudes, opinions, and thoughts about this subject among policymakers and faculty members in both the College of Education (COE) at Kuwait University (KU) and the College of Basic Education (CBE) at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET).[12] As the research seeks to discover how political institutions operate, how decisions are made, and how political power is attained, it is necessary to ask the political elites who have access to this level of information, as opposed to members of the general public. The main ‘role of an elite interview is to provide an insight into the mind of that particular political actor’ (Harrison, 2001, p. 94).

The selection of participants was based on purposive sampling and snowball sampling. The former is used to access people who, due to their professional role, power, or access to networks, would have in-depth knowledge about the research issue. Cohen et al. (2011) stated that ‘[in] many cases purposive sampling is used in order to access “knowledgeable people”, i.e. those

12 The COE at KU and the CBE at PAAET are the only two colleges in Kuwait that are responsible for initial teacher training, and they are the main suppliers of the teacher workforce to the MOE.

who have in-depth knowledge about particular issues, maybe by virtue of their professional role, power, access to networks, expertise or experience' (p. 157).

In this case, policymakers were the key people who were able to provide information on the policymaking process and the circumstances that they went through to design and introduce teacher policies reform. When it came to teacher selection, as well as teacher training and preparation, the faculty members in both education colleges, the COE and the CBE, were the key people responsible for providing teachers to the MOE.

Snowball sampling was employed to gain access to other policymakers and faculty members who played significant roles in the reform process, through recommendations from their colleagues. This strategy allowed the researcher to ask participants to identify other relevant individuals and to help contact them. As is typical with policymakers, it was difficult to gain access to them and interview them without having a recommendation from someone they knew. This method is considered a valuable method in qualitative research (Blaikie, 2000; Cohen et al., 2011).

Accordingly, as illustrated in Table 4.2, 20 policymakers and faculty members were interviewed, eight of whom had held different positions in several institutions. Among the participants were two former Ministers of Education and one senior policymaker in the MOE. Three participants were from the National Center for Education Development (NCED); two were former directors, and the other was a senior policymaker. There was one senior policymaker in the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (GSSCPD) and one senior leader in the Kuwait Teachers Society (KTS). The general label 'senior', instead of specific titles, was used to ensure their anonymity. Twelve of the participants were faculty members at the COE and CBE; some of these were deans or former deans, and heads of departments were also represented. All participants, whether policymakers or faculty members, were invited by email and WhatsApp messages to take part in this research (see Appendix 1).

The average length of the interviews was between 45 minutes and one hour, and the questions were prepared in advance to guide the interview (see Appendix 2). As there were two different types of participants, policymakers and faculty

members, each type was asked questions appropriate to their positions and experience. The interview questions were initially discussed and negotiated with the supervisors of this research as well as other experts in the field of education reforms in the region, and two pilot interviews were conducted, one with a policymaker and one with a faculty member, to evaluate and improve the questions. All interviews were recorded after permission was obtained from the participants, and then they were carefully transcribed.

Table 4.2

Participants

Category	***Institution***	***Position***	***N***	***Participant's Code***
Policymakers	MOE	Former Minister	2	PM02, PM03
		Senior Leader	1	PM05
	NCED	Former Director	2	PM01, PM08
		Senior Leader	1	PM04
	GSSCPD	Senior Leader	1	PM05
	KTS	Senior Leader	1	PM07
Faculty Members	COE	Faculty Members	8	FM01, FM02, FM04, FM05, FM06, FM07, FM09, and FM11
	CBE	Faculty Members	4	FM03, FM08, FM10, and FM12

4.5 Analysis Method

Interpreting the data is the core of qualitative research. This study dealt with a large amount of information; the researcher collected data from three different countries and conducted 20 interviews. To manage and analyse the data, qualitative content analysis was applied. Schreier (2012) defined qualitative content analysis as 'a method for systematically describing the meaning of qualitative data' (p. 1). A number of categories are created within a coding frame, and materials are then coded according to the frame; using these frames reduces the amount of material

and focuses on those materials related to the research question (Male, 2016; Schreier, 2014). For this research, the materials selected were those related to education reform and teacher policies reform, and reducing the volume of data was beneficial in the comparative stage of the study.

The coding frames created for this research consisted of two categories, the first related to the approach to education reforms and the second related to evidence of what happened in terms of implementation. The researcher created a number of codes for each findings statement and used these codes to establish the main themes and to group statements containing similar codes, i.e., those that had the same type of information or discussed the same issue.

The same process of qualitative content analysis was used to analyse the interviews. After they had been transcribed, the coding process began to identify what themes existed, by highlighting the critical statements from the responses to each question and assigning a code to each relevant statement. However, instead of creating a new coding frame, the researcher used the explanatory factors identified from the comparative analysis as themes, and the participants' statements were classified under the appropriate themes. (See Appendix 3 for a sample of the process.) Each participant was compared with others to see how they interpreted the issue under investigation. When participants' statements were identified as containing crucial information, they were translated from Arabic to English, and an individual fluent in both languages reviewed the translations. This method of analysis helped provide a more comprehensive understanding of the situation in Kuwait.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

To conduct this research and collect the empirical data, the researcher was granted ethical approval from the UCL Institute of Education (see Appendix 4). Participants were given an information sheet that introduced the research topic and the objectives of the study; there was also a section on the plan for the interview (e.g., how long it was expected to take; preservation of anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy; how the collected data would be used; and what would happen to the data both during the research and after its completion). It also

included a section explaining the participants' rights to opt out of the interview and to withdraw data prior to publication (see Appendix 5).

All participants were anonymous throughout all the research steps, especially during the interviews; they were given codes based on their position, so policymakers were coded (PM01, PM02, …), and faculty members were coded (FM01, FM02, …). All the interviews were conducted with the agreement of the participants (see Appendix 6). The data collected is held securely, and access is limited to the research supervisors. All participants had the right to withdraw at any time, and an email and contact number were made available to them in case they decided to do so. Finally, participants were offered the chance to see the project after it has been submitted.

4.7 Summary

This chapter outlines the research approach to this study. The comparative research approach, using MSSD and a qualitative approach, will be employed to answer the research question. The MSSD will be employed as a method to compare Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, and to identify the similarities and differences in their designing and implementing teacher policies. This comparison will help to determine the explanatory factors that impeded Kuwait's implementation of teacher policies, so that these factors can in turn be examined further through empirical data.

The originality of this research made it necessary to use a combination of different methods to acquire the data relevant to the inquiries. These methods consisted of a document review examining policy documents, government reports, and other material that discussed teacher policies reform in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, in addition to semi-structured interviews with policymakers and faculty members in education colleges in Kuwait. Qualitative content analysis was employed to analyse the data. The following chapters will present the findings and an analysis of the three explanatory factors.

Chapter 5 Explanatory Factor 1: The Motivation of the Ruling Establishment for Reforming the Education System

5.1 Introduction

Chapters 5 to 7 of this thesis will analyse the outcome of interest that was detailed in Chapter 2, using the Most Similar System Design (MSSD) and guided by the combination of the Institutional theory and the Multiple Streams theory (see Chapters 3 and Chapter 4). These chapters will seek to answer the research question, "**Why has Kuwait been less successful than Qatar and Bahrain in reforming teacher policies?**", by identifying and analysing key factors that prevented Kuwait from introducing and implementing policies designed to improve the teaching profession. The MSSD method, supported by the above-mentioned political theories, will be employed to examine three key factors—the motivation of the ruling establishment for reforming the education system (this chapter), the degree of stability in the administration that is responsible for reform (Chapter 6), and the degree to which stakeholders are involved in the reform's policy process (Chapter 7)—and whether these factors are strongly related to the presence and absence of the outcome of interest.

This chapter discusses and examines the first explanatory factor—the motivation of the ruling establishment for reforming the education system—and seeks to understand the extent to which this factor was present or absent (or weak) across the three cases. To examine the degree of motivation in each ruling establishment, and how this affected the process of implementing teacher policies, three indicators were established: political support, institutions responsible for education reform, and identification of the problem. Following the MSSD logic, this chapter will start by presenting the positive cases (Bahrain and Qatar), and then will address the negative case (Kuwait), before ending with a comparison and conclusion.

5.2 Theoretical and Conceptual Perspective

As stated in Chapter 3, Kingdon's (2003) theory relied heavily on the motivation within the state to implement certain policies, especially whether or not those in power push for change, and on how specific issues assume priority on the government agenda. Thus, the concern in this research is similar to what Kingdon

was looking for, namely, to understand how and why teacher policies reform became a priority on the government agenda in Bahrain and Qatar but not in Kuwait. Kingdon (2003) argued that the active participant, such as the ruler, was one of the primary sources of setting an agenda, so the contributions and involvement of the ruler may affect the agenda and its implementation.

The Institutional theory is also concerned with analysing implemented policies once they are recognised and supported by those holding the power to make policy (Amenta & Ramsey, 2010). In the case of the Arab Gulf States (AGS), this power is held by the ruling establishments; since they control the policymaking process (see Chapter 3), the more they are involved, the more likely it is that a policy will be supported and implemented. In other words, recognition and support from the ruling establishment are considered signs of motivation towards implementing certain policies, in this case, teacher policies reform.

The Institutional theory also looks at public bureaucracies and their power and efficiency in handling and implementing policies (Cairney, 2012). In the AGS, the bureaucracy and civil service are weak in terms of performance and policy implementation. The literature describes the systems in the AGS as dysfunctional due to a range of issues including overstaffing, low skilled personnel, low productivity, red tape, and a lack of innovation (Ayubi, 1990; Jabbra & Jabbra, 2005; Jreisat, 2012). Several scholars have argued that the capacity of technocrats to carry out reforms may have an impact on the way policies are designed and implemented (Akiba, 2013a; Bruns et al., 2019; Harris & Jones, 2018).

For these reasons, the AGS established parallel governmental bodies that allowed for ‘bureaucratic manoeuvring’ to bypass the rigidities of traditional bureaucratic institutions (Abdel-Moneim, 2016). Thus, the decision about which institution was made responsible for the reform may indicate the level of the state’s motivation. If the reform project was assigned to an inefficient institution, this might signify that the ruling establishment was not sufficiently motivated to reform the education system.

Moreover, according to Kingdon’s (2003) theory, identifying a problem is the first stream of the policy process. He argued that this makes all the difference and that a failure to do so will preclude attracting attention or raising awareness about

it. Kingdon stated that presenting a specific problem creates pressure on the government to pay attention to it and also motivates the public, or at least parts of it, to support the agenda. He pointed out that when policymakers fail to identify a problem, it is usually because they prefer to deal with problems that they are more easily *able* to solve, even if these are not the problems that need to be solved. Hence, if the state is genuinely motivated to reform the education system and target teacher policies, they will identify specific problems that affect the teacher profession and try to draw attention to reforming the policies.

Therefore, if the ruling establishment was motivated enough to reform the education system, they would provide the political support necessary to make sure the reform reached the implementation phase, and they would allocate the reform to an institution that was capable of leading and handling it. Finally, they would ensure that the problems in the education system were identified first, so this information could guide the reform agenda.

5.3 Findings

5.3.1 Bahrain

This section now turns to Bahrain, which implemented education reform, including teacher policies reform (as outlined in Chapter 2). This outcome shows that the ruling establishment was highly motivated to implement the reform agenda, which included a range of policies related to teachers. One of the reasons for this was the active involvement of the ruling establishment in promoting education reform. The Crown Prince, First Deputy Prime Minister HRH Prince Salman Bin Hamad Al Khalifa, was involved in the reform process from the beginning to the end. In his capacity as the Chair of the Economic Development Board (EDB), he met with the consulting company, McKinsey & Company, and requested that they conduct a review of the education system in order to prepare an agenda for reform. Given the position and power held by the Crown Prince, his involvement ensured a high degree of political support for reform.

What may explain the Crown Prince's involvement in the education reform in the first place is that education reform in Bahrain was presented in parallel with planned economic and labour market reforms, all of which were designed to enhance the economy; this explains why the EDB, an economic body, was tasked

with overseeing education reform. Thus, the establishment of the EDB in Bahrain can be seen as facilitating educational reform, which consequently became a priority for the ruling establishment. Moreover, the ruling establishment recognised that education reform needed a champion or owner to achieve its momentum.

In Bahrain, the Ministry of Education (MOE) was not assigned to lead the educational reform because it was perceived as not only reluctant to support the reforms but also incapable of carrying them out due to its dysfunction (Mohamed, 2019). It is not easy to transform a system when relying on the same people who were working in the old, dysfunctional education system (Mohamed, 2019); these people will likely continue what they have always done, and the system will continue to perform poorly.

Trying to reform the existing, inadequate ministry would probably have been a long and slow process, so that option was simply abandoned in favour of setting up a new institutional body to drive the reform process. To circumvent bureaucratic manoeuvring and overcome the rigidities of the traditional MOE bureaucracy, Bahrain's government established a new body, the Education Reform Board (ERB), outside the conventional bureaucratic system. The ERB was led by the Deputy Prime Minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, to oversee the development and implementation of the reform strategy, and this raised the level of the reform process from the ministerial level up to the central state level.

Under the leadership of the Deputy Prime Minister, the reform gained more power to stand up to challenges. The ERB had more flexibility, structuring the reform process through three working teams: the Basic Education Team, the Vocational & Technical Team, and the Tertiary Education Team (see Figure 2.1 for the teams' responsibilities and day-to-day tasks). In conjunction with McKinsey's consultancy work, these working teams carried out much of the research and other efforts that led to the development of the reform strategy. Team members were selected from several institutions and ministries based on their potential for improving the education system.

Prior to preparing the education reform, as noted previously, the Crown Prince asked McKinsey & Company to undertake a diagnostic study to identify the main problems in the existing education system and the causes of its low

performance. Bolstered by the political support provided by the Crown Prince, McKinsey worked with the EDB, the MOE, the Ministry of Labour, the University of Bahrain (UOB), and vocational educational providers to produce a wealth of data and research. They conducted several surveys with students and parents, both in private and public schools; interviews with officials at the MOE and UOB; and school observations.

McKinsey's diagnostic study and proposed solutions were not shelved; on the contrary, they were presented to the Crown Prince in a workshop that he hosted himself, with the attendance of around 200 key officials in Bahrain. This workshop was essential for making the Crown Prince and key political figures aware of the reality of Bahrain's educational situation and motivating them to work to improve it; as such, it created an important momentum. The hosting of this workshop by the Crown Prince attracted the attention of the national media, which illustrates how crucial this is for pushing for education reform.

Clearly, Bahrain's ruling establishment demonstrated a high level of motivation to reform the education system by conducting this diagnostic study to properly plan the reform agenda in a bid to strengthen the education system and eliminate its weaknesses. The results of the study, as presented in the workshop, encouraged the government to take action and introduce reforms designed to enhance the performance of the education system for the future development of the economy. As a result, the reform agenda was sharply focused on solving specific problems, one of which was teacher quality. This was reflected clearly in the reform agenda, which introduced major policies related to teachers (see Table 2.2).

When the EDB published documents relating to the planned reforms, it stated clearly that 'the quality of teachers is the most important factor that influences the quality of learning' (EDB, 2006a, p. 3). This illustrates the emphasis that Bahrain's leadership put on reforming teacher policies. With the involvement of the Crown Prince, the EDB appointed Singapore's National Institute of Education (NIE) to develop and reform teacher policies specifically. To further examine the status of teacher quality and policies, the NIE conducted a needs analysis study using surveys and interviews with teachers, school principals, and MOE officers in order to understand the teachers' situation in more depth. Bahrain

not only diagnosed the problems in the education system but also reviewed the situation of teachers in order to feed this information into its reforms. This thesis argues that it is very unlikely that this would have been achieved without high-level political support from the ruling establishment.

What is more, the final reform agenda was presented by the ERB to the Prime Minister and approved by the cabinet, marking the beginning of the implementation of the education reform. This demonstrated the strong political support for the reform, as the key members of the ruling establishment in Bahrain (the Crown Prince, the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the cabinet, and more than 200 key officials) were aware of the urgency of reform and were involved in it, in one way or another, during the implementation stage. In other words, education reform became a national priority on the cabinet's agenda.

What is important for this research is that Bahrain managed to implement all of its policies relating to teachers, by establishing a new teacher college, the Bahrain Teachers College (BTC), launching the selection initiative to attract and select the best candidates for the teaching profession, improving in-service training, and finally developing a system for teacher performance management. The teacher policies reform could not have been completed without the keen motivation of the ruling establishment to reform the education system in general, and teacher policies in particular.

Bahrain's ruling establishment was highly motivated to reform the education system, and their political support was demonstrated by the involvement of the Crown Prince. They assigned the education reform to a national committee (the ERB) that was led by the Deputy Prime Minister instead of the MOE, and they began by identifying the main reasons for the low performance of the education system, which enabled them to target reforming teacher policies.

What might explain the strong motivation and meaningful involvement of the ruling establishment is that although Bahrain was recognised as a high-income country and a rentier state, it was facing a real economic issue regarding the amount of oil remaining, as noted in Chapter 2. It no longer maintained the same level of wealth as the rest of the AGS; therefore, the reform became a serious matter for the Crown Prince and the government, not only as a way to raise

students' scores in international assessments, but also to come to grips with looming economic challenges.

5.3.2 Qatar

The status of educational reform in Qatar is rather similar to Bahrain in terms of the ruling establishment's level of motivation for reforming the system. Qatar was not facing the same economic challenges as Bahrain, as Qatar has the world's third-largest reserves of natural gas and is the largest exporter of liquefied natural gas; with its small population, it has the world's highest per capita GDP. Nonetheless, economic diversification remains a top national priority for the Qatari ruling establishment, who consider education the key to economic and social progress.

The ruling establishment recognised that the education system was lacking and did not meet twenty-first century needs for supplying productive and competitive citizens; therefore, they acknowledged the need for system-wide reform to the K-12 education system. The involvement of key individuals from the ruling establishment demonstrated the high level of motivation for reforming the education system in Qatar.

The ruling Emir (the head of the state) at that time, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, commissioned the RAND Corporation to investigate the education system, recommend reforms, and develop an implementation plan. He established the Coordinating Committee, which included high-ranking decision-makers such as Sheikha Ahmad Al Mahmoud (the Minister of Education at that time) and Sheikha Abdulla Al Misnad (the president of Qatar University at that time), to work with RAND. The role of the committee was to arrange meetings to evaluate the education system and to help RAND's researchers understand the social and cultural context of Qatar; they worked together closely in the reform designing phase (Brewer et al., 2007). Both RAND's team and the Coordinating Committee were meeting and working from the Emiri Diwan, the ruler's working palace, and they presented their reports directly to the Emir. This organisation structure demonstrated the Emir's strong political involvement and commitment to the reform process, as well as his willingness to consider different solutions.

As in the case of Bahrain, the MOE was not assigned to lead the reforms in Qatar. RAND's assessment of the education system found that the MOE lacked vision and had low capacity for growth and progression, due to its hierarchical approach and lack of communication with society and stakeholders. Their report stated that 'reforming the Ministry of Education would be a Herculean task for even the most dedicated internal change agents' (Brewer et al., 2007, p. 44), arguing that the MOE had no mechanisms for implementing changes or handling reform. The Qatari leadership agreed that the MOE was part of an old, failing system that had become rigid, outdated, and resistant to reform efforts.

To avoid the rigidity of the MOE, its bureaucratic and outdated structure, and its low capacity to handle the reform, an Emiri decree established the Supreme Education Council (SEC) beyond the MOE structure, and it was given legal authority over the MOE to direct the reform. The SEC was designed to be the main education policymaking body; it was assigned a major role in implementing the education reform projects and was responsible for the practical success of the Education for a New Era (EFNE). The MOE thus became a stakeholder only, an entity that implemented policy but was not the leading institution for the reform. This demonstrated the high level of state motivation to reform the education system, because assigning the reform to the MOE, which did not have the mechanisms for implementing changes or handling the reform, would not have helped in reforming the system.

To give this newly established council the political power needed to manage and implement the education reform, the Crown Prince at that time, His Highness Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, was selected to chair the SEC, with Her Highness Mozah Bint Nasser Al Missned, the First Lady, as vice chair. This meant that three highly influential members of the ruling establishment—the ruling Emir, the Crown Prince, and the First Lady—were directly involved in the education reform, which showed how important the reform was to the ruling establishment and how passionate they were about it. Therefore, it was not surprising that Qatar managed to implement all of its reform agenda, especially the projects related to teacher policies.

In addition to the Crown Prince and the First Lady, the SEC included six other influential and committed individuals who were carefully selected to oversee

the implementation of the reform. Major decisions were taken by the SEC, which also managed to establish several institutions and units, including the implementation team, to follow up on day-to-day reform tasks, as outlined previously (Figure 2.3). This made the reform process easier to manage and thus easier to implement. Furthermore, the leadership of the Crown Prince in education reform raised it up to the central level of the state instead of the ministerial level.

Before the reforms were designed, as noted previously, the Emir of Qatar commissioned RAND to evaluate the existing education system to identify the main problems causing its low performance. With the political support provided by the Emir, RAND and the Coordinating Committee worked together in this phase and collected as much data as possible in order to thoroughly understand the system and identify the problems. Several tools were used to gather these data, such as visiting schools and government ministries for observation; interviewing over 200 individuals, including school principals, teachers, students, parents, and officials at the MOE and other ministries; and analysing all documents related to education and schooling in Qatar. At the end of each day, the RAND team met with the Coordinating Committee to discuss the data and clarify information. This intensive and comprehensive effort to diagnose the problems in the system clearly indicated the level of motivation to reform the system in Qatar.

The RAND report was presented to the Emir and his government; this made them aware of the situation in the education system and boosted their interest in reform. One of the major findings concerned teachers. The diagnostic study found that teachers in Qatar were of low quality due to poor training, both pre-service and in-service. It also found that their pay and incentives were low, and that the teacher allocation policy was inadequate.

With teacher policies identified as a main reason behind the low performance of the education system, policymakers were attracted to this issue and managed to include teacher policies at the top of the reform agenda. This was reflected very clearly in the reform agenda, which emphasised that teacher quality was critical to enhancing standards and that teachers needed to be selected according to specific criteria and then trained effectively. As a result, Qatar managed to introduce comprehensive reform projects related to teachers in the

form of teacher standards, teacher preparation, teacher licensing, and teacher professional development.

As in Bahrain, Qatar's ruling establishment demonstrated their enthusiasm for education reform by involving key members of the ruling establishment, including the Emir, the Crown Prince, and the First Lady; assigning education reform to the SEC, led by the Crown Prince, instead of the MOE; and identifying the main reasons for the low performance of the existing education system, which enabled them to target reforms in teacher policies.

As a result, Qatar succeeded in implementing all its reform projects related to enhancing teacher quality; it established the Teacher Preparation and Certification Program (TPCP), the Qatar National Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders (QNPSTSL), the Professional Licensing Office (PLO) for issuing teacher licences, and finally the Professional Development Office (PDO). The implementation of these huge reforms to teacher policies would not have been achieved without the strong motivation and commitment of the ruling establishment to reforming the education system in general and teacher policies in particular.

As discussed earlier in this section, the economic outlook for Qatar was much better than that for Bahrain, but the interest and passion of the ruling establishment for diversifying its economy toward a knowledge economy and for building a 'world-class' system to compete in the global economy is what explains the high motivation to reform the system. Because Qatar's leadership saw education as the key to economic and social progress, reforming the education system was a priority for them, and they became directly involved in the process to ensure that the reforms fulfilled their aims.

5.3.3 Kuwait

Although Kuwait was similar to Bahrain and Qatar in terms of its political structure, economic situation and desire to diversify the economy, and reliance on international consultants to develop the reform, the development of its education reform was very different from that of Bahrain and Qatar, for Kuwait ultimately failed to reform its teacher policies.

One of the significant variations between the positive cases (Bahrain and Qatar) and the negative case (Kuwait) is that the education reform effort in Kuwait was not initiated by the ruling establishment; in fact, it began as a suggestion from the World Bank to the MOE. This striking difference implies that Kuwait's ruling establishment either was not previously aware of the low performance of the education system, or they did not recognise the importance of reforming the education system in relation to the ambitious economic vision that they had launched. Therefore, no members of the ruling establishment were involved in the education reform process, which indicates the low motivation regarding the reform.

To be precise, what happened in Kuwait was that in 2003, the government asked the World Bank to hold a public expenditure review and to strengthen the MOE's information system. When the World Bank started their work on this project, they found that the MOE had no indicators, standards, or national assessments that could be used to determine the quality of its service; therefore, it was hard for them to evaluate its expenditures. The MOE and the World Bank then launched the Kuwait Education Indicators and Assessment Project. Once this project was in place, the World Bank suggested focusing on improving the performance of the general education system through the Integrated Education Reform Program (IERP) project starting in 2010, as outlined in Chapter 2. It does not seem that the IERP was meant to develop human capital or to play a role in diversifying the economy, as the reforms in Bahrain and Qatar were, even though the New Kuwait Vision 2035 claims that.

This section aims to understand in more depth how and why Kuwait's ruling establishment was not motivated to reform the education system and what the underlying circumstances were for this lack of motivation. It will present and discuss excerpts of interviews with policymakers and faculty members at education colleges in Kuwait, and how the lack of motivation affected the implementation of teacher policies reform. To make the discussion easier to follow, it will be divided into three sections, one for each of the three indicators that were used to examine the motivation of the ruling establishment for reforming the education system: the political support provided to the reform, the institutions responsible for education reform, and the identification of the problems.

5.3.3.1 Political Support Provided to the Reform.

As outlined in Chapter 2, there was no mention of any involvement by the ruling establishment in any of the policy documents reviewed in the course of this research, which demonstrates the lack of political support for education reform in Kuwait. The majority of interviewees (14 out of 20) believed that the government did not consider education and educational reform to be a priority on its policy agenda, and that this was the main problem facing Kuwait in the realm of education. In general, the participants agreed that the government did not have a clear vision as to what was needed from the education system or why it should be reformed, and this implies that education was not a matter of state policy. One of the faculty members commented:

> The government does not have a real, clear vision to reform education. Education is not a priority for the government, and they are not really taking any serious action to solve the problems facing education… we have not seen any serious actions that show that the government is interested in reforming education. (FM10)

From his point of view, the education reform in Kuwait did not have political support because the ruling establishment simply did not consider education a priority. A former education minister raised the same concern in his interview; he believed that 'the main problem that faces education in Kuwait, and the root of all problems, is that education is not a state policy' (PM02). He argued that 'Kuwait does not have a long-term strategy for education that is formed and approved by the cabinet. To improve our education system, the government must consider education to be one of its top priorities' (PM02). A former director at the National Center for Education Development (NCED) also noted that 'the education reform was not a priority in the government's agenda; we have not observed any interest' (PM08).

One of the faculty members attributed this lack of interest among members of the ruling establishment to their viewing 'education as a service similar to any other service that the state provides' (FM07), and not as a vital factor in developing human capital. This might mean that as long as the schools are operating and children are going to school every day, and then graduating and moving up to the next level, the leaders are satisfied; they do not seem to be concerned with educational attainment and quality. According to FM07, the absence of a clear

vision, mentioned previously by one of the faculty members who was interviewed, means that the government does not know 'what it needs from the education system (what final outcomes Kuwait needs). In the absence of that vision, it makes education a random practice, where reform projects are no more than slogans for media use'. He continued, 'There is no real will from the state leaders to develop education in Kuwait' (FM07).

These quotes could illustrate two things. First, they confirm that the ruling establishment was neither involved nor interested in the reform, and secondly, they explain this lack of motivation in the first place. The ruling establishment did not view education as crucial to solving the challenges the country faced in regard to its economy, the low productivity of its citizens, and overemployment in the public sector. (See Chapter 1 for more discussion about these challenges.) Based on their view of education as a general public service, they were not interested in reforming the education system and therefore did not offer their political support.

A former education minister recalled that when he was in the cabinet, there was a strong contrast between the level of government concern regarding oil affairs and the concern about education affairs. Shedding light on the ruling establishment's involvement in matters that interested them, such as the oil sector, he reported:

> The state considered oil to be Kuwait's main resource, but this view should change, and the emphasis should shift from oil to education as the main resource. The education sector must be viewed as being as crucial as the oil sector. I used to discuss this with the Prime Minister and the Emir. State leaders must ask every morning, 'How many students reached the benchmark, and how well are our students performing in international assessments?' instead of asking about the oil prices. Unfortunately, this interest does not exist. No one asks, and no one cares. (PM03)

In other words, the ruling establishment has not viewed the education sector as being as crucial as the oil sector. During his time in the cabinet, this minister was not asked about the students' performance or their achievements, and he felt that no one cared about that. This indicates that the absence of this interest affected the implementation process of the reforms. It seems that ministers were not interested in implementing them because, as the minister stated in his testimony, '*No one asks, and no one cares*'.

Given that ‘education in Kuwait is highly influenced by politicians’ (PM03), a few of the persons interviewed assumed that members of the National Assembly were exerting political pressure on the Ministers of Education not to reform teacher policies. The assumption was that teachers would not consider the changes to be in their best interest, so they would enlist the help of Members of Parliament (MPs) to block the reforms and maintain the status quo. One participant argued that ‘policymakers in the MOE fear the reaction of politicians or the society, so the reform projects that are related to teachers do not reach the implementation stage’ (FM10). A former education minister explained that this fear was due to the absence of political support from the government:

> The political pressure placed on the ministers by some MPs may delay the implementation of teacher policies. The ministers know that the government and the society will not support them in resisting this pressure, so they choose not to take any major decisions until their term is finished. (PM02)

Due to this political pressure, the Ministers of Education did not make any serious decisions about reforming teacher policy, and the minister explained this by saying that ‘the government does not give you enough support’ (PM02); he continued, ‘So, as a minister, if you take any major decision that could create political pressure against the government, you need to face it alone. No one will support you’ (PM02). This might indicate that there was no political support from the ruling establishment for the reform; in fact, the former education minister argued that the government’s position ‘is negative; there is no support, no advice, and no evaluation of the decisions we take. This is why most reform projects are not going forward and do not succeed’ (PM02).

In other words, the problem lies in the ruling establishment’s position towards reform and its lack of political support. The role of the ruling establishment is to support the ministers in their decisions, especially those decisions related to teachers, affecting their roles and their policies. In fact, though, the ministers did not get enough support to go forward and implement the policies related to teachers. The success of the reforms was dependent on how much the policymakers believed in them and would support them to ensure implementation. One faculty member argued:

> If the decision-makers were serious about implementing teacher reforms, and they were aware of their importance, they would make the decision and go forward with implementation, withstanding all pressures that may oppose these policies. Take, for example, what happened when the government recently increased the gasoline prices.[13] The educational policymakers are still hesitant and not really convinced by the reform projects that they established. (FM10)

This quote indicates that policymakers still did not appreciate the importance of reforming teacher policies. It also suggests that if the ruling establishment was interested in certain policies, it would implement them regardless of parliamentary pressure. It all comes back to the ruling establishment and its interest in supporting change.

The participants strongly believed that education reform in Kuwait in general, and teacher policies reform in particular, required strong political support from the highest political level in the state—the ruling establishment—for successful implementation. 'The weakness of the political will' for reforming the education system 'caused the weakness and delay in developing education in Kuwait' (FM08).

One of the faculty members argued that 'sometimes implementing such policies could create political or social opposition to these policies. The MOE needs real support from the state leader to implement the teacher licence' (FM01). From his point of view, teacher policies reform needed to be 'supported at the highest political level in the state in order to go forward with the implementation process and to avoid these pressures' (FM01). A former director at the NCED reported being told by a former Minister of Education that if he had been 'in position when the reform plan was being established, [he] would have made the plan under the patronage of the Emir; that way, it would have had more power and respect' (PM01). This indicates that the support of the state's leader is crucial to empower the reform and its projects. A former director at the NCED also argued:

> Reforming the education system required a comprehensive interest from the top of the state, not on the level of the minister, but instead on the level of the Emir. The political support is absent. I requested a meeting with the

13 In 2016, the Kuwait government raised gasoline prices by up to 83% for high-quality gasoline, explaining this step in the context of reforms to counter the decline in global oil prices. It was the first price increase in almost 20 years (The Guardian, 2016).

> Emir to explain the issues and ask for his support; however, I resigned before I heard back from his office. (PM08)

He continued, ‘As long as the education reform in Kuwait is on the level of the Minister of Education, nothing will change, and nothing will be implemented. It is impossible’ (PM08). Participants believed that ‘the first step in developing the education system is to make it a state concern and not a ministers’ concern’ (FM01). A former director at the NCED argued that ‘solving [education] issues requires a person who is able to make decisions, as well as support from the country’s leadership’ (PM01). This might demonstrate that the MOE’s leaders were not able to make these decisions because the political support from the ruling establishment was absent. Furthermore, a senior policymaker made it very clear that ‘the education field is missing the sponsorship and the political support from a higher institution that supports its projects and facilitates meeting its challenges’ (PM04).

Therefore, it can be concluded that the reason why the ruling establishment did not become involved and lend their political support to the education reform was simply that they did not consider it a priority. The evidence provided above repeatedly indicates that this lack of political support affected the implementation of teacher policies because the ministers did not receive enough support to move forward in implementing these projects.

5.3.3.2 Institutions Responsible for Education Reform.

In Kuwait, the education reform was not assigned to a quasi-government body, as it was in Bahrain and Qatar; instead, the reform was assigned to the existing MOE. The MOE was thus responsible for designing, implementing, and evaluating the reform, and also for deciding which parts of the reform projects would be implemented first and which might be delayed or even cancelled. The government insisted on passing on education reform to the MOE despite its poor performance and its failure to reform the education system over the previous 30 years. Their insistence might indicate that the ruling establishment was not seriously motivated to reform the education system.

One interesting point that was observed while examining Kuwaiti education reform was that the reform was not well-managed. Kuwait did not establish a

special committee to follow up daily on the reform tasks, and they did not form an implementation team. Also, the reform projects were not all under the same administration; there were some projects where the MOE was in charge but partnered with the World Bank and the NCED (such as the education national standards, and developing the competencies-based curriculum), there were other projects that the MOE was solely in charge of (such as promoting ICT as a tool for learning), and there were still others that the NCED alone was in charge of (such as teacher licensing). This created a lack of coherence, with each organisation working in isolation from the others, as will be discussed later in this section. This situation was not observed in Bahrain and Qatar, where the institutions leading the education reform were responsible for delivering the entire reform projects.

Quasi-governmental bodies, namely the SEC and NCED, do exist in Kuwait's education sector.[14] The majority of the participants interviewed (16 out of 20) felt that these bodies had shortcomings in their powers, autonomy, and professional capacity, and that these defects prevented the two institutions from effectively carrying out their roles in reforming the education system. They also saw these weaknesses as indications that the ruling establishment was not especially concerned with education; otherwise, they would have taken action to correct them.

A senior policymaker at the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (GSSCPD) asserted that 'the NCED is considered a broken body... game over' (PM06) and that neither the NCED nor the SEC had performed their roles well 'because they are handcuffed and cannot do any serious work' (PM06). For instance, the SEC was not a fully independent body due to the fact that it was 'led by the Minister of Education, who has the power to select the members and to call meetings according to his will' (PM03), as a former minister shared with me; this was what led a senior leader at GSSCPD to claim that 'the SEC's role in the reform was marginal' (PM08).

14 Kuwait's SEC was established in 1984 as an advisory body, chaired by the Minister of Education, whose role was to oversee the establishment of general policies related to educational affairs and approval of the educational programmes. The council was to meet at least twice a year by invitation of the Minister (Council of Ministers Legal Advice & Legislation, n.d.).

One former education minister drew a contrast between the Supreme Petroleum Council and the SEC, highlighting how government interest in a certain sector has a significant impact on its power:

> In the oil sector, there is the Supreme Petroleum Council, which is led by the Prime Minister and not by the Minister of Oil; the minister is only a member of this council. The council sets all the strategies and general policies in the oil sector, and all its decisions are mandatory. In comparison, yes, there is a Supreme Council in the education sector, but it was established as an advisory board. No one hears about this council, and no minister has ever referred to the council for advice on education strategies and policies. (PM03)

This may confirm what was discussed above, namely, that the ruling establishment has not been interested in education or its reform. Although there is a minister of oil, the minister does not lead the Supreme Petroleum Council; instead, it is led by the Prime Minister because it is understood that this will guarantee more power and stability for the council. When it comes to education, though, the council is led by the Minister of Education.

Furthermore, a former director at NCED explained how his hands were tied and he was unable to do his work:

> As a centre, I could not criticise the decisions of the MOE because I was not independent from them, so if the minister was upset with us as a centre, he could decrease our budget or stop us from operating—and this has happened before. As a director, I did not have the authority to propose innovations that might develop the educational policies. If we found that an issue required more work to resolve it, we could not do anything unless we received an order from the Board of Trustees or from the minister. Without this order, we could not do anything. Our hands were tied. (PM01)

Given this point of view, we can understand the inability of the NCED to take an active role in the reform or to function as required. Most importantly, it was assigned to develop the teacher policies reforms (teacher licensing and teacher standards), as discussed in Chapter 2, but it did not in fact have the human capacity to do that work. A senior leader at the NCED described the limited capacity of the centre:

> There are many projects that are related to teachers, and we at the centre are responsible for these projects. These projects need lots of work and research, but unfortunately, I could not do all the work because I don't have enough staff in my department. Due to that shortage, I couldn't do

> more than one project at a time. If I had enough staff, I could run all the projects at the same time and achieve faster results. (PM04)

This may give a clear insight into the delay and the eventual lack of implementation of teacher policies reform in Kuwait. Aside from its other weaknesses, the NCED was not capable of developing and delivering teacher policy projects due to its shortage of staff. Because it was not independent, it could not hire any new staff without permission from the MOE. Both of the former education ministers who were interviewed confirmed this situation, sharing their frustration with the NCED. One of them stated that 'unfortunately, the NCED suffers from a shortage of human and financial resources; therefore, its work is delayed due to the lack of support and power' (PM03).

There have been several attempts to restructure the centre, by senior policymakers at both the ministerial level and the NCED level, but these attempts have not been successful. One former director reported that he had proposed empowering the centre and its role:

> There was a proposal to transfer the centre to be under the Prime Minister instead of being under the Minister of Education. However, the Prime Minister refused this proposal, and he was unwilling to have the educational policies under his direct responsibility. I was surprised. The Prime Minister is in charge of the oil policies by chairing the Supreme Petroleum Council, and he is also in charge of the national strategies by chairing the Supreme Council of Planning—but when it comes to education, he refused! This illustrates that the government is not really serious about reforming education. (PM01)

So even though the Prime Minister chaired both the Supreme Petroleum Council and the Supreme Council of Planning, it seems that he was less willing to have the SEC or the NCED under his supervision, as the former director expressed. Indeed, this quote indicates that education and education reform were not considered priorities for the Prime Minister or his government.

It is apparent that there were significant problems in the establishment of both the SEC and the NCED and the unwillingness to solve their internal problems. These two bodies were not independent of the MOE and its rigid bureaucracy; as a result, they were not active in the reform process, and this had a huge impact on the floundering reform implementation. One of the former ministers succinctly stated that 'it is not possible to have a national reform of the education system

under the supervision of the MOE's leaders' because 'the ministry's leaders are too busy with day-to-day routines; therefore, they cannot concentrate on leading the reform projects' (PM03).

Given that Kuwait launched its education reform with the MOE as the leading body in designing and implementing it, the reform remained a matter for the MOE's leaders only. It was not elevated to a national matter, and this was reflected in all the relevant decisions; the MOE's leaders could decide what would and would not be implemented based on their own beliefs and interests in certain projects. A former director at the NCED stated that 'the reform projects that were launched are not part of the state's national policies. As each new minister or leader in the MOE can requisition these projects, they may believe in them or may refuse them' (PM01). Accordingly, this weakened the education reform projects and affected their sustainability and implementation. He claimed, 'If education reform projects were launched at the national level instead of the level of the MOE, a lot of these projects would have been implemented by now' (PM01).

Fourteen of the participants who were interviewed questioned the MOE's capability to lead and manage educational reform, arguing that it was not the correct decision to assign reforms to the MOE. A senior leader at the Kuwait Teachers Society (KTS) explained that 'the MOE is merely an executive body that cannot assume more significant roles than its capabilities and size' allow (PM07). A senior policymaker at the GSSCPD also contended that 'having the MOE design the reform's plan is a big mistake. This is not their job. The MOE is planning, implementing, observing, and evaluating the reform, and this is not acceptable at all' (PM06). He asserted:

> The MOE built the reform on the wrong basis because they do not have enough understanding as to how reform is built from the beginning. The mentality of the MOE's leaders makes them unable to design or deliver reform, and there are some leaders who do not want this reform to work successfully. (PM06)

Likewise, a former NCED director argued that 'the MOE's leaders lack a lot of skills and knowledge; the lack in designing and delivering a reform is only one of them. Some of them do not understand English, which creates a challenge when meeting the World Bank' (PM08). He continued, 'the MOE is completely collapsed; the whole institution and system are collapsing, so it is not possible to assign the

reform to a collapsed institution'. He also agreed with the previous senior leader that 'the MOE is the one that fights against educational reform and tries to obstruct and delay it' (PM08).

The study participants strongly believed that there was a flaw in the mechanism for leading the reforms. A senior policymaker at the GSSCPD argued, 'you cannot initiate education reform without having a theory of change'. He claimed that 'no leaders in the MOE understand what a theory of change is. They don't know that; they are very weak, and they cannot admit that they are weak' (PM06).

If these claims are accurate, this may have created a challenge in managing the reform, and it may have created chaos. The level of chaos was illustrated in an interview with a senior policymaker at the MOE. When asked about the delay in implementing the teacher licensing project, he responded, 'Why are you asking me about this project? The MOE is not responsible for it. You need to ask the NCED'. He then asked, 'Is the project ready? Definitely not. When the NCED finishes the project, then ask me why we have not implemented it' (PM05). Yet when a senior leader at the NCED was asked about this, the reply was, 'the MOE is not supporting us, and they are not providing the NCED with enough staff to do our work. I am working alone' (PM04).

These statements from two senior policymakers, who were supposed to be working with each other, show that the extensive bureaucracy involved in the teacher policies projects allowed them to blame one another for the delays. They also demonstrated that there was no collaboration between the MOE and the NCED in leading the reform projects. Moreover, they make it clear that the MOE was not capable of leading, managing, or coordinating the reform. This state of affairs has had a significant impact on the reform projects in general and the teacher policies projects in particular.

Some of the participants claimed that 'there are some policies that the MOE was not able to decide on; these policies should have been made by the government or higher' up in the system (FM01). One of these was the teacher licensing policy, which a policymaker characterised as much too complex for the MOE or the NCED to handle:

> When we started working on developing the teacher licensing policy, we discussed how this type of project could not be an NCED project or even the MOE's project; instead, it should be a national project. We know that there are administrative regulations in the state related to the appointment and employment of teachers, so if teacher licensing is meant to be the standard as to whether a teacher would be accepted to the profession or not, it becomes closely related to Civil Service Law. In order to implement this policy, the Civil Service Law needs to be changed, and modifying this law can be done only through the National Assembly. (PM07)

This quotation explains clearly why the teacher licensing project is not yet implemented. According to this policymaker, the MOE did not have the authority to implement such a policy without changing the Civil Service Law, but changing this law required legislation from the National Assembly. Since there was no political support for education reform, the Ministers of Education were not interested in requesting the change needed to implement the policy because they knew that the government would not support them.

Furthermore, a former NCED director stated that 'the problem is not in finding solutions; the main problem is with the way that the MOE handled the reform. They are making development of the system so difficult' (PM08). Likewise, a former education minister argued that 'the failure in the education reform is due to the manner of leading and managing the projects, not because of the projects themselves or the ideas behind them' (PM03). He pointed to 'weaknesses and defects in designing and implementing some of the reform projects' (PM03). This indeed demonstrates the inability of the MOE to handle the reform, and it explains why it was a serious mistake to assign the education reform to the MOE.

One reason for the weaknesses in designing and implementing education reform in Kuwait is something that the majority of the participants agreed upon: that most of the educational leaders appointed by the government did not have an educational background and were not specialists in education. 'Some have not spent one day in a school since they graduated from secondary school' (PM07). One participant reported:

> Most of the leaders in the MOE are not educational experts. For example, if you tried to explain to them some of the educational theories, they would not understand or recognise the scholars behind these theories because they do not have an educational background. So how can we expect these leaders to reform our education system?! (FM08)

Selecting leaders who are not experts in education, and who may not understand how the system is working, has had an effect on decision-making in the MOE. One faculty member stated that 'educational decision-making is affected by the leaders in the ministry; they are not educational specialists. Most of these leaders come from different backgrounds' (FM05). He pointed out that this 'could be one of the reasons why reforms are delayed, as they are not aware of the educational priorities or the realities of the education system' (FM05). Along the same lines, a senior leader at the NCED said:

> Ministry leaders are not aware of educational priorities; they do not understand the reality of education and its requirements. I felt this every time I had a meeting with them. I found them discussing very, very trivial issues that are not really important. (PM04)

During an interview, a senior leader at the MOE was asked about how the ministry was prioritising the reform's projects, and his response was evidence for the previous claims. He said:

> There are no priorities in the education field, and whoever claims that one or another aspect of education takes priority doesn't understand education well. Education—in general—is only one aspect; therefore, there is no prioritising regarding the reform's projects. (PM05)

This clearly demonstrates the lack of understanding of education among the MOE's senior leaders, and this affected not only the decision-making but also the reforms, along with the collaboration with the consultant firm (the World Bank). A senior policymaker commented that 'the World Bank is good if you know how to use it' (PM06) but attributed the problems to the calibre of the MOE personnel who were dealing with the World Bank. He said:

> When the World Bank works with high calibre staff, this will be a challenge for them, and they will give the best of what they have. But with the MOE, the World Bank is working with low calibre staff who are not experts in education reform or education policy. (PM06)

A former director of the NCED provided an example of how those lower calibre staff members affected the reforms:

> The MOE still does not recognise the significance of teacher standards, or until now they do not know how to use these standards; are they for assessment or for recruitment? The vision is not clear yet within the MOE. The MOE is not capable of estimating their needs for teachers over the

> next five years, so I am not sure how it is capable of managing and reforming teacher policies. (PM01)

After listening to these policymakers, one is not surprised that teacher policies have not yet been implemented, for the MOE still does not have a clear vision of their purpose, how they should be used, or their significance. This clearly reveals its weakness in handling the reform. The MOE announced the reform projects in 2010, yet 10 years later, a senior policymaker who worked in the NCED for several years stated that the MOE still did not have a clear idea regarding teacher standards or teacher licensing.

5.3.3.3 Identification of the Problem.

A look at the reform agenda, as outlined in Table 2.5, shows that Kuwait introduced only two teacher policies: teacher standards and teacher licensing. These initiatives were limited in scope and not considered to be comprehensive reforms based on the international literature on teacher policies (see Chapter 1). Because the problems were never identified and presented to the policymakers in Kuwait, there was no interest in reforming teacher policies. Policymakers did not know whether teachers in general were qualified or not, or which aspects of the teaching profession needed to be reformed. Clearly, the state was not motivated to reform the education system.

Asked whether the World Bank or MOE conducted a diagnostic assessment of the education system prior to launching the reform programme, a senior leader at the NCED answered, 'No, the World Bank did not do a diagnostic study about the current status of Kuwait's education system. It was a process of trial and error, meaning that while they were working on the reform, they oversaw the situation in each subproject' (PM04). Another former senior leader at the NCED explained why this was the situation in Kuwait:

> Under our circumstances, it was difficult to do what Bahrain and Qatar did, to diagnose the education system before launching the education reform. One of the main reasons that prevented us from doing this is the turnover among ministers and leadership in the MOE; every new minister comes with a new method and a new project, regardless of the existing projects. Also, the MOE totally refused to have an institution like the NCED assess the education system. All these matters made it difficult for us to conduct a diagnostic study, so we established the reform programme, and while we were doing that, we tried to do some diagnostic study (such as the NIE's)

> to inform and redesign the reform's projects. The process in Kuwait was not 1, 2, 3, 4. Instead we started with 2, then went to 1, then back to 2, then 3, and in 3, we went back to 1 and 2. We took this approach based on our circumstances. (PM08)

These two quotes from senior leaders at the NCED confirmed that Kuwait did not identify the problems before launching the reforms. Two of the reasons, as discussed previously, were the fact that reform was not considered a government priority and the weakness with which the MOE dealt with the reform.

Because Kuwait failed to identify the problems and did not design the reform in a way that could solve its problems, a number of faculty members and policymakers claimed that the reform agenda was not based on any study of Kuwait's context and its needs, nor was it linked to how these projects would develop the education system. For example, a faculty member claimed that 'the MOE picked several reform projects, but they do not know exactly what they will do with these projects' (FM09). Another faculty member went further, saying that when it came to setting up the reform agenda:

> The World Bank was the one who dictated the reform projects to the MOE and the NCED. All the projects proposed by the World Bank were agreed on without any change, which illustrates that neither the MOE nor the NCED had any role in setting the reform agenda. The World Bank delivered the reform as a whole package. (FM07)

This can be understood in light of what was noted previously, that most of the MOE's leaders were not educational specialists, and some did not even understand how the education system operated and what it needed. According to the previous two quotes, it seems that the MOE's leaders did not know how education reform should be structured and designed. Therefore, they accepted all of the projects that the World Bank proposed, even if the projects were not needed or were not applicable in the Kuwaiti context. A faculty member explained:

> The MOE does not have a structure or strategy to pick these projects. The reform projects that were selected by the MOE were not based on the needs of the education field and were not based on examining the weaknesses in the education system. The selection was based on randomness and unsystematic selectivity. (FM09)

This illustrates very clearly that the education reform agenda was not built to solve the problems facing the education system. Kuwait failed to identify the problems; as a result, teacher policies were not attractive to the policymakers at

the MOE, and the government has not paid attention to reform policies related to teachers. A former director at the NCED stated:

> There were some crucial issues that we believed should be included in the reform agenda. We knew that the initial teacher programmes were too weak and should be reformed, but due to the absence of political support and the MOE's lack of conviction toward the reform, we were not able to include this in the agenda (PM08).

This illustrates how crucial it is to have political support from the beginning, first to establish the agenda and then to implement the reform. A senior leader at the GSSCPD, explaining why the Kuwaiti government did not identify the problems before launching the reform, stated, 'We have a problem in the policy mechanism in Kuwait. There is no systematic approach for policymaking, nor for evaluation or assessment. We have an ad hoc process' (PM06).

It appears that the ruling establishment did not deal with the problem of the policy mechanism in the beginning but instead launched the reform with no systematic approach. This was apparent when Kuwait's education reform was discussed in Chapter 2. The policymaking process was unclear and did not indicate that the reform underwent a systematic approach, and it appears that critical steps—identifying the problems at the outset, proposing the solutions, implementing, and evaluating—were missing. The quality of teachers was not identified as a reason for the low performance of the education system, because diagnosing the problem was not part of the policy mechanism. This also has to do with the level of the motivation in the ruling establishment for reforming the system, because if they had been highly motivated, they would have taken a different approach.

Given that they did not identify the problems initially, there remains a question as to how the MOE was able to implement some of the reform projects—such as the competencies-based curriculum, the national assessment Math, English, Science, and Arabic (MESA), school leadership training, and the distribution of more than 80,000 tablets in secondary schools—while failing to implement teacher policy projects. One of the faculty members argued that the MOE implemented those reform projects that were easier but neglected those that were more sensitive and took more time and effort:

> The MOE is implementing easy projects. It is very easy to come up with a product (new textbook, tablets, etc.) given the financial abundance. However, it is very hard to establish and implement teacher standards or a licensing system. It requires more time and effort to be sure that these fit the needs of the education system. So the MOE finds it more attractive to implement the projects that create quick wins and which people can recognise, such as the tablet project. In that case, people will perceive the MOE as doing something and reforming the education system. But this is not real reform. (FM03)

Another policymaker confirmed that the implementation of reform projects was not based on the needs of the education system. He stated that 'implementing the reform projects depends on the minister's will, regardless of whether this project is a priority or not, and regardless of whether the education system needs it much or not' (PM07). A senior leader at the GSSCPD agreed, stating, 'the MOE implements the easiest projects that do not need much effort and are not complicated' (PM06). An NCED senior leader provided another example:

> The long-term projects that require a long time to have an impact and show results, needing more effort and lengthy discussion, or the projects that may generate rejections from others and create a new challenge to the minister—the minister does not make a decision on them. This is exactly what happened with the teacher licensing project; each minister feared implementing it and asked us to work more on the project, without telling us with what was needed to complete it. Every minister that I spoke to about the teacher licensing, their response was that if the project could be implemented after their term ended, they would be willing to delay the implementation. This is because they know that they will not be in their position for long, and they are not willing to bear the consequences. (PM01)

This quote demonstrates that the MOE's ministers did not feel that reforming teacher policies was urgent because the problem of teacher policies was never identified in the first place. The teacher licensing project did not emerge as a solution to a problem. As noted before, the MOE's leaders still do not know what the licensing is for; therefore, it has never become a priority for them, and they have failed to implement it. Moreover, this quote by a senior leader illustrates how the MOE was handling the reform projects. Due to the absence of political support, which has been discussed previously, the MOE ministers were not interested in implementing them.

It has become obvious now why teacher policies reform was never implemented in Kuwait. The ruling establishment was not motivated to reform the

education system, including teacher policies. The ruling establishment was never involved in any of the reform processes, and there was no political support provided to the reform. Instead of assigning the reform to an independent body, they gave it to the MOE despite its weakness and inability to carry out the reforms. The teacher policy projects were not meant to solve a problem of the teacher profession and to enhance its quality, for this problem was never even identified, and the government was not attracted to implementing these policies. Therefore, during the past ten years, Kuwait failed to implement the only two policies that were related to teachers.

This thesis interprets the lack of motivation for reforming the education system as being due to the fact that Kuwait's ruling establishment has never been aware of how vital the quality of education is to the society and particularly to diversification and sustainability in the economy. This was evident from the IERP; it aimed to improve the performance of the education system, yet it did not clarify how or why the system was to be improved, unlike in Bahrain and Qatar. But this begs the question: If the ruling establishment was not motivated to reform the education system, why did they launch the education reform programme in the first place? A faculty member remarked:

> In Kuwait, we do not have a real project to reform the educational system. All the projects that the MOE announced were operational projects that were not aiming to reform the system and develop its practices. Instead, they were intended to show the world and international organisations that something is changing in Kuwait, that we are doing something. The most apparent evidence that proves my claim is that the educational situation in Kuwait is deteriorating more and more, whether internationally, regarding international assessments such as the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), or domestically, regarding educational outputs. (FM07)

This strong allegation demonstrates the motivation of the ruling establishment for reforming the education system.

5.4 Comparison and Conclusion

Three indicators were used in this chapter to examine the motivation of the ruling establishment for reforming the education system and teacher policies in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, namely: the political support provided to the reform, the

institution responsible for education reform, and the identification of the problems that were causing the education system to perform poorly. According to Kingdon's (2003) theory, the motivation within the state is the key to implementing certain policies, and it needs to exist throughout the entire policymaking process to guarantee the implementation of the policies. This motivation was evident in Bahrain and Qatar but not in Kuwait.

In regard to political support, the evidence presented above clearly demonstrates that in both Bahrain and Qatar, the ruling establishments were heavily involved in supporting the reform from the beginning, including during its implementation. Conversely, in Kuwait, political support was absent, and no one from the ruling establishment was involved.

The Institutional theory describes policies as being implemented when they are recognised and supported by the person or group holding the power of policymaking (Amenta & Ramsey, 2010). Kingdon (2003) argues that the participation of the ruler is considered one of the primary sources of setting the agenda, and the ruler's contributions and involvement may affect the agenda and its implementation. This was observed clearly in the discussion above, in terms of the policymaking process and setting the agenda, as the education reform process in Bahrain and Qatar was different from that in Kuwait.

It is evident from the analysis in this chapter that the ruling establishments in both positive cases (Bahrain and Qatar) were directly involved in the policymaking process, providing the political support required to implement the education reform in general and teacher policies in particular. Both these states recognised the need to reform the system if they wished to develop and enhance the economy by developing their human capital.

On the other hand, this recognition did not exist in Kuwait, and no one in the ruling establishment realised the critical role that education might play in diversifying the economy. The ruling establishment still looked at education as a general public service, not as one that contributes to developing the society and the economy. The interviews illustrated that the ruling establishment did not consider education a top priority on its agenda, and the government did not have a clear vision of what the education system should look like or its role in developing

the country. Therefore, the education reform was missing involvement from key policymakers in the state, and this lack of political support had an impact on the implementation of teacher policies.

Individuals that were interviewed, including two former Ministers of Education and two former directors at the NCED, confirmed that they were not able to implement teacher policies due to the lack of support from the ruling establishment. Education reform in Kuwait has struggled considerably due to the absence of political support and any real will from the state's leadership with regard to reforming the system. Ministers of Education have not received enough political support to reform teacher policy, which is why each minister postponed its implementation (see Table 2.4). The interviewees strongly believed that if the reforms had been given political support, they would have been implemented by now.

In terms of the institution responsible for the reforms, the analysis in this chapter illustrates that both positive cases assigned the reforms to quasi-governmental institutions that were independent of and more powerful than the MOE, and which had the mechanisms to design and handle reforms. In contrast, Kuwait insisted that reform remain in the hands of the MOE, which was expected to design, implement, and evaluate it.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the bureaucracy and the civil service in the AGS are marked by weak performance. Their systems are dysfunctional due to overstaffing, low skills, low productivity, red tape, and a shortage of innovations (Ayubi, 1990; Jabbra & Jabbra, 2005; Jreisat, 2012). When it comes to the MOEs in the AGS, Kirk (2015) argued that they are slow to change and not capable of managing change.

Therefore, to bypass the rigid, traditional bureaucratic institutions, and to ensure that education reform would be managed and structured well and would be capable of reaching the implementation phase, each of the positive cases assigned the reform to a parallel body outside the government's weak bureaucratic systems. This was the ERB in Bahrain and the SEC in Qatar, each of which was led by a member of the ruling establishment and presented as a facilitator of the reforms. Moreover, the ERB and SEC each comprised a structured reform team

whose members were carefully selected to follow up on day-to-day reform tasks, and each one included an implementation team to ensure that the reform agenda was implemented as planned.

In Kuwait, however, the ruling establishment insisted on keeping educational reform in the hands of the MOE in spite of its poor record and its failure to reform the education system over the previous 30 years, as Winokur (2014) pointed out. This assignment of educational reform to such a dysfunctional institution signified the lack of motivation for reforming the education system. The MOE failed to establish a reform team to manage day-to-day affairs, and the reform projects went astray as the MOE relied on its employees, who were described as having inadequate skills and low productivity, to handle them.

Participants that were interviewed for this study argued that assigning the education reform to the MOE was a serious mistake because its leaders did not have the mindset to design and manage educational reforms, and it was not capable of handling any kind of changes or reforming the system. Most of the participants argued that this was related to the low calibre of the leaders' skills and their backgrounds, as the majority of these leaders did not have the educational background needed to understand how education reform should be led and managed. Moreover, the participants argued that the MOE's leaders still do not understand how to implement teacher licensing or teacher standards and how these can be used. This sheds light on why teacher policy projects were never implemented.

One more variation between the two positive cases, on the one hand, and the negative case, on the other hand, is that both positive cases managed to identify the problems before setting up their reform agendas; they diagnosed the weaknesses in the education systems to understand the causes of their low performance, and both were able to pinpoint the issue of teacher policies as needing to be reformed. These studies were presented to the ruling establishment and key policymakers in Bahrain and Qatar, raising their awareness and drawing their attention to reforming teacher policies. In contrast, in the negative case, the problem was never identified; hence, the ruling establishment in Kuwait was not even aware of the reasons behind the low performance of the education system.

Kingdon's (2003) Multiple Streams theory considered the task of identifying the problem to be the first stream of the policy process, noting that if this were not done, there would be no attracting attention or raising awareness, and the government would not feel any pressure to resolve the problem. This explains why the ruling establishments in both positive cases were motivated to reform the education system and interested in reforming teacher policies—because identifying the problem of unsatisfactory teachers and their effect on the education system succeeded in raising awareness and attracting the ruling establishment's attention to change the situation. In Kuwait, the ruling establishment did not give it attention, simply because the problem was never identified in the first place.

The failure to identify the problem in Kuwait came about because the MOE totally refused to perform any kind of assessment; it also had something to do with the absence of political support and the MOE's lack of commitment toward reforming the system. The MOE tended to implement the easiest projects, those that required little effort and were not complicated; this was based on the minister's wishes, regardless of whether or not these projects deserved a higher priority. This is because there was no attempt to identify the problem; as Kingdon (2003) argued, policymakers prefer to address problems that can be solved easily, even if those are not the problems that are most in need of solutions. Kuwait's policymakers demonstrated this preference very clearly, by implementing some reforms that looked easy to solve, while at the same time ignoring those that seemed harder and more complicated, such as teacher policies.

One economic factor, Kuwait's wealth, might be considered an explanation for the ruling establishment's lack of motivation, but this thesis demonstrates that this factor does not actually explain it. Bahrain was facing an issue with the amount of wealth that it had, and this explains the Crown Prince's political support and involvement in reforming the education system. However, the situation of wealth in Qatar was similar to, if not better, than that in Kuwait, yet Qatar's ruling establishment was still motivated to reform the system and provide the political support that the reform needed, due to their belief in the role of education for developing the country and diversifying the economy. This belief does not exist in Kuwait.

In conclusion, the analysis in this chapter serves to explain how Bahrain and Qatar were motivated to reform their education systems and to implement teacher policies reform, and this was made possible by involving the ruling establishment, assigning the reform to a powerful institution outside the MOE bureaucracy, and by identifying the problems at the outset. In Kuwait, none of these actions were taken, and this demonstrates the lack of motivation within the ruling establishment for education reform in general and teacher policies in particular. Therefore, this thesis argues that the motivation of the ruling establishment was present in both Bahrain and Qatar, but it was absent in Kuwait, and that this helps to explain Kuwait's failure to implement teacher policies reform.

Chapter 6 Explanatory Factor 2: The Stability of the Administration Leading the Reform

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter examined the first explanatory factor, '**the motivation of the ruling establishment for reforming the education system**', and analysed how the ruling establishments in Bahrain and Qatar were more motivated to reform the education system than were those in Kuwait, and how this motivation paved the way for implementing teacher policies reforms in both countries. In Kuwait, the motivation to reform was absent, and this led to the failure to implement teacher policies, in particular, teacher licensing and teacher standards. This research argues that the ruling establishment's apparent lack of interest in education reform partly explains the absence of the outcome of interest (implementing teacher policies).

Following that discussion and analysis, this chapter examines the second explanatory factor: '**the stability of the administration leading the reform**'. The aim of this chapter is to understand the presence or absence (or weakness) of this factor across the three cases, and how the stability of the administration affected the implementation of teacher policies reform. The stability discussed here refers to the leadership in charge of reform in each country, i.e., whether the positions of the leaders were stable.

6.2 Theoretical and Conceptual Perspective

In the politics stream of Kingdon's (2003) Multiple Streams theory, policymakers have both the motive and the opportunity to turn a proposal or a solution into policy. Most of the actions in this stream take place in the political bodies that are responsible for formulating and establishing policies; in this research, these bodies are the institutions responsible for leading the education reforms. In this stream, Kingdon indicated that turnover in the relevant administrative bodies or key positions might have a significant effect on the motivation to change, and this in turn might affect policy implementation. Moreover, the Garbage Can Model, from which Kingdon (2003) adapted his theory, demonstrated that 'participants drift in and out of decision-making, so the boundaries of such an organization are rather fluid' (p. 84).

Furthermore, Kingdon (2003) argued that the involvement of governmental actors could change the agenda in two ways; 'either incumbents in positions of authority change their priorities and push new agenda items; or the personnel in those positions change, bringing new priorities onto the agenda by virtue of the turnover' (p. 153). Hence, the turnover of policy actors and the instability of the organisation has a dramatic impact on both setting the policy agenda and implementing it. In other words, 'new faces mean that new issues will be raised', (Kingdon, 2003, p. 154) or a new approach must be developed to handle an existing issue. Policies in general, and reforms in particular, take time to be developed and formed, and a certain length of time is needed for the policy to unfold and be implemented (Cairney, 2012; Heck, 2004).

As for education reform in general, and teacher policies in particular, Bruns et al. (2019) argued that it could take years to decide on and implement such reforms. From their point of view, reforms are challenging due to their political contentions, and system-wide reform is a long-term process that takes years, if not decades, to achieve results. Therefore, this thesis argues that the more stable the administration leading the reform, the more likely it is to succeed in implementing teacher policies reform. Changes in the administration's leadership do not help the implementation.

6.3 Findings

6.3.1 Bahrain

From the time Bahrain started to work on reforming its education system, in 2005, until the implementation of the reform agenda, the administration leading the reform was stable in terms of its leadership and the other people involved. The leadership of the Crown Prince, HRH Prince Salman Bin Hamad Al Khalifa, and the Deputy Prime Minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, did not change during the development or implementation of the reforms, including those of teacher policies.

The stability of the reform's administration and its leadership benefited the implementation of the reform agenda. As the people who identified the problems of the education system in the first place, and who then set up the agenda, the reformers were motivated to implement the reforms, and they were able to maintain

their motivation due to the stability of the administration leading the reform. Two reasons might account for this stability.

First, Bahrain's education reform was not assigned to the Ministry of Education (MOE). As explained in the previous chapter, the Education Reform Board (ERB) was assigned to oversee the establishment and implementation of the reform, led by the Deputy Prime Minister. His leadership made the reforms national, and the stability of the administration was guaranteed due to his position of power. Also, the political support conferred on the reform process by the involvement of the Crown Prince provided stability. Moreover, the current Minister of Education has been in his position since 2002; although he was not in charge of leading the reform, his longevity provided stability to the institution and ensured that both the ERB and the MOE were working towards the same outcome. Therefore, the key persons responsible for the reform did not change during the development of the reform or during its implementation.

The second reason has to do with the political structure of Bahrain, where the cabinet is considered stable because ministers do not change frequently, and they typically complete their terms (specified by the constitution as four years). Its Prime Minister was the longest-serving Prime Minister in the world, in office for about 40 years.[15] Chapter 3 explained the new constitution of Bahrain and the establishment of the bicameral system with an appointed Consultative Council and an elected Council of Representatives (Herb, 2002; Kinninmont, 2011). Even though there is an elected council (Council of Representative), the ruling establishment still hold ultimate power; they did not give up any of their privileges, and they retained control over economic resources and political institutions through the appointed government and appointed Consultative Council (Khalaf & Luciani, 2006; Kinninmont, 2011).

The elected Council of Representatives cannot interrogate the Prime Minister, but ministers of his government can be interrogated after an official request from at least five members. A simple majority of the elected members is

15 During the writing of this chapter, the Prime Minister of Bahrain, Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, passed away on November 11, 2020. Two days later, the King named the Crown Prince, HRH Prince Salman Bin Hamad Al Khalifa, to become only the second Prime Minister since independence.

not enough to withdraw confidence in a minister; this requires a two-thirds majority (Herb, 2002, 2014). Herb (2014) stated that 'this makes it virtually impossible for elected deputies to push through legislation against the wishes of the ruling family or to block legislation favoured by the government' (p. 58). This explains the remarkable stability of the Bahraini government, for it is not easy to challenge or question the government's agenda and policies.

Although Bahrain had its own government institutions, it established the Economic Development Board (EDB), chaired by the Crown Prince, in early 2000 to have overarching authority over all economic policy. Most of the economic policies and reforms, including the education reforms, shifted towards the EDB, making it look like a parallel cabinet in which all ministers involved in such policymaking and reforms answered to the Crown Prince instead of the Prime Minister; as a result, no one could stand against the Crown Prince's wishes and agenda (Kinninmont, 2011). This demonstrated the interest of the ruling establishment in achieving its economic vision, and it ensured the consistency of the administration leading the reform.

It should be noted here that this thesis is not arguing the merits of this structure; although this may seem like an important question, it is beyond the scope of this research. What is important is to illustrate the political structure of Bahrain and to highlight the stability of the government and the administration leading its educational reforms.

As a result, Bahrain maintained a high level of stability in the administration leading the reform, in that the key persons responsible for reform were not changed during the development of the reform or during its implementation. The team that worked with the consultant firm (McKinsey) to diagnose problems in the education system was the same team that travelled to several benchmark countries to deepen their understanding of other education systems, the same team that carried out much of the research and work that led to the development of the strategy, and the same team that worked to implement the reform projects. Due to this stability, Bahrain managed to implement its reform agenda, including teacher policies reform. This stability was associated with a strong motivation to reform the education system, as argued in Chapter 5. The more the ruling establishment is motivated to reform the education system, the more it will ensure that the

administration leading the reform is stable, so that it is able to implement the reform agenda.

6.3.2 Qatar

In Qatar, the situation was similar to Bahrain in terms of the stability of the administrative body leading the reform. The education reform in Qatar was led by the Crown Prince, His Highness Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, as the chair of the Supreme Education Council (SEC), and the First Lady, Her Highness Mozah Bint Nasser Al Missned, as vice chair.

The SEC was established in 2002 and given legal authority over the MOE to lead the education reform. Its administration did not change until 2013, when the Crown Prince left to become the ruling Emir. By this time, all the reform projects, including teacher policies, had been implemented.

The Crown Prince's leadership provided the SEC with a great deal of stability, and there was no turnover among the key people who were involved from the beginning of the education reform. The Coordinating Committee that worked with the RAND team during the investigation and design stages was established before the SEC, but it subsequently joined the SEC and become part of the Implementation Team, ensuring constancy and stability in the administration leading the reform (Brewer et al., 2007).

The stability of the administration can be understood through the lens of the strong political support provided to the reform by the ruling Emir at that time, as well as his motivation to develop and reform the education system (see Chapter 5). There were several changes to the SEC in 2013, when the Crown Prince, Sheikh Tamim, became the ruling Emir after the abdication of his father, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani (Tok et al., 2016). In 2014, the new Emir named the Prime Minister to take his place as chair of the SEC, and his sister, Sheikha Hind bint Hamad Al Thani, became vice chair (Al Meezan, 2014). These changes did not affect the implementation of the reform, as all of the reform agenda had been implemented successfully by this time.

The political arena in Qatar is very different from that of Bahrain and Kuwait. In Qatar, there is still no election for the Consultative Council; despite several

promises from the ruling establishment to hold an election, the Consultative Council is still appointed (Herb, 2002; Tok et al., 2016; Wright, 2011). Therefore, the ruling establishment holds the main power in Qatar's political decision-making, as none of the appointed members can challenge the decisions of the ruling Emir or his Prime Minister. The stability of the government is evident when looking at the Ministers of Education; since 2002, there have been only three ministers who led the MOE, and the current minister has been in charge since 2013.

What is significant for this research is that the administration leading the education reform in Qatar showed a high level of stability. The key persons responsible for the reform did not change during the development of the reform or during the implementation; thus, Qatar managed to implement its reform agenda, including teacher policies reform. This stability in the reform administration is associated with the high level of motivation necessary to reform the education system, as argued in Chapter 5. As stated previously, the more the ruling establishment is motivated to reform the education system, the more it will ensure that the administration leading the reform is stable, in order to be able to implement its reform agenda.

6.3.3 Kuwait

The situation of Kuwait, in terms of the stability of the administration leading the reform, appears to be in sharp contrast to the situations in both Bahrain and Qatar. As was discussed in Chapter 5, Kuwait's education reform was assigned to the MOE and the National Center for Education Development (NCED), who were responsible for designing and implementing the reform projects. The Minister of Education was thus considered the reform leader.

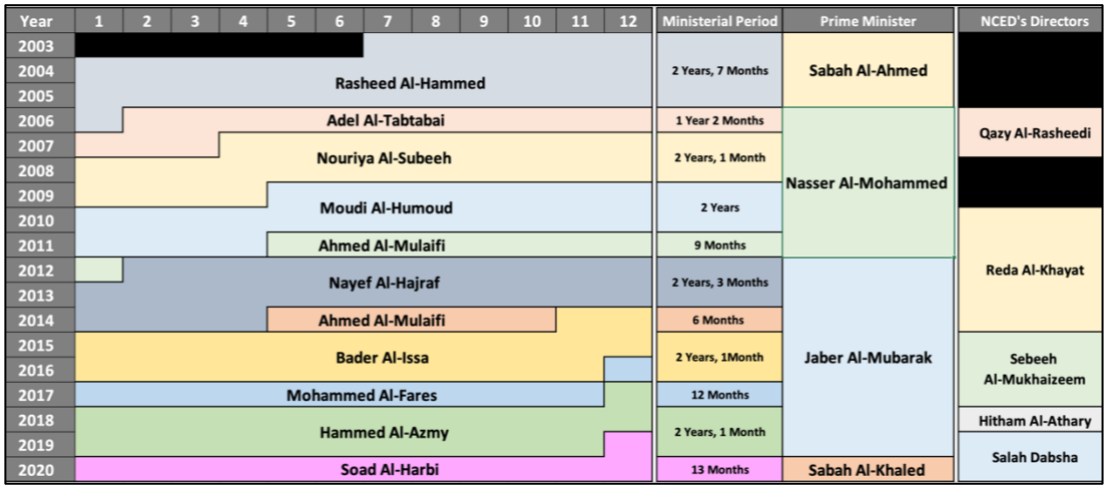
An examination of the Kuwaiti case finds a huge turnover at the ministry level of the MOE and in the administrative body of the NCED. Between 2003 and 2020, 11 different ministers were in charge of the MOE (Council of Ministers General Secretariat, 2019), and five directors led the NCED since its establishment in 2006 (Figure 6.1). From the time Kuwait launched its Integrated Education Reform Program (IERP), in 2010, until 2020, there were eight ministers and four NCED directors, under two Prime Ministers. The number of ministers is changing frequently even as this chapter is being written; in November 2019, the government

of Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah resigned.[16] The new Prime Minister, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, chose a new Minister of Education, who became the fifth Minister of Education just since this research began.

In Kuwait, the key persons—the Minister of Education and the director of the NCED—changed frequently during the reform process, and this affected the process of designing and implementing the reform. The World Bank very clearly indicated in their report that they 'saw six different administrations take office during a 4-year period. The constant transition made decision-making at the most senior level difficult, stalling decisions at key moments in the programme's trajectory' (World Bank, 2014, p. 22). Obviously, there was no stability or consistency in the educational reform process in Kuwait. Each new minister brought their own priorities and preferences, and some held the position for only a short time – in some cases around six months, which is not enough time to understand the reforms or to take any decisions.

Figure 6.1

Kuwait's Ministers of Education 2003-2020



The teacher licensing policy in Kuwait is a clear example of how the instability of the administrative bodies affected the establishment and implementation of policies. The timeline of the teacher licensing project shows that there were no fewer than six Ministers of Education, four undersecretaries of public

16 The government resignation was due to its inability to fight corruption, as Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmed, the emir's eldest son and the first Deputy Prime Minister and defence minister, explained (Al-Saif, 2019).

education, and four directors of the NCED who were engaged directly in the project since the MOE announced the project officially in 2011 (Figure 2.6). Each new minister brought in different players, made different decisions, and proposed new dates for implementing the reform, as outlined in Table 2.4. As of today, the policy of teacher licensing has still not been established or implemented. This is due to the instability of the administration body leading the reform in Kuwait.

The reason for this instability was that Kuwait did not assign the reform to a quasi-governmental body. The MOE was supposed to lead the reform, but any time a change occurred in its administration, the reforms were affected and set back. The MOE's administration was changing so often because the government was unstable as well. Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed became the Emir in 2006 and later announced economic and educational reforms. During the years of his reign, from 2006 and 2020, Kuwait had 15 different governments under three different Prime Ministers, and every time the government was reorganised, a new Minister of Education was appointed (Herb, 2020). The constitutional term of a government in Kuwait was specified as four years, but this was not the reality. Only one government completed its four-year period, from 1992 to 1996, and the Minister of Education at that time was the last minister to have made it through four years in this position (Herb, 2020).

This instability was due to the political crisis that Kuwait was facing in the relationship between the elected National Assembly and the appointed government, as discussed in Chapter 3. The 'hybrid system' is divided uneasily between an elected parliament and an appointed government (Ulrichsen, 2014). Although Kuwait is said to have the only longstanding parliamentary process in the Arab Gulf States (AGS) region, the ruling establishment retains full control of this process, which makes Kuwaiti democracy imperfect and weak (Alnajjar, 2000; Alnaqeeb, 2006).

What complicates the relationship between these two institutions is that the elected parliament has the power to withdraw confidence in any cabinet minister, and even the power to refuse to cooperate with the Prime Minister (Ghabra, 1994). Any individual Member of Parliament (MP) can introduce an interpellation motion against any minister, including the Prime Minister, and only a simple majority of the elected members is required to remove confidence in a minister or to reject

cooperation with the Prime Minister. This power makes Kuwait's parliament qualitatively more powerful than the consultative councils or representative assemblies of other AGS (Herb, 2014).

The Kuwaiti government is so sensitive to criticism that even though no minister has ever lost a vote of confidence, a number of them have resigned before a vote was to be taken. On the other hand, the parliament is unable to form a government or to be represented in the cabinet, so this situation leads to two possibilities: either the government resigns to avoid criticism or non-cooperation with the Prime Minister, or the government and the Emir dissolve the parliament and call for new elections (Ghabra, 1994; Herb, 2014) because the ruling establishment feels 'that their authority and legitimacy should not be questioned' (Ghabra, 1994, p. 104). This situation has indeed harmed Kuwait's democracy and policymaking process; it also demonstrates the level of political crisis that Kuwait has been facing.

This 'hybrid' political structure (Ulrichsen, 2014, p. 214), which stands between a 'semi-authoritarian' and 'semi-democratic' system (Ghabra, 1994, p. 102), has caused instability not only in the MOE but in the entire state and its institutions. This has definitely hindered the implementation of education reform in Kuwait.

It is important to acknowledge here that the political crisis facing Kuwait is harming the stability not only of the MOE but of all the ministries as well as other sectors. As I mentioned above, over a period of 14 years, the ruling establishment in Kuwait formed 15 different governments with three different Prime Ministers, and instability became a phenomenon associated with Kuwait's political structure. Nevertheless, despite these extensive changes in government bodies, there were some ministries and sectors that were excluded from this massive turnover because they were more stable than the others.

For example, between 2011 and 2019, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, was never changed even though Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah formed eight different governments during that period (Herb, 2020); each time the Prime Minister and his government resigned, he reappointed the same minister to lead the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Another example is in the oil sector; as mentioned previously (see Chapter 5), the Supreme Petroleum Council is led by the Prime Minister, not the Minister of Oil. As a result, although there were eight Ministers of Oil during the period of Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, the Supreme Petroleum Council was led only by the Prime Minister for about seven years. This illustrates that despite the fact that many government bodies were not stable, the ruling establishment made sure to maintain stability in sectors which they considered to have priority.

Based on what has been discussed, Kuwait has not been able to take the proposal regarding the teacher licensing project and teacher standards project and turn it into policy, due to the instability of the MOE and the entire government that is responsible for developing and establishing these policies, with the key persons in charge changing frequently. It is not easy to understand in more depth precisely why this is the situation in Kuwait and why the ruling establishment prefers to appoint a new Minister of Education with every new government that is formed; this would require an entirely new research study.

The interviews with policymakers and faculty members shed light on how the instability in the minister's position and in the administrative bodies of the MOE has negatively affected the process of education reform and achievements in general, along with the implementation of teacher policies reforms in particular. The majority of interviewees (16 out of 20) cited the instability of the MOE as a reason for the lack of implementation of teacher policies reform, emphasising that the 'instability of the political system and the political conflicts are affecting the education system and reforms' (FM06).

Participants who were interviewed pointed out that the education policies and reform projects changed every time a new minister was appointed. One faculty member said that 'there is no stability in the MOE; each new minister changes what has been done by his predecessor. Our education policies are floundering due to the continuous change of ministers and MOE leadership' (FM12).

Another said, 'the plans are changing with every new minister's appointment', and the interviewee considered that 'a disaster', arguing that 'the educational plans must be clear and supported by the government, so if the minister changes, the plans remain as is' (FM01).

Therefore, ‘with each new minister, the education policies and the methods change; books and educational philosophy change as well. This has caused the instability of the whole educational system in Kuwait’ (FM04).

Another faculty member argued that ‘the changing of ministers in the MOE has a significant effect on the education process and causes instability’ (FM11).

These comments seem to be related to the discussion in the previous chapter (Chapter 5) about the government not knowing exactly what the purpose of education is, and therefore having no national plan. Each newly appointed minister sets their own plans and priorities based on a new set of views and preferences, bringing their own team to the process. The priorities of one individual are different from those of the next, and as a result, the entire system is less stable.

A former director of the NCED said very clearly that ‘there is no stability in the MOE. Changing ministers causes confusion in the reform projects because every new minister has their own views, which differ from those of the previous one. Maybe a minister will continue what their predecessor started, or maybe not!’ (PM01). Moreover, he stated that the instability is not on the ministerial level only; it also occurs at the managerial level. The former director gave these examples:

> After three months of implementing the new competencies-based curriculum, the project manager was referred for retirement, and this also happened with the manager of the school leaders’ project. You can imagine the effort and time required by the new manager to understand these projects and how they work. (PM01)

From his point of view, the instability clearly has had a significant effect on the reform and the implementation process. Based on his statement, there has been no continuity and consistency in Kuwait’s education reform due to the turnover of key persons responsible for leading and managing the reform projects.

Some argued in their interviews that the instability had affected the continuity of the reform projects because they were linked directly to the ministers themselves, so when the minister left the position, the projects stopped.

> The instability of the ministers creates discontinuity in the reform projects because each new minister does not complete the path of their predecessor; instead, they announce new projects. The projects are linked to persons, not to institutions, so when the person leaves the position, the project ends. (FM08)

This might be due to something that participants often repeated: that Kuwait does not have a clear vision for education; hence, the reform's projects 'are linked to the minister as a person and not linked with the ministry's vision' (FM09). This suggests that these projects had no continuity, and many of them 'ended when the minister left the ministry' (FM09). A faculty member described his experience:

> In 2007, I participated as a member of the team that was tasked with preparing the national development plan. There were a number of teams who were responsible for developing strategies and development plans for education; some were working on curriculum, others on student activities, and some on teacher competencies. Billions of dinars had been allocated to this plan. However, the plan was not completed; everything ended when the minister left his position. (FM03)

In fact, when the minister left the position, the national plan was discontinued, and in 2010, the new minister announced a new reform programme, the IERP, in collaboration with the World Bank. This faculty member also shared other examples of projects that were included in the IERP but subsequently cancelled: 'the flash memory project, the tablet project, and the smart board project. All these projects were implemented by various ministers. Once the minister left his position, the MOE announced the cancellation of the project' (FM03). He continued, 'every new minister proposes new projects and new plans' (FM03). This was corroborated by a senior leader at Kuwait Teachers Society (KTS), who argued that in Kuwait:

> The educational policies and decisions are linked to one person, who is the minister. Thus, if the minister has a particular view, the MOE focuses all its projects on serving that view, and sometimes the MOE establishes entirely new projects only to serve the minister's view. Once the minister leaves the position, all these projects are cancelled. (PM07)

This quote may confirm what was discussed in previously (see Chapter 5), that the Ministers of Education have the full authority to do whatever they wish in setting up the agenda and policies; as stated in the previous chapter, the ruling establishment is not interested in education and does not consider it a priority. The interviewee continued:

> It is supposed that any changes related to education or educational policies should require thorough, exact steps and processes. Today, if the minister wanted to change the school ladder, change the curriculum, or establish an entirely new practice, the minister alone could take the

> decisions individually, and everything would be changed in the whole education system. (PM07)

A former NCED director shared an interesting story that illustrates how the turnover in ministers has affected the reform process:

> I remember that once a new minister told me that he preferred to refer to national specialists as the main advisers for the education reform, and he asked us as a centre to stop working with the World Bank and any other international consultant. Then the government resigned, and this minister was not re-appointed, so a new minister came to the position. He believed that the international experiences were significant, so he signed a contract with the Singaporean National Institute of Education (NIE) to conduct a diagnostic study of the education system in Kuwait. While the NIE was conducting the study, this minister resigned, and the previous one returned. Unfortunately, he refused NIE's work, claiming that they were not aware of the Kuwaiti context. When the minister rejected their work, you can imagine the feelings of those from the centre who had worked on the study. (PM01)

This was confirmed by a former minister, who used his authority to terminate all international contracts, based on his own beliefs and opinions:

> I stopped all of the contracts that the MOE was aiming to sign with the World Bank because I am against the involvement of an international institution in framing our educational policies. The World Bank is at the top of these institutions; it aims to destroy the education system more than it tries to fix it. As a result, there are many examples of countries that have refused to work with the World Bank, such as Singapore and Malaysia. (PM02)

This might help us to understand what was discussed in Chapter 5, that education reform is not seen as a national issue but as a matter for the ministry. This approach makes the minister the sole leader of the reform, able to make any decision without needing permission from any other authority, even if this decision is to cancel a reform project or even to cancel the reform in general. A former director told me that 'the former minister officially refused the IERP and stopped it from operating in 2019' (PM08).

From another point of view, a former Minister of Education described his first impression on assuming the position:

> When I became the minister, no one gave me reports showing the projects that the ministry was working on or the strategic plan for the ministry. To know my starting point, I asked the leaders of all sectors to give me the documents and reports that had been done before. When I read these

> documents, I was shocked; there were some reform projects from 2008 that had not been implemented. I have no idea what the circumstances were at that time, which stopped the previous ministers or ministry's leaders from implementing these projects and policies. (PM03)

Based on this experience, it seems that there was no handover to the new minister from his predecessor, so it took time to understand how things were operating in the ministry, how the reform was working, and what stage it had reached. This delayed the process of the reform and its implementation, especially when considering what was discussed in Chapter 5 – that most of these ministers and leaders were not from the education field. As they were entirely new to this area, they needed time to understand what was happening before they could take decisions.

This may have had an impact on the process of reforming the system. As outlined in Figure 6.1, some ministers lasted for only a matter of months, which meant they did not have enough time to understand what was happening or to make informed decisions. Moreover, the quotes from this former minister illustrate that some projects were shelved and never implemented. The problem is that this minister would not know the reasons for this because the key persons in charge were no longer working in the MOE.

Furthermore, a senior leader at the NCED explained that a long time was needed with each new minister to bring them up to speed regarding what the NCED was doing and what the education reform was about.

> The instability of the ministers and the frequent changes to the ministry's leadership delayed the work significantly. I need a long time to explain the reform's projects and to convince the new ministers. By the time the minister comes to take a decision, we find that the government has resigned, and the Minister of Education is changing again. Since I started working in the NCED in 2013, I have worked with six different ministers. I have forgotten their names because there were so many of them. I remember that we spent more than five hours with the previous minister to explain to him the projects we were working on and to highlight their importance for improving education in Kuwait. He gave us his notes and asked us to prepare some reports for him, but near the date when we were to present the reports to him, the minister changed, and a new minister came to the position. I was frustrated because now we needed to spend the same time, or even longer, with the new minister and repeat the process. (PM04)

This quote from a senior leader sheds light on her own experience seeing the implementation being markedly delayed due to instability, as policymakers needed to spend long periods of time with each new minister to convince them to continue the reform projects. Each minister made their own comments, and the policymakers were required to modify some policies based on those comments. After the policymakers did what was required, this minister left, and a new minister was appointed, resulting in a vicious cycle. Therefore, policymakers never completed the work and never had the chance to implement teacher policies reform.

When it came to implementing teacher policies, a senior leader at the NCED argued that 'the frequent changes in ministers affects the implementation of the reforms', and that 'most of the decisions related to the reform projects and teacher policies must be made by the minister' (PM04). Because the Minister of Education was the person in charge of the reform in Kuwait, teacher policies could not be implemented without a decision from the minister. Yet 'every new minister stops the implementation of existing reform projects until they understand, before taking a decision. Often the minister will be changed before they even get the chance to create any change' (PM04). As a result, teacher policies reforms have never reached the implementation stage.

A former director at the NCED reported clearly to me how each minister was unwilling to take the decision to implement the teacher licensing project during their term:

> Every minister that I have talked to about the importance of the teacher's licence agreed with it, but they all preferred to delay the project's implementation until after their term if there was no issue with delaying it. Because they know that their period will not last too long, and they are only in this position temporarily, so they do not want to bear the consequences of the decision on the teacher's licence. (PM01)

This was illustrated in Table 2.4, which listed all the official announcements and promises of the MOE's ministers and leaders that the teacher licensing would soon be implemented. All the ministers delayed the implementation because they were aware that they faced it alone. Because the political support was absent, the ministers took the safest path and refused to make the decision. These ministers

were not in charge when Kuwait launched its reform, so they had no idea how crucial it was to implement these policies.

Therefore, we can interpret from this former director's statements that there is no consistency in the education reform in Kuwait; he explained that 'every new minister brings their own consultancy team, the minister leaves, their team of consultants leaves with them… and so on' (PM01). He claimed that the 'plans are not implemented because there is no leader, and nothing is stable centrally' (PM01). If the Minister of Education is considered the leader of the education reform, then there were eight different leaders since the reform was launched in 2010. There is no doubt that this has had an effect on the reform process and its implementation. This former director shed light on the situation and the progress of the reform projects related to teachers:

> The teachers' professional framework is ready, and it has been approved by all authorities. Yet, the situation now is different, especially as we have a new government and a new minister who may or may not approve the framework; he could request more time to look at the framework and then make his own decision. This delays the implementation of the framework. The Teacher's Licence is similar; we signed a contract with the National Center for Assessment in Saudi Arabia, but with the new minister, we have no idea what the fate of this project will be. (PM01)

At the time this interview was conducted, a new government had recently been appointed, and the staff at the centre were waiting to meet the new Minister of Education to discuss how to handle these projects. That minister spent about two years in his position, and not one decision was taken in regard to these projects, which have not yet been implemented. This illustrates that teacher policies reform was not a priority for this minister, so he decided to postpone taking any decision on them, keeping them on hold until he finished his term. It is thus not surprising that Kuwait failed to implement teacher policies reform. One faculty member argued that this was because:

> The ministers usually tend towards safety and do not want to clash with the educational field, so they delay important decisions because they want to complete their term in the government without problems. They know that they have no political cover from the Prime Minister and will not stay in the ministry for very long. (FM10)

This may indicate that the ministers hesitated to take decisions, and even if they did try to fix anything related to the reform and its path, there would not be enough time to do so during their short ministerial career.

The ministers' instability not only affects the reform process and blocks the implementation of teacher policies reform, but it also involves the institutions pertaining to the MOE and its role in the reform, such as the NCED. As discussed previously, this organisation is meant to be a key player in administering the reforms in Kuwait. A former director stated that 'the frequent changes of ministers have a negative effect on the centre and its role in the education reform' (PM01). As 'the role of the NCED in reforming the education system is totally dependent on the minister and their beliefs and support of the NCED, some of these ministers were providing a good amount of support and some were not' (PM08). Another faculty member explained this obstacle in more depth:

> When the NCED was established, it was getting good support from the minister at that time. But when the minister changed and a new minister was appointed, he stopped the centre from operating because he did not like the idea of the centre. After that, another minister was appointed, and this one reopened the centre. The frequent changes of ministers changes everything in the educational field. (FM11)

Clearly, the stability of the administration and the leadership of the reform is critical to implementing the reform projects. Reforming education takes time, and when some ministers tried to fix the approach, they failed because time was not on their side. A former minister reported:

> As a minister, I tried to fix the working path of education reform, and I was aiming to change the team responsible for implementing the reform, but unfortunately, time was not on my side. The government resigned, and I was not re-appointed. (PM03)

He continued:

> Educational decisions need at least 10 years to reveal their effects, and a long time is also needed to process these decisions through research and stakeholder involvement in the decision-making process. Unfortunately, I could not do all that because the period that I spent as a minister was less than a year. Change needs time, and it was too arduous for the ministry to handle. (PM03)

According to this former minister, the instability of the administration prevented any minister from doing what was right. This former minister, for

example, understood the need for time to reform the education system and to implement the reform successfully, but he did not have that time, due to the short tenure of his position. He proposed that 'there must be a procedure to protect the educational decisions and policies from the frequent changes of ministers' (PM03).

One idea would be to give the ministers enough time in their position to do the right thing and to take the right decision, as one faculty member commented:

> The government needs to give the ministers enough time to do their work before holding them accountable for the work in progress and basing decisions on reappointment on that. However, they are not giving them enough time, so they can't ask them to take big decisions or to implement major change to the education system. (FM04)

This issue is associated with the discussion in Chapter 5. First, the ruling establishment needs to consider education a priority and assign educational reform to a stable institution to implement teacher policies reform, similar to the situation in the foreign affairs sector and the petroleum sector, both of which have enjoyed great deal of stability. The ruling establishment has the power to make sure that the educational reform can have the same benefit. That way, the key person in charge would not be changing so frequently, and the administration responsible for the reform would be more consistent and more capable of implementing reforms to teacher policies.

It has become clear from interviewing both policymakers and faculty members that the instability of the administration leading the reform has affected the implementation of the reform process significantly. As a result, Kuwait has failed to convert the proposals on teacher licensing and teacher standards into policy and has failed to implement them over the past 10 years.

6.4 Comparison and Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, it is evident that the administrative bodies leading the reform in Bahrain and Qatar benefited from more stable leadership than did those in Kuwait. The key persons responsible for the reform in Bahrain, Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, and in Qatar, the Crown Prince, His Highness Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, were never changed throughout the development and implementation of the reforms. In Kuwait, however, the key person for the reform was the Minister of Education, who was frequently replaced

during the reform process; as a result, Kuwait never reached the level of implementing teacher reform.

According to Kingdon's (2003) Multiple Streams theory, in the politics stream, most actions occur in the political body responsible for formulating and establishing policies. In Bahrain, this body was the ERB, in Qatar it was the SEC, and in Kuwait it was the MOE. The more stable these bodies are in terms of their leadership, the more they can establish and implement reform. As Kingdon argued, turnover in the key position and the administration responsible for the proposal (the reform, in this case) significantly affects the motivation to change and thus the implementation. It was evident in the above discussion that Bahrain and Qatar did not face these changes, whereas Kuwait suffered from frequent changes in the reform's administration. The motivation of the key persons in Bahrain and Qatar did not change, as its leadership was stable, but in Kuwait, each new Minister of Education brought a different motivation and agenda.

Kingdon (2003) demonstrated that 'participants drift in and out of decision-making, so the boundaries of such an organization are rather fluid' (p. 84). This precisely describes the case in Kuwait, where ministers drifted in and out of the decision-making process, as illustrated in Figure 6.1. Since Kuwait announced its education reform in 2010, there have been eight Ministers of Education and four directors of the NCED in charge of the reform. Each new minister in Kuwait pushed for a new agenda based on their own priorities, and this closely matches Kingdon's (2003) description, 'either incumbents in positions of authority change their priorities and push new agenda items; or the personnel in those positions change, bringing new priorities on to the agenda by virtue of the turnover' (p. 153). The turnover of policy actors and the instability of the administration has a dramatic impact on both setting and implementing the policy agenda.

Also, the stability in both positive cases (Bahrain and Qatar) meant that they had a champion to drive the reforms forward to implementation, and Bruns et al. (2019) pointed out the importance of having such an advocate for reforming teacher policies. In both Bahrain and Qatar, the champion was the crown prince, an influential figure in pushing policies and reforms forward. In the negative case, Kuwait, the instability prevented the education reform from having a champion with the power to drive the teacher policies reform to reach the implementation stage.

This thesis concludes that this difference in the stability of the administrations leading the reform in Bahrain and Qatar, on the one hand, and Kuwait on the other hand, is related first to the political structure and secondly to the institutions leading the reform.

In the political realm, Kuwait's elected National Assembly has more power to challenge the government than do the parliaments in Bahrain and Qatar. For instance, any single member in Kuwait's parliament can initiate an interpellation motion to grill any minister, including the Prime Minister, and it requires only a simple majority of the elected members to win a vote of no-confidence for a minister or a vote of non-cooperation with the Prime Minister. In Bahrain, the interpellation of any minister requires at least five members, and the Council of Representatives needs a two-thirds majority to remove confidence. The Prime Minister in Bahrain is protected from any interpellation, and this makes it much harder to challenge the government there. Qatar is a different story because it does not yet have an elected council. The ruling establishment appoints the Consultative Council, and this ties its hands; it cannot exert any real power against the appointed government, which is similarly appointed by the ruling establishment.

The political structure in Kuwait leads to massive battles between the elected parliament and the appointed government. Even though the government holds a safe majority in the parliament, it is sensitive to criticism and believes that its authority should not be questioned; therefore, it prefers to resign or dissolve the parliament rather than face a no-confidence vote on any of its ministers. As a result, Kuwait suffers from instability in its government.

This instability prevents not only the implementation of education reform and its projects but the entire development plans in all sectors. The government is busy trying to win these political battles instead of focusing on implementing its development plans.

Furthermore, Kuwait's unusual political structure, coupled with the activism of the National Assembly, means that it is critical and urgent for Kuwait, more so than for Bahrain and Qatar, to assign education reform to quasi-governmental institutions that are outside the government structure, to safeguard the reform from frequent changes in the ministerial position and to provide the necessary political

support. But this has not been the case; in fact, the opposite has occurred, and educational reform in Bahrain and Qatar received more support and experienced more stability than in Kuwait.

This brings us to the second reason for the stability in both Bahrain and Qatar, and the instability in Kuwait. As discussed in Chapter 5, Bahrain and Qatar assigned the reform to a quasi-governmental organisation to lead it: the ERP in Bahrain and the SEC in Qatar. Kuwait's ruling establishment insisted on leaving the reform in the hands of the MOE, making the Minister of Education the sole leader of the reform. Therefore, any change in the ministerial position changed the leadership of the reform, by default. In Bahrain, for example, even if the Minister of Education had to be changed, the reform would not have been affected because neither the MOE nor the Minister of Education led the reform; instead, it was led by the Deputy Prime Minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa.

The majority of participants interviewed for this study made it clear that the instability of the administration leading the reform had hindered the implementation of the policies. They indicated that the reform projects changed every time a new minister was appointed, because each new minister had their own agenda, priorities, and approach, and this brought instability to the reform and the entire education system.

Policymakers in the NCED, who were responsible for developing the teacher licensing and teacher standards projects, complained that they could not complete the required work. A senior leader at the NCED explained that they needed to spend a long time with each new minister, discussing what they were doing and why the projects were essential to the reform. After spending this time, and then modifying the policies based on the minister's comments, the government would resign, a new minister would be appointed, and the same process would have to be repeated. This explains very clearly why teacher licensing and standards have still never been implemented.

Throughout the past decade, these projects have remained as proposals and have never been turned into policy or implemented. A former director shared that every new minister he talked to about the teacher licensing project wanted to delay the implementation. Knowing that they would not be in their position for very

long, they understood that it would be risky to implement these policies. Table 2.4 shows that each minister promised that the teacher licensing project would be implemented soon. Ten years later, this has still not happened.

In Bahrain and Qatar, this issue was not observed. These administrations were more stable than those in Kuwait, their reform processes went smoothly, and both positive countries managed to implement teacher policies reform. In Qatar, in 2007, the SEC announced the teacher licensing system in collaboration with New Zealand's Cognition Education Group, and in 2008 a professional licence officially become a requirement for all teachers and school leaders. Bahrain announced in 2006 that it would establish a new teacher training college in collaboration with Singapore's NIE, and the Bahrain Teachers College (BTC) was established in 2008, taking over the role of the College of Education (COE).

In sharp contrast, Kuwait announced its teacher licensing project in 2011, and as of today, this single project has not been implemented. More than six ministers and four NCED directors were engaged directly in the licensing project (Figure 2.6). Each new minister worked with a different consultant, based on their own preferences; one of them worked with Kuwait's education colleges, another worked with the World Bank, and still another selected Saudi Arabia's National Center for Assessment. Obviously, the reform faced a massive turnover in its administration, producing a lack of consistency; as a result, this project has never been implemented.

A former NCED director asserted that even if the NCED staff invested a lot of effort into the teacher policies projects, they could not implement these policies because after they had finalised the teachers' professional framework, including the teacher standards, and signed an agreement with the National Center for Assessment, a new minister was appointed. Due to the minister's position in the reform process, all decisions needed to go through him personally, so they needed to wait for him to decide whether or not to move forward to the next level.

In Bahrain and Qatar, the decisions were made not by the Minister of Education but by the Deputy Prime Minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa in Bahrain, or the Crown Prince, His Highness Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani

in Qatar. As discussed previously (see Chapter 5), these figures were part of the ruling establishment and thus had more power to push for implementation.

Finally, policymakers and faculty members both recognised that implementing reform projects, especially those related to teachers, required stability. One former minister indicated that he tried to fix the path of the reform and to push for implementation, but he was unable to do so because his ministerial period was too short. This is in keeping with the argument of Bruns et al. (2019), that it takes years for such reforms to achieve results. In this case, none of the MOE's ministers were given that time.

In conclusion, the stability of the administrative body responsible for leading the reforms had a significant impact on the education reform and implementation process. The discussion in this chapter illustrates that the administrative bodies leading the reform in both Bahrain and Qatar were more stable than those in Kuwait. Both Bahrain and Qatar managed to implement policies related to teachers, while Kuwait suffered from instability due to the turnover in Ministers of Education and their inability to implement teacher policies reform. Therefore, this research argues that the stability of the administrative body is an explanatory factor, and the instability faced in Kuwait was one reason for its failure to implement teacher policies reform.

Chapter 7 Explanatory Factor 3: Stakeholder Involvement

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter examined the second explanatory factor, 'the stability of the administration leading the reform', analysing how the administrative bodies leading education reform in Bahrain and Qatar had more stable leadership than Kuwait did, and discussing how that stability enabled those states to implement teacher policies reform. Kuwait suffered from instability in the administration leading the reform due to the enormous turnover in the ministerial positions at the Ministry of Education (MOE), which affected the implementation of teacher policies reform. This thesis argues that this instability is an explanatory factor for the absence of the outcome of interest.

The current chapter is concerned with the last explanatory factor, '**stakeholder involvement**'; it discusses and examines this factor in more depth to understand the ways in which it is present or absent across the three cases studied, and how stakeholder involvement affects the implementation of teacher policies reform. The stakeholder involvement discussed here refers to their involvement in decision-making and in the reform process. Due to the lack of primary data from Bahrain and Qatar, and because this research relied more on policy documents and secondary data, it may be that the precise role of the stakeholders cannot be determined here and will require further in-depth study in the future.

7.2 Theoretical and Conceptual Perspective

The third explanatory factor is rooted in the stakeholders' involvement in the policymaking process of the reform. Kingdon's (2003) Multiple Streams theory contended that the active participants in the policy process may affect how the agenda is set. He argued that the active participants were the primary source of the agenda, and they included the ruler, the legislative institutions, the bureaucrats, and some forces outside the government, such as the media, interest groups, and the general public, whose contributions and involvement might also affect the agenda. In other words, the involvement of various stakeholders in the reform policy process contributes to shaping and setting the agenda.

In his second stream, ‘the policy stream’, Kingdon emphasised the role of specialists—such as bureaucrats, academics, researchers, professionals, and consultants—who are interested in developing and finalising the policies in a single policy field. This eventually results in a number of actions being taken, such as generating, debating, and redrafting proposals in communities of specialists. Thus, the absence of stakeholders affects the establishment of policy and results in missed opportunities for gaining support from stakeholders with respect to implementation.

In education policies and reforms, whether or not stakeholders are involved in the policymaking process has consequences for the outcomes and the implementation of the reforms (Heck, 2004). The idea behind involving stakeholders and interest groups at the outset of policy formation is that their engagement may make the implementation much easier and the policy more acceptable to those who implement it (Taylor et al., 1997). In reforming teacher policies, Bruns et al. (2019) argued that the involvement of stakeholders encourages buy-in for the reforms and smooths the path of implementation. This chapter will show the consequences of involving the stakeholders in the reform process.

7.3 Findings

7.3.1 Bahrain

As discussed in the previous two chapters, Bahrain’s ruling establishment was highly motivated to reform its education system; they made this evident by involving members of the ruling establishment in leading the reform, and also by assigning the reform to a quasi-governmental body that existed independently of the MOE. In Bahrain, the involvement of the stakeholders was ‘viewed as an important factor in achieving stakeholder buy-in’ (Mohamed, 2019, p. 262), and it gained support from the stakeholders for implementing this reform.

The stakeholders were involved in the reform process from the beginning. When Bahrain asked McKinsey to conduct the diagnostic study to identify the problems, McKinsey did not work alone; they worked with a team of representatives from the Economic Development Board (EDB), MOE, Ministry of Labour, University of Bahrain (UOB), and vocational educational providers. When

the Crown Prince hosted a workshop to present the main findings of this study, there were around 200 of Bahrain's key officials in attendance; this made them part of the reform and enhanced their motivation to reform the education system.

In addition, when Bahrain established the Education Reform Board (ERB) to oversee the development and implementation of the reform strategy, it comprised the main education stakeholders, including the Minister of Education, Minister of Labour, President of UOB, Chief Executive of the EDB, General Secretary of the Supreme Council for Women, Chairman of the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and a few members from the private sector. The main role of the ERB was to set the reform agenda and propose the initiatives that offered the most potential for improving the education system, based on the diagnostic study that had been conducted earlier. It can be understood that these stakeholders were working closely with each other to develop education reform and its initiatives.

Most importantly, these stakeholders were part of the working teams established in the ERB, and they travelled to several benchmark countries to deepen their understanding of other education systems. These teams also carried out much of the research and work that led to the development of the strategy. This means that the stakeholders were involved in most of the reform work in Bahrain. Their exact role in the reform, and the extent to which they were capable of advocating their opinions, is not clear from the documents that were reviewed, but it may be expected that as long as they were involved, they might have been engaged in the debates. This would be a good indication of their participation in the reform.

According to the documents available, most of the teacher policies reform was implemented through collaboration among these stakeholders. For instance, the MOE would not have been able to change its criteria for teacher selection without the involvement of other stakeholders such as UOB, the Minister of Labour, the EDB, and others. Similarly, the decision to abolish the College of Education (COE) at UOB and to establish the Bahrain Teachers College (BTC) would have not been possible without the involvement of stakeholders, including UOB. Moreover, improving the in-service training and establishing the Professional Development Continuum Model (PDCM) were accomplished through a joint effort

by the MOE, the BTC, and Singapore's National Institute of Education (NIE). All of these decisions were taken by groups of stakeholders rather than by just one individual, and the work was completed by collaboration among these stakeholders.

Furthermore, Bahrain collaborated with the NIE and accessed their help in reforming all teacher policies. Kingdon (2003) considered such consultants to be players who could work to develop the policies, and Bahrain took advantage of the NIE's experience in developing and implementing all reforms related to teacher policies.

All in all, Bahrain exhibited a high level of stakeholder involvement in the reform process, with stakeholders meeting with each other and discussing how to develop and implement the reform. Therefore, Bahrain managed to implement all the teacher policies reform that they had announced in their education reform agenda. The extensive stakeholder involvement can be explained by the high level of motivation to reform the education system and the substantial involvement of the ruling establishment. They saw education reform as a national mission, so they ensured the involvement of most stakeholders.

7.3.2 Qatar

In terms of stakeholder involvement in the education reform process, the situation in Qatar was rather similar to that in Bahrain. When Qatar asked the RAND Corporation to evaluate the education system, the ruling Emir established the Coordinating Committee—which comprised a number of high-ranking decision-makers representing various stakeholders, such as the Minister of Education and the President of Qatar University—to work closely with RAND to conduct this evaluation and to understand the context of Qatar. Also, both teams worked closely in developing the reform plans. In reforming the education system, the state considered the urgency of building not only a high-quality education system but also one that could respond to stakeholders' needs (Brewer et al., 2007). Therefore, they made sure to involve the stakeholders as implementers in building the reform.

Stakeholder involvement was one of the main principles upon which Qatar built its educational reform project. When RAND and the Coordinating Committee

evaluated the existing education system, they found that there was little communication with stakeholders. Each department in the MOE functioned in isolation, and the MOE was not developing either strong internal ties or strong external relationships. Stakeholder surveys 'noted the absence of feedback mechanisms for informing the Ministry about the quality of its graduates or offering ideas for improving the education system' (Brewer et al., 2007, p. 39). Hence, engaging stakeholders was a main factor in the education reform.

As discussed in Chapter 5, in 2002, Qatar established the Supreme Education Council (SEC) to lead the reform. The SEC was chaired by the Crown Prince at that time, His Highness Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, and Her Highness Mozah Bint Nasser Al Missned – then First Lady, as vice chair. The SEC's members included the MOE, Qatar University, Qatar Petroleum, the State Audit Bureau, the Qatar Chamber of Commerce & Industry, and the Chairman of the Executive Team of the Education Development Project. The SEC and its members became the main education policymaking body in relation to the Education for a New Era (EFNE) reform programme, and this broad representation illustrates the involvement of stakeholders in the reform.

The SEC was responsible for taking decisions and following up on day-to-day reform tasks, and it in turn established the Education Institute, Evaluation Institute, Implementation team, and Communication team with staff selected from the consumers of the K-12 education system, as well as the MOE and the higher education system. One of the main roles of the Communication team was to communicate with key stakeholders and to educate and inform the reform's clients regarding the progress of the reform (Brewer et al., 2007).

The teacher policies reforms that were presented in Chapter 2 illustrate that all these projects were designed and implemented by collaborating with the stakeholders, including an international consultant for each project. For example, the teacher standards project was designed by Education Queensland International (EQI) of Australia but also involved independent schools, private universities, School Support Organisations (SSOs), and officials in the SEC, as well as the MOE and Qatar University. Furthermore, Qatar University's COE worked with education partners and other stakeholders such as the MOE, the SEC, and administrators and teachers from several independent schools to discuss the

further development of the conceptual framework of teacher standards and their integration within the College programmes.

Undoubtedly, the involvement of Qatar University and the COE in the reform process made it easier to reform the teacher preparation programmes. As illustrated in Chapter 2, the COE collaborated with Texas A&M University to establish new academic departments and new programmes to coincide with the education reform, and the SEC collaborated with the Centre for British Teachers (CfBT) and the University of Southampton to design and implement the Teacher Preparation and Certification Program (TPCP). In addition, the professional development programme was an outcome of collaboration among the SEC's Education Institute, Qatar University, SSOs, and the CfBT, and it led to the establishment of the Professional Development Office (PDO).

As a result, Qatar succeeded in implementing all its reform projects related to teacher policies. This would probably not have been possible if the stakeholders had been absent from the reform process and had not become an integral part of the national reform. Qatar showed a high level of stakeholder involvement in reforming its education system; this can be understood in light of the ruling establishment's motivation for reforming the education system as well as the Crown Prince's leadership and support for effective implementation of the reform.

7.3.3 Kuwait

Stakeholder involvement in the policymaking process to reform the education system in Kuwait appears to be in sharp contrast to the situations in both Bahrain and Qatar. As discussed in Chapter 5, Kuwait did not assign the reform project to a quasi-governmental body. The MOE was supposed to be the leading body for the reform, yet it and the National Center for Education Development (NCED) worked in isolation from other stakeholders, although the latter is not considered independent from the MOE due the way that the NCED was established (see Chapter 5).

In Kuwait, there are numerous governmental bodies and institutions that are stakeholders in the educational system and teacher policies, such as the Civil Service Commission (CSC), COE at Kuwait University (KU), College of Basic Education (CBE) at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training

(PAAET), SEC, Supreme Council for Planning and Development, Kuwait Teachers Society (KTS), Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, and others from the private sector—yet none of them were involved in the reform process. In the policy documents available, there was no mention at all of any of these stakeholders, which clearly indicates their absence.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Kuwait announced only two reform projects related to teacher policies: teacher licensing and teacher standards. One of the reasons that the MOE did not target other policies related to teachers—such as initial teacher training, teacher professional development, or teacher performance management—is related to the fact that the MOE had not conducted a diagnostic study, unlike in Bahrain and Qatar (see Chapter 5). The absence of stakeholders in the reform process from the beginning may also explain why Kuwait neglected to include other relevant teacher policies, because the stakeholders who were responsible for these policies had no part in designing the reform.

In regard to the teacher licensing project, stakeholders were not mentioned at all in any available documents or reports from news outlets. The first committee that was established in 2011 to design the licensing project included representatives of both teacher colleges, but that committee did not last very long; it was abolished after the minister resigned. After that, the project was moved from the MOE to be entirely within the NCED, and no other stakeholders were involved.

For the teacher standards project, the only stakeholder involved was the KTS. Even so, a senior leader at the KTS reported that he had officially resigned from the committee after one year:

> We had finalised the standards based on the World Bank's framework, but I was surprised that the consultant team that we were working with during the first year was replaced with a new team, and the new team asked us to start again and rewrite the standards again. This was not acceptable at all; here I figured out that the MOE was not serious about this project. (PM07)

Therefore, the stakeholders were also not involved in this project.

Furthermore, the MOE in Kuwait did not collaborate with any international consultants to develop the teacher licensing project. There were attempts to engage the World Bank at one time, and the National Center for Assessment in

Saudi Arabia at another time, but neither reached a final agreement. The teacher standards project was the only project related to teacher policies that was included in the agreement signed with the World Bank.

The majority of participants interviewed (16 out of 20) stated that the stakeholders were not part of the education policymaking process and were not involved in any stage of the education reform. A former Minister of Education stated:

> Unfortunately, the educational stakeholders were not involved in the right way; therefore, their role was absent from the decision-making process. Part of the challenge that I faced when I became a minister was that the education field was not aware of the reform projects. I visited some schools and spoke to school leaders and teachers, but none of them had any idea about the projects that the MOE was announcing. (PM03)

Moreover, a senior leader at the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (GSSCPD) argued that the 'reform's strategy that was established by the MOE was closed; it was not a participatory approach. The stakeholders were not part of establishing this strategy' (PM06). This indicates the absence of stakeholders in setting the agenda and the MOE's exclusivity in leading the reform. He continued, 'if you need to establish a reform or a policy, you need to work and think outside the box by involving other stakeholders, which has not happened with the MOE's reform' (PM06). Consequently, it seems that the MOE focused on and implemented the policies with which they were familiar, even if the policies were not those that were most needed.

Another faculty member raised the same issue, noting that even though she was at the department of Curriculum and Instruction at the COE, she had no idea about the new national curriculum that the MOE had established as part of the reform:

> The MOE and NCED are not sharing their projects with us, and we are not aware of what they are doing. The biggest proof is that we are not aware as a college about the new national curriculum that the MOE implemented. Imagine! We are still not training the students teachers on these new curricula. Not only that, but I also don't have any information about the teacher standards that the NCED and MOE are working on now, or the teacher licence. (FM02)

Similarly, a faculty member at the COE stated that ‘as a college, we were not part of the policymaking process of these reform projects’ (FM09).

Another faculty member at the CBE stated that ‘faculty members do not have a role in policy decisions or policymaking’ (FM10).

The KTS also argued that ‘there is no real collaboration with the MOE in the policymaking process. The KTS is not represented on the decision-making committee. We requested it many times, but the MOE did not respond to our requests’ (PM07). He added that ‘teachers are not aware of the education reform’s projects, its goals and vision, or their role in the reform’ (PM07).

It becomes clear from these quotes that the main stakeholders—the COE, CBE, KTS, and GSSCPD—were not involved in the reform’s policymaking process, and that the MOE excluded them from the beginning. The MOE did not even respond to multiple requests from the KTS and the teacher colleges asking to be involved, as stated above by a senior leader. A faculty member stated:

> As a dean of one of the education colleges, I went by myself and with a number of college leaders and department heads to the previous minister, and I proposed to him that the college and all its faculty members, which numbered more than 130 doctors in different fields of education, were happy to collaborate. I made it clear to him that we needed to work together if we wanted to do things right. The minister was happy, and he agreed with me that we needed to collaborate; he asked me to send him a list of names to be representatives of the college, and I did. Unfortunately, I never heard back from the ministry after that meeting. The minister has been changed now, and we have a new minister, whom we need to deal with again. All that we are asking for is a real partnership between us and the MOE and its departments. The big gain is to accomplish our job. (FM09)

This quote again brings up the obstacle of instability, especially the turnover of Ministers of Education, as affecting not only the reform process and its implementation (see Chapter 6), but also the collaboration with stakeholders. The example presented above demonstrates that the minister was happy to collaborate, but when he was replaced by a new minister, the work was delayed significantly.

Furthermore, the research revealed that even the MOE and the NCED, who were supposed to be working with each other, actually were not. A former director

at the NCED commented, ‘there were some projects that the MOE was responsible for. As a centre, we did not have any role in these projects, and the MOE did not ask for our opinion before implementing these projects’ (PM01). One of these was the ‘implementation of the Tablets projects for all secondary schools’ (PM01).

A senior leader at the NCED gave another example related to teacher policies:

> There is no coordination among the educational stakeholders at all. The leaders are not sitting down with each other to discuss the real education issues. For example, we in the NCED are working to develop the teacher standards, which will be the basis of teacher evaluation; at the same time, the MOE is working on developing the criteria for teachers’ evaluation. This creates conflicting roles between us, as well as wasting time, effort, and money. (PM04)

These two quotes from senior leaders at the NCED show the lack of coordination between the MOE and the NCED in developing the reform projects. Both organisations were working on almost the same project regarding teachers’ evaluation, and, as PM04 argued, this created conflict between their two proposals and wasted time, and this definitely would delay the implementation of the proposal. If these two bodies were not even collaborating with each other, it is not surprising that they did not work with other stakeholders.

Participants shared several results of the lack of stakeholder involvement, one of which was that the World Bank took the lead in communicating among stakeholders. One faculty member at the CBE claimed:

> Because of the lack of communication between the education fields and the MOE, the World Bank is taking the lead now and acting as a liaison between Kuwaiti’s educators and the MOE. If the MOE needs to know what we think about a specific policy or project, or what we think about current education practice, they send a World Bank representative to connect with us and get our opinions and then to report back to MOE leaders. (FM10)

From this quote, we can infer that instead of involving the stakeholders to hear their opinions and work with each other to develop the reform, the MOE was sending the World Bank to gather the opinions of its own stakeholders. One faculty member at the COE recalled, ‘The World Bank asked us to integrate the new competencies-based curriculum. We agreed to do so at their request, but we told them that we should be part of this project and have a say in it. However, this never

happened' (FM09). What is interesting in this quote is that the World Bank, rather than the MOE, was asking the COE to integrate the new competencies-based curriculum into their programmes. This demonstrates the gap between the MOE and the colleges of education, and it also indicates their absence from the reform process.

The second result of the lack of stakeholder involvement was that the majority of stakeholders in Kuwait were not even aware of the Integrated Education Reform Program (IERP) that the MOE launched in 2010, including the teacher policies reforms that the MOE was working on. One of the faculty members at COE said:

> Unfortunately, I have no knowledge about the reform projects that the MOE and NCED are working on or that they implemented recently. Also, I have no idea about the integrated education development programme and its projects, such as the teacher licence, the national assessment, the national standards, etc. As faculty members at the COE, we were not part of developing these projects. (FM04)

A faculty member at CBE stated that he was not 'aware of the education reform that the MOE is working on; even the teacher licensing project, I know about from the newspapers, but I did not have a chance to look at its details' (FM08).

Furthermore, a policymaker stated that 'as a KTS senior leader, a teacher, and someone interested in the issue of education, I have no information about the teacher licensing project, what the licensing is about, how a teacher will obtain it, or who will be responsible for issuing the licence' (PM07).

This demonstrates the 'big gap' between the MOE and the stakeholders, and this gap 'needs to be breached' (FM01) if the MOE is serious about reforming teacher policies. All that the stakeholders 'are asking from the MOE is a real partnership' (FM09), noted one of the faculty members.

Interviewees suggested several reasons for this lack of stakeholder involvement, but all the reasons pointed toward the MOE and the way it handled the reform process. One faculty member stated, 'I think that the reason behind the lack of correspondence and coordination is the absence of real leadership that is able to lead the educational process and the reform in Kuwait' (FM10).

Another faculty member commented:

> The MOE is working in isolation from the educational field – schools and teacher colleges. They [the MOE] imposed the new policies without asking the field workers their opinion. The Ministry is like an ivory castle – no one is allowed to criticise their work or to propose anything or comment. Therefore, the reform projects that the MOE is working on are failing. (FM04)

Another senior leader at the GSSCPD described how the MOE refused to involve the stakeholders as part of the reform and was not willing to make the reform plan available to others:

> The MOE is refusing to put the education reform plan online and to make it available to others. Despite my position, the MOE was not willing to give me a copy of the reform plan, and I waited a long time until the undersecretary signed my request to have a copy. (PM06)

This illustrates the lack of transparency in education reform. Most of the interviewees were not even aware of the education reform that the MOE was working on because the MOE refused to involve them or to make the reform plan available to the public, as the policymaker stated above. This also may explain why the amount of data and the number of documents available about education reform in Kuwait is so limited in comparison to the data available about the reforms in Bahrain and Qatar.

Another reason that was raised by the interviewees had to do with the instability in the MOE, which was also related to the absence of a clear educational strategy. A faculty member at the CBE argued:

> The main reason for the lack of collaboration among the stakeholders is the instability of the ministers in the MOE; there is no one who links the institutions with each other or follows up on their roles and practices because mostly every six months, we have a new minister. Another reason for the gap among the stakeholders in education may be the absence of a clear strategy for our education system, which any coordination should be based on. (FM08)

This quote highlights the importance of stability in the administration for ensuring ongoing collaboration among the stakeholders. The instability of the administrative body leading the education reform, along with the absence of a clear educational vision, were discussed in more depth in Chapters 5 and 6.

Another faculty member at the COE blamed the lack of stakeholder involvement on the way the state had established these institutions in the first place:

> The state established an education system that is dispersed; the MOE is far away from what is happening in the educational colleges, and the educational colleges are far away from the NCED and what they are doing in the centre. Each institute is working in isolation from the others. This is why there is no collaboration between us. The MOE leaders feel a threat from the faculty members at the educational colleges about taking their leadership positions, and the MOE claims that the academics are not aware of what is happening in schools, thus isolating us from the decision-making circle. (FM06)

A senior leader at the GSSCPD argued that the absence of stakeholders made the reform look like an MOE reform only, rather than a national reform:

> The education reform in its current situation cannot be considered a national reform, as the main stakeholders in the state are not part of the reform. This is because the MOE refused to involve these stakeholders and work with them at the same level. (PM06)

This policymaker raised an interesting point. According to him, the MOE was not willing to involve stakeholders in the reform process because it did not see them as partners who were at the same level and who deserved to work with them. This is because the MOE regarded itself as a leader of the reform; as such, they felt that involving other stakeholders might threaten their interests and positions.

There were only four interviewees whose points of view differed from those discussed above, and all were policymakers in the MOE and NCED. When a senior policymaker from the MOE was interviewed to learn more about its collaboration with other stakeholders, he insisted that ‘the MOE is coordinating and cooperating with all stakeholders, as this is the original relationship among all state sectors, and anyone who claims otherwise needs to prove it’ (PM05). He asked for the names of the people who claimed that they were not involved, but these were not revealed to him, due to the need to protect their confidentially and due to other ethical considerations.

A faculty member at the COE responded to this claim by stating, ‘Yes, there are collaboration protocols between us and the MOE and committees; however, these protocols and committees are not active’ (FM09). As with the case of the

SEC, the protocol was there, but the Ministers of Education were not activating them (see Chapter 5).

A faculty member from the other college also disputed the MOE senior leader's claim, saying:

> The only collaboration between the CBE and the MOE is to arrange the MOE's need for teachers in certain subjects. Each year, the MOE informs us that they need a certain number of teachers in these specific subjects. Other than that, there is nothing related to the reform. (FM03)

Obviously, this collaboration between the MOE and the teacher colleges was not related to the reform and did not involve the latter in the reform process. Instead, it was only about arranging the number of applications that each college is required to accept every year, based on the MOE's needs.

A former director at the NCED claimed, 'Before launching the reform, I make sure to present the reform's programme to several stakeholders. We even visit some schools to present the reform to them' (PM08). This might be true, but presenting the completed reform plan to the stakeholders is totally different from involving them in the policymaking and policy decisions. When the MOE decided to reform the education system and set the reform agenda, this was in isolation from other stakeholders.

Another former NCED director also asserted that 'as a centre, we are working with all the stakeholders, and we coordinate with teacher colleges in different events' (PM01). He continued:

> As a centre, my role is to send a letter to the dean of the college informing him of what we are doing, and then it is his responsibility to inform the rest of his colleagues. For example, each committee that worked on establishing the curriculum standards was led by one of the faculty members from the teacher colleges, and it was their responsibility to send the draft to their colleagues at the end. As a centre, my role is to manage the project. (PM01)

A faculty member responded to this claim:

> This is not the right process for involving the stakeholders. Stakeholders were supposed to have been involved from the beginning, by being represented on committees that should have been established to set the agenda and the implementation strategy. (FM12)

It seems that the senior leaders at the MOE and the NCED have a different understanding of stakeholder involvement. As described in the literature (see Chapter 3), it means to involve the stakeholders from the beginning and to consider them key players in the policymaking process. Informing the stakeholders later is not the same; involvement requires more. Also, the NCED's former director argued that some of the faculty members led working committees to establish the new curriculum standards, but this technical role does not count as involvement in the decision-making process because they were not involved in deciding what kind of curriculum was needed in the first place.

Some of the faculty members interviewed shared their concerns and experiences with working on projects with the MOE. One reported how the MOE was managing and preparing the reform's projects:

> I know that some colleagues who participated in committees in the MOE did prepare some projects; however, they decided not to continue working. They found that the MOE was not serious and that the committee meetings were no more than a formality, with no decisions or accomplishments in terms of the projects. The evidence of that is that many reform projects announced by the MOE have not been implemented yet, and those that were implemented caused disasters in the system and had to be cancelled. The MOE does not have a single project that it can be proud of in front of the other Gulf states. (FM03)

This may indicate that the MOE is not treating reform seriously. Another faculty member agreed that 'the MOE is not serious about reforming the education system because it does not know what works and what does not when it comes to developing education' (FM12). Hence, the involvement of the stakeholders is crucial to providing support for developing and implementing reforms.

Clearly, the involvement of stakeholders in the policymaking process makes an enormous difference in how the agenda is set, for stakeholders are the primary source of the agenda. Their absence affects the establishment of policy and precludes gaining their support to help with implementation. As a result, Kuwait's education reform agenda did not emphasise the reform of teacher policies, and the MOE has failed to implement the only two policies it proposed that were related to teachers.

Most of the initiatives that Kuwait's MOE managed to implement—such as the new curriculum, E-learning, the national assessments, and school

administration—were within its jurisdiction. It was easy to manipulate these policies, in contrast to teacher policies, which required the involvement of other concerned stakeholders. For instance, the teacher colleges were responsible for initial teacher training, and the CSC was in charge of all legislative policies regarding teacher selection and teacher performance management, so both should have been involved.

A senior leader at the GSSCPD explained why teacher performance management was not on the reform agenda. 'The MOE missed the performance management of teachers and did not include it in the reform agenda because in Kuwait, teachers are subject to the CSC law' (PM06). He added, 'I have no idea how the MOE will implement the teacher licensing project without involving the CSC and working with them to change the CSC law that teachers come under'. This demonstrates clearly that the absence of stakeholders affects both setting the agenda and implementing it. In other words, the MOE failed to target teacher performance management and failed to implement the teacher licensing project because they did not involve the CSC in the reform process from the beginning.

7.4 Comparison and Conclusion

The discussion presented in this chapter demonstrates that in Bahrain and Qatar, the stakeholders were highly involved in the reform process, starting from identifying the problem and setting up the agenda, and continuing through the policy implementation. In Kuwait, however, other stakeholders were not involved in the reform process at all (Table 7.1).

According to Kingdon (2003), the 'policy stream' is the stream where policymakers and stakeholders meet with each other to discuss and finalise the policies. In other words, both policymakers and stakeholders work together to generate proposals and to debate, draft, and redraft the agenda. The relevant stakeholders are the primary source of the agenda, so the more they are involved, the more the agenda will manage to target specific policies to solve the problem that was identified in the beginning.

Table 7.1

Stakeholders Involved in the Education Reform Process in Bahrain, Qatar, and Kuwait

	Bahrain	Qatar	Kuwait
Reforms' leading body	The ERB	The SEC	The MOE
Stakeholders	- Minister of Education - President of UOB - Minister of Labour - Chief Executive of EDB - General Secretary of the Supreme Council for Women - Chairman of the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry - Private sector representatives	- The MOE - Qatar University - Qatar Petroleum - State Audit Bureau - Qatar Chamber of Commerce & Industry - Chairman of the Executive Team of the Education Development Project	The NCED

In the cases of Bahrain and Qatar, the majority of stakeholders—most of whom represented the perspective of consumers of the K–12 system, as well as the private sector and higher education—were involved officially and were part of the decision-making process that designed and implemented the reform agenda, as outlined in Table 7.1. The stakeholders in both Bahrain and Qatar were involved in identifying the problem, setting the agenda, and implementing the reform. In Kuwait, however, the stakeholders were not involved in any stage of the reform process because the MOE was working by itself throughout the reform process.

The participation of stakeholders in the reform process in both Bahrain and Qatar helped in targeting teacher policies, such as the initial teacher training and teacher professional development. In Bahrain, UOB was involved in the reform process, and Qatar University was involved in Qatar. The involvement of UOB made it easier for Bahrain to abolish the COE and replace it with a new college for initial teacher training, the BTC. The case in Qatar was similar in that the COE established new programmes in line with the reform projects.

However, in Kuwait, the reform agenda failed to include reform of initial teacher training or teacher performance management, as KU, PAAET, and the CSC were not involved in the policymaking process at all. One senior policymaker pointed out that teacher performance management was not included in the reform agenda because the CSC was not part of the policy process, and none of the laws that manage teachers' performance and their professional ladder are in the hands

of the MOE. The same is true of the implementation of teacher licensing, which demonstrates that the absence of stakeholders in the reform process in Kuwait affected both agenda setting and implementation, and this explains why Kuwait failed to reform these policies. This exemplifies precisely what Kingdon (2003) stated in his theory: that the involvement of the stakeholders affects agenda setting and its implementation.

The majority of the participants interviewed stated very clearly that stakeholders were not involved in the policy process for any kind of reform. A former Minister of Education pointed out that the stakeholders were not engaged in the right way, and when he became minister, he found that school leaders and teachers were not even aware of the reform that the MOE was implementing. Another senior policymaker also noted that the MOE refused to even make the reform plan available online for the public to see. As a result, most faculty members interviewed (representing both of Kuwait's education colleges) reported that they had no idea what the MOE was doing. They claimed that there was a huge gap between the MOE and other stakeholders; some described the MOE as an ivory castle and contended that no one was allowed to criticise its work or to voice alternative opinions.

Although a few policymakers claimed that the stakeholders were involved, it seems that their understanding of 'involvement' was different from what has been discussed in the politics of education discourse (Bruns et al., 2019; Heck, 2004; Taylor et al., 1997), where it is argued that the involvement paves the way for buy-in of the reform, and it smooths the path for implementation, as well as contributing to the reform agenda. The policymakers who defended their own efforts understood stakeholder involvement to mean merely informing them about the reform agenda, but not necessarily involving them in setting the agenda or allowing them to participate in the reform process from the beginning. Because educators' and stakeholders' roles were passive rather than active, they failed to understand the policies in the first place, which likely resulted in the failure to successfully implement them.

In contrast, both Qatar and Bahrain also involved international stakeholders, contracting with specialist international consultants to work with local stakeholders to design and implement teacher policy initiatives, and this process helped to build

local human capital. Bahrain referred to Singapore's NIE to introduce all four of its initiatives. Qatar referred to EQI of Australia, the CfBT and the University of Southampton, the New Zealand Cognition Education group, and Texas A&M University, each of whom provided a consultant assigned to design an initiative related to teachers.

Kuwait did refer to the World Bank, the main consultant for its education reform, to design teacher standards. Yet this collaboration between the MOE and the World Bank has not been successful, as discussed in this chapter, because the World Bank teams were being changed during the design process, and every time a new team was assigned, the work started over again from the beginning. Moreover, the teacher licensing project was not assigned to any international or national consultant. This is why these two policies have still not been finalised as a formal policy proposal and have not been implemented yet.

In the Arab Gulf States (AGS), the main role of international consultants has been to transfer the globalisation discourse into the local context by virtue of their having the know-how, resources, and relationships with which to develop a modern state that can survive global competition, and in 'keeping with the move to a more international outlook' (Kirk, 2014, p. 137). Their contributions have had a significant role in developing the education reforms in the AGS, as discussed in Chapter 3. Alone out of the three countries, Kuwait missed this opportunity; it did not employ international consultants, whom Kingdon (2003) called 'policy entrepreneurs', to make use of their resources and knowledge in supporting the teacher policies reform.

This study finds that the reason behind the high level of stakeholder involvement in both Bahrain and Qatar is that in both positive cases, the ruling establishment were highly motivated to reform the education system, as has been discussed repeatedly (see Chapter 5). The ruling establishments in these states were directly involved in leading the reform. Therefore, bringing all the stakeholders into the policymaking process was 'viewed as an important factor in achieving stakeholder buy-in' for the reform, as was the case in Bahrain (Mohamed, 2019, p. 262). In Qatar, stakeholder involvement was seen as an approach to building a high-quality education system that would respond to the needs of stakeholders (Brewer et al., 2007). Moreover, in both positive cases, the

education reform was assigned to a quasi-governmental body (see Chapter 5), and the MOEs cooperated with other stakeholders at the same level. The MOEs in Bahrain and Qatar were regarded as stakeholders, not leaders of the reform.

However, in Kuwait, participants who were interviewed pointed out three reasons underlying the lack of stakeholder involvement in the reform process. The first reason had to do with the position of the MOE as the reform leader and its ability to lead the reform. Interviewees argued that the MOE was lacking in real leadership to lead and manage the education reform process, and that it refused to work with other stakeholders at the same level.

The second reason that the interviewees brought up was the instability of the MOE's administration. They argued that the frequent turnover among ministers and other leaders affected the collaboration among the stakeholders because there was no one to link these stakeholders to each other (see Chapter 6). Thus, the instability of the administration leading the reform not only affected the implementation of the reform, but it also affected the involvement of the stakeholders in the reform process.

The final reason had to do with how the state of Kuwait had originally established institutions such as the NCED, the SEC, the education colleges, and others. They were working to enhance the education system, but they were working in isolation from each other, and some were not active (see Chapter 5). The result was that there was no coordination among them.

One more indication was identified when analysing the education reform in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, which were similar in this respect. The analysis presented in this chapter indicates that teachers and school leaders were not part of the process and were not considered stakeholders. This might be due to the absence of active and powerful teacher unions in the AGS; teachers and school leaders are not organised and in some cases are not allowed to establish labour unions. Consequently, educators' voices were missing from the reform process. Although there is no research available to understand the reasons for this absence and how it might have affected the implementation, further investigation in the future is called for.

In conclusion, it is clear that the factor of stakeholder involvement was present in both Bahrain and Qatar, but it was absent in Kuwait. The discussion in this chapter illustrates the significant involvement of stakeholders in both Bahrain and Qatar, both of which targeted teacher policies in their reform agendas and went on to successfully implement all relevant initiatives. On the other hand, in Kuwait, the absence of stakeholders in the policymaking process was notable and affected the education reform agenda in two ways:

1. The stakeholders were not present during the policymaking process to put pressure on policymakers to focus on reforming teacher policies. For example, some policies, such as initial teacher training and teacher selection, were not even under the authority of the MOE, so it did not include them when setting the reform agenda.
2. The absence of academics, researchers, professionals, consultants, and other stakeholders prevented Kuwait from designing an effective proposal for either the teacher licensing project or the teacher standards, and neither of these two policies has been finalised yet.

Therefore, this thesis argues that stakeholder involvement is an explanatory factor, and its absence can help to explain Kuwait's failure to implement teacher policies reforms.

Chapter 8 Conclusion: Towards Successful Implementation in Kuwait

The main purpose of this study was to understand why Kuwait was less engaged in reforming teacher policies and why it failed to implement any reforms to teacher policies since it launched its education reform in 2010. This research was approached through a political perspective to study the policymaking process of the education reform in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain in order to identify and understand the variations in these three countries and to determine what was missing in the policymaking process that could account for this failure in Kuwait.

There were two main reasons for focusing on teacher policies. First, policymakers and scholars worldwide have recognised the vital role of teachers in improving and advancing any education system, as the quality of any education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers. (See for example: Akiba, 2013a; Barber et al., 2007; Oon Seng, 2015; Schleicher, 2011; Wiseman & Al-bakr, 2013.) Secondly, an examination of education reforms in these three similar countries showed that teacher policies were the only main component in the agenda that varied in terms of the countries' initiatives and their implementation. This research was inspired by Davies' (1999) argument that teachers 'should also be an important component of any country's educational reform strategy' (p. 12). Therefore, Kuwait's failure to reform teacher policies was worth examining to understand the underlying reasons in more depth.

Based on the research findings, the explanatory factors were identified through the Most Similar System Design (MSSD) method and then analysed in light of the Institutional theory, and the Multiple Streams theory was found to be closely related to the outcomes of interest. The three explanatory factors—namely, (1) the motivation of the ruling establishment for reforming the education system; (2) the stability of the administration leading the reform; and (3) the stakeholder involvement in the reform process—were found to be present in both positive cases (Bahrain and Qatar) but absent in the negative case (Kuwait).

This thesis has illustrated that these three explanatory factors are clearly connected to each other. It all starts with the motivation of the ruling establishment because in the Arab Gulf States (AGS), they are considered to have the power and responsibility to undertake reforms. Their motivation is reflected in their

involvement in the reform process. If they are involved, they can make sure that the institution handling the reform is stable and well-equipped to handle the education reform in general and teacher policies reform in particular. Identifying the problem from the outset serves to attract their attention and motivate them to reform the system.

The motivation and involvement of the ruling establishment ensures the stability of the administration leading the reform, which means that during the reform process, there is minimal change in the key persons responsible for the reform. Also, strong motivation from the ruling establishment increases the degree of stakeholder involvement, so that education reform is perceived as a national reform that can only be successfully implemented if all stakeholders work together.

Based on this research, I argue that there was little motivation among Kuwait's ruling establishment for reforming the education system. This was demonstrated by the lack of political support, the inability of the Ministry of Education (MOE) to lead the reform, and the failure to diagnose the problems in the first place. The instability, turnover in the reform's leadership, and minimal involvement of the stakeholders in the policymaking process are all reasons that explain why Kuwait has been less engaged in reforming teacher policies and has failed to implement the only two of its reform policies that were related to teachers: teacher licensing and teacher standards. In Kuwait, the policy window that Kingdon (2003) described was never open to implement teacher policies reform, as the three streams never came together at a critical moment. The problem was never identified, the policy solutions were never developed in the policy stream, and finally, there were no solutions to be turned into policy in the politics stream.

This final chapter consists of three parts. The first part summarises the findings of the preceding chapters, and the second part presents the contributions of this research to the literature, as well as its limitations, and future areas of research. In the third part, I reflect on the significance of this study in moving Kuwait towards successful implementation of reforms in the future.

8.1 Summary of Chapters

The thesis began by laying out the context of the AGS and the goal of transforming the oil-based economy to a knowledge-based one. This background was

necessary to understand why these states decided to reform the education system in the first place. The first chapter discussed the commonalities among the AGS in terms of their history, culture, political, and economic situations. The exploration of oil and gas in the 1930s marked a significant shift in the development of the AGS's economy and the political relationship between the monarchs and their citizens, during a time when the area became one of the wealthiest regions in the world. The AGS provide a high level of welfare to all citizens, including free education at every level and a guaranteed job after graduation.

Nevertheless, in studying the regional context, three main issues emerge: overreliance on oil and gas revenues, low worker productivity, and an imbalance between the population of citizens and foreigners, which results in a lack of job opportunities for young, educated citizens. These issues were identified by international consultants as the main reasons necessitating education reform in the AGS. The only way to solve these problems is by redesigning the education system to increase citizens' productivity and develop human capital, by shifting the economy towards a knowledge-based one that will enable these countries to sustain their welfare systems. Despite substantial investment, though, the education systems in the AGS continue to be of low quality.

The chapter then reviewed the literature concerned with education reform in the AGS and specifically teacher policies reform in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain. To highlight the gap in the literature and to clarify the contribution of my research, I argued that the literature has not examined the education reforms in the region in any depth from a political perspective. Most of what has been written has either focused on the concept of policy borrowing or has studied each state separately. Thus, the study of teacher policies reforms in the region was neglected in the fields of comparative education, politics of education, and political science. This called for a study to examine the reforms in more depth and to study the educational policymaking process in the region.

Next, Chapter 2 presented the teacher policies reforms in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain in greater detail. In order to highlight the similarities and differences among these states in reforming policies related to teachers, I established four themes to collect relevant data about the reforms in these three countries. I found that despite the similarities shared by these three cases, the teacher policies

reform in Bahrain and Qatar was in sharp contrast to that of Kuwait, in terms of the agenda and its implementation. The reform agendas of Bahrain and Qatar included most of the teacher policies that needed reforming, such as initial teacher training, teacher recruitment, teacher professional development, and teacher performance management, and both countries managed to successfully implement all the projects that they had announced. On the other hand, Kuwait's education reform agenda included only two policies related to teachers: teachers licensing and teacher standards. Its agenda ignored initial teacher training, teacher professional development, and teacher performance management. In the end, Kuwait failed to implement any projects related to teachers, even the two that made it onto the reform agenda.

Because the education reforms in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain were conducted at the national level, Chapter 3 looked at the policymaking process in these three countries. I argued that despite establishing legislative institutions in these states, the ruling establishment still controlled the policymaking process because the legislative institutions lacked genuine power. Thus, I engaged with the political science literature to identify a theory that could explain and frame the policymaking process in the region. Because the political theories that explain the policymaking process in the AGS were of limited value, I adopted two political theories from the perspectives presented in the international literature—the Institutional theory (Amenta & Ramsey, 2010), and the Multiple Streams theory (Kingdon, 2003)—to analyse and examine the policymaking processes in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain. The Institutional theory looks at the recognition of the state's issues given by the highest level of the state and how it reflects on the process. The Multiple Streams theory looks at the policymaking process in depth to understand how some policies become a priority to the state while others do not; it defines three streams: the problem stream, the policy stream, and the politics stream. Following this, I discussed the literature of the politics of education, reflecting on how these two theories could be integrated to understand educational reforms.

In Chapter 4, I elaborated on how this research emerged and consequently influenced the development of the main research question. The topic and the context of the study necessitated a qualitative method, reinforced through an

interpretivist paradigm, to provide an understanding of how Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain reformed their teacher policies; this would allow me to understand why Kuwait has not yet made any progress in this reform. To accomplish this, a comparative approach was adopted using Mill's (1891/2002) method of differences, the MSSD, which looks at similar system designs that share common features but have different outcomes, with the aim of finding the explanatory factors that explain the absence of the outcome. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 participants in Kuwait to explore the explanatory factors in more depth.

Together, Chapters 5, 6, and 7 make up the comparative analysis of this study. They were concerned with answering the research question: 'Why has Kuwait been less successful than Qatar and Bahrain in reforming teacher policies?' These three chapters consider the implications of the MSSD in order to analyse in which ways the explanatory factors are present or absent (or weak) in each case under investigation, and how these factors can explain the presence or absence of the outcomes of interest, namely, reforming teacher policies. Each of these chapters addresses one of the three explanatory factors that were identified in the research.

Chapter 5 focused on the first explanatory factor, '**the motivation of the ruling establishment for reforming the education system**', where the ruling establishments in Bahrain and Qatar were found to have been a great deal more motivated to reform teacher policies than in Kuwait. The motivation of the ruling establishment was examined through three factors: the political support provided to the reform, the institution responsible for leading the reform, and the identification of the problem.

An analysis of the data demonstrated that the ruling establishments in both Bahrain and Qatar were heavily involved in providing the political support needed to implement the reforms, whereas in Kuwait, no one from the ruling establishment was involved, so political support was absent. In Bahrain, the reform was overseen by the Crown Prince and led by the Deputy Prime Minister; in Qatar, it was overseen by the ruling Emir and led by the Crown Prince. In Kuwait, on the other hand, the reform was led by the Minister of Education. Moreover, both Bahrain and Qatar assigned the education reform to an independent institution that had more

power than the MOE; in Bahrain, this was the Education Reform Board (ERB), and in Qatar, it was the Supreme Education Council (SEC). Kuwait, however, insisted on leaving the reform in the hands of the MOE, despite the low calibre of its staff and the failure of its previous attempts to reform the education system.

Finally, both Bahrain and Qatar were able to identify the problems in their education systems before they set the reform agenda, and they managed to introduce several initiatives that covered most of the policies related to teachers, and to raise awareness about the importance of reforming teacher policies. In Kuwait, however, the MOE did not conduct any diagnostic study to identify the problems, so it launched its reforms without really knowing which part of the education system to focus on. Therefore, Kuwait did not succeed in raising awareness or addressing policies related to enhancing teacher practices. I argued in this chapter that the high level of motivation in both Bahrain and Qatar contributed to successfully implementing teacher policies reform, whereas the lack of motivation in Kuwait was an explanatory factor for the absence of outcomes.

The second explanatory factor, '**the stability of the administration leading the reform**', is the focus of Chapter 6, in which I found that the administrative bodies leading the education reform in both Bahrain and Qatar were more stable than those in Kuwait, in terms of their leadership. In Bahrain, the leadership of the Deputy Prime Minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, continued from 2005, when the state launched its education reform and established the ERB, through the implementation of the reform agenda. In Qatar, too, the leadership of the Crown Prince, His Highness Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, did not change from 2002, when education reform was launched and the SEC was established, until after the implementation of the entire reform agenda. In Kuwait, however, the situation was in sharp contrast, with the MOE experiencing extensive turnover in its leadership. From the time Kuwait launched its education reform in 2010, until 2019, there were eight different Ministers of Education and four different directors of the National Center for Education Development (NCED). This means that the key person leading the reforms in both Bahrain and Qatar never changed throughout the development of the reform and its implementation. In Kuwait, though, the frequent changes in leadership ensured that there was never stability regarding the key people in the reform, and this significantly affected the motivation

to reform and thus its implementation. I contended in this chapter that the stability of the administration leading the reform in both Bahrain and Qatar contributed to successful implementation of teacher policies reform, while in Kuwait, the instability caused by the turnover of MOE ministers and NCED directors prevented the implementation of teacher policies reform. Thus, the lack of stability was considered an explanatory factor in the absence of outcomes in Kuwait.

The third explanatory factor, '**the stakeholder involvement**', was addressed in Chapter 7, which found that the major stakeholders in Bahrain and Qatar were heavily involved, from the beginning, in the education reform policy process and policy decisions. In both these countries, stakeholders were part of the teams that worked to identify the problem, set up the reform agenda, establish the initiatives and policies, and implement the reforms. In both cases, the participation of stakeholders helped to target teacher policies on the reform agenda and covered most policies that would enhance teacher quality, and in both cases, they managed to implement all of the teacher reforms, with support from national and international partners. In Kuwait, however, the stakeholders were totally excluded and not involved at all in the reform process or the decision-making. The MOE and the NCED worked in isolation from others; as a result, they failed to include most teacher-related policies and then failed to implement the only two policies that the MOE did announce (back in 2010). I argued in this chapter that the involvement of stakeholders in both Bahrain and Qatar contributed to successfully implementing teacher policies reform, whereas in Kuwait, the absence of stakeholder involvement was an explanatory factor for the absence of outcomes.

8.2 Contributions, Limitations, and Future Research

This thesis offers several empirical, methodological, and theoretical contributions to the literature regarding the politics of education, comparative education, and political science in the Gulf region. The interpretivist lens and the comparative qualitative methodology, unconventional for research into the AGS, generated an extensive amount of unique empirical evidence. This contribution is important because it provides an understanding of the policymaking process of educational reform in a region that is relatively under-researched in the academic literature, especially from a comparative politics perspective. This research contributes to the

growing literature on educational reforms and teacher policies reforms in the region. Uniquely, though, instead of describing the reform or examining the policy borrowing approach and its results, this study looks more deeply into the process that shaped the educational reforms and into the political circumstances behind the process itself.

Empirically, the main contribution of this research is that despite the similarities among the AGS—political, economic, and educational—these states have demonstrated very different experiences in terms of implementing reforms in their education systems. The evidence provided in this research illustrates that each country under investigation (Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain) had its own distinctive approach to handling education reform. Much of the existing research, both by international organisations and academic scholars, into educational reform in the region treats the AGS as homogenous in all respects; thus, the individual circumstances and political practices of each country have typically been overlooked. Taking into account the underlying circumstances of the variations among these states provides a proper understanding of the region.

Moreover, this research contributes to education and education reform in Kuwait, a field that is relatively under-researched in the academic literature, by explaining the lack of implementation in Kuwait and the minimal interest of the ruling establishment in reforming the education system in the first place. The sole study that investigated recent education reforms was undertaken by Winokur (2014); however, it did not provide a full picture of the failure to implement reforms to education in general, and teacher policies in particular (see Chapter 1).

Interviews with senior policymakers and stakeholders in Kuwait provided rich information and data. In conducting these interviews and then rigorously analysing them, I have illustrated the utility of rich qualitative data in uncovering reasons for policy failures and their consequences. The analysis in this thesis illustrates that the foremost obstacle facing Kuwait in developing and reforming its education system is a political obstacle rather than a technical one. Nonetheless, the framework of the policy process can contribute to research that is interested in examining educational reform and its failure in similar contexts, such as the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region or other contexts that lack robust experience with democracy.

Methodologically, this thesis has contributed to the growing comparative education literature in the region. To my knowledge, Mill's methods (see Chapter 4) had not previously been used as a comparative method in social research in the Gulf region. I believe that this method is particularly suitable for use within this region, as it seeks to compare similar countries to understand the variation of outcomes or practices. For this research, using Mill's methods allowed me to obtain a clear understanding of each case, individually at first, and then later by comparing the cases with each other to identify the causes behind the variation in outcomes.

Finally, this thesis has contributed in more than one way to the literature regarding political theory in the Gulf region. First, by applying to the policymaking process a theoretical lens that was generated in the developed world in a very different context, I was able to shed light on alternative understandings of the policymaking process, which was not clear and not sufficiently organised in the AGS. The role of the ruling establishments in the AGS highlighted the ways in which education reform is processed and handled. The involvement and political support of the ruling establishment makes an enormous difference to what the policymaking process looks like, who is involved, and how successful and organised it is. Although some existing studies mention the political support provided by the ruler, the contribution of this research is to provide an in-depth understanding of how and why the support was provided in the first place. Also, this research illustrates how the absence of political support can undermine the reform process and prevent the reforms from being implemented.

This research also contributes to the existing political and economic literature in the AGS, arguing for the crucial role played by the ruling establishment in pushing for political and economic reform. This study provides empirical data from the educational field to support this critical role. It is evident that the more the ruling establishment is involved in reforms, the better their chance of being implemented, and vice versa.

Additionally, this research contributes to the important conversation and ongoing debate about the influence of Kuwait's National Assembly on the policymaking process and its effectiveness in blocking development reforms. The influence of the National Assembly has been the focus of several studies, mostly

undertaken by Western scholars who examined its role in regard to economic reforms in Kuwait (see Chapter 3) and identified it as the reason behind the failure to implement reforms. However, this research provides rich, qualitative data from high-ranking policymakers, some of whom served as cabinet ministers in Kuwait's government, and an analysis of the data leads me to refute this claim, for this research uncovered other reasons for the state's failure to implement reforms. This thesis contributes to this literature by establishing a model of reform implementation that considers other factors that may explain the failure to implement reforms in Kuwait, and this is presented in the next section.

In terms of limitations and future research, the intention of this thesis was to look at the policymaking process of the education reform and to examine the implementation of teacher policies reforms. The outcomes of implementing these reforms, and the question of whether these reforms actually enhanced teacher quality and student achievements, were not included in this thesis, and different research tools would be required for that kind of study. Merging both aims into one thesis would be a challenge, due to the time and space available to complete the current study. However, further research into the outcomes of implementing teacher policies reform in the region is required in order to identify whether these reforms achieve their goal of improving student achievement. Also, studying the outcomes of the reforms might illustrate for us who might win or lose as a result of these implementations and whether or not these reforms have a positive impact on developing teaching practices.

Although I did attempt to analyse the policymaking process of education reforms in the AGS, the focus of this thesis was on three states only—Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain—due to limits of time and space. Moreover, adding more countries might have affected the conditions required for employing the MSSD methods. An in-depth analysis at each level of the state and a wider comparison of all six states could extend our understanding of the policymaking process in reforming the education system in the region.

Furthermore, this methodological approach was designed to conduct interviews with policymakers and faculty members in Kuwait alone, while relying on policy documents to collect data for Bahrain and Qatar. My focus was to gain an in-depth understanding of the reasons behind Kuwait's failure to implement

reforms in regard to teacher policies, along with the underlying circumstances of the policymaking process. Including the voices of policymakers and stakeholders in Bahrain and Qatar could have further enhanced our understanding of the policymaking process of reforming teacher policies, and interviewing consultants working on these projects could also have been useful to include their voices in the policymaking process and to understand, from their points of view, what they identified as the challenges in each country. Realistically, though, interviewing more people from several countries would have been too time-consuming, given the need to travel and to collect, transcribe, and analyse these interviews.

Finally, the thesis illustrates that teachers and parents were not considered stakeholders in reforming the education system in any of the three countries studied. I really wish that I had had the chance to engage more with teachers and parents; however, the limitations of time and space for this research project prevented me from doing so. I do believe that further investigation is greatly needed to understand why they were excluded in the first place, incorporating their voices to understand how they felt about not being part of these reforms. This is especially the case for teachers, whose profession was being directly targeted by these reforms; their voices might provide us with a great deal of data to understand how they receive such reforms and how they handle the implementation. Do these reforms improve the quality of their teaching or not, and do they feel that these reforms make them more motivated to continue in this profession? Future research must address these questions and must hear from the teachers themselves about their experience. Including teachers' voices in such research would definitely be useful for any future attempt to develop teacher policies.

8.3 The Future of Educational Policymaking in Kuwait: Towards Successful Implementation of Reforms

This research was not proposed as an applied research project; instead, it was motivated by a practical issue concerned with the failure to implement reforms. In this section, I reflect on the findings of this thesis in relation to Kuwait. I do not intend to present a list of recommendations or to provide practical solutions. Rather, I offer reflections and considerations for future policymaking in Kuwait, especially given that all the reform projects announced in 2010 have since been

cancelled, which leaves Kuwait officially without any national plan to reform the education system.

This research has highlighted several critical issues regarding the policymaking process for reforming the education system. I believe that these issues are not exclusive to the education sector but are also applicable to other sectors, as the lack of development and the failure to reform have become commonplace in Kuwait in the past two decades.

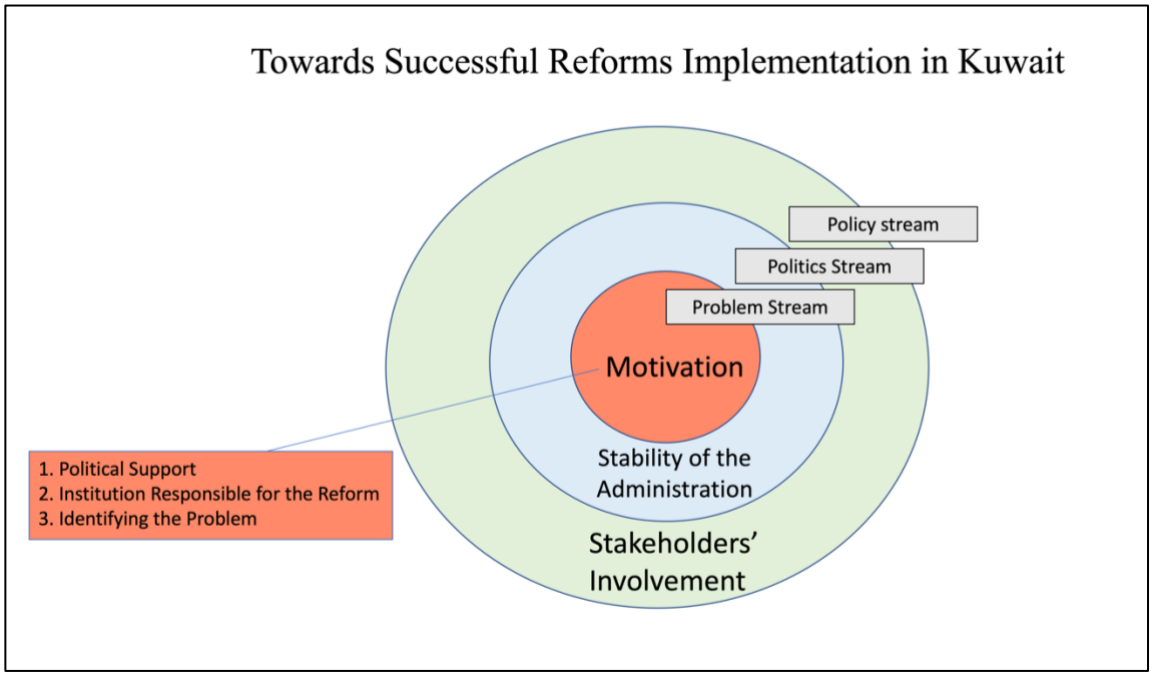
Kingdon (2003) raised three major indicators to classify governments or organisations labouring under the condition of anarchies: (1) fluid participants, (2) problematic preferences, and (3) unclear technology. All three conditions were found to be applicable to Kuwait's government, and without surmounting these conditions, it would be difficult to successfully reform the education system in Kuwait.

Therefore, to ensure successful implementation, and based on the findings of this research, I argue that Kuwait's ruling establishment must reconsider their position and motivation towards reforming and developing the state. Figure 8.1 identifies the main factors necessary for successful implementation in Kuwait. This model was the outcome of integrating the MSSD with two political theories: the Institutional theory and the Multiple Streams theory, which involves the problem stream, politics stream, and policy stream (see Chapters 3 and 4). Certainly, the model is not conclusive and needs further examination in different reform fields in Kuwait, but I argue that if Kuwait continues to attempt to reform the education system without taking these factors into consideration, it will continue to fail.

The motivation within the ruling establishment is one of the main factors to ensure the success not only of the implementation but also of the reform process itself. As this thesis shows, the level of motivation of the ruling establishment is reflected in the rest of the policymaking process, as it is inextricably linked to the other parts. Once Kuwait's ruling establishment is sincerely motivated to reform the education system, for instance, and political support is provided, the reforms should be assigned to an institution that has the power and the mechanisms to handle the effort. A prerequisite is that the problem be clearly identified so the appropriate reforms can be designed.

Figure 8.1

Model for Successful Implementation in Kuwait



Also, when Kuwait's ruling establishment becomes motivated to reform the education system, the ruling establishment should work hard to guarantee stability in the administration leading the reform and thus consistency in the reform process. Turnover at the ministerial and leadership levels at the MOE impairs the reform policymaking process, and as a result, the reforms cannot be implemented. The political crisis and the ongoing battles between the government and the National Assembly should not be allowed to affect the implementation of the reform. Furthermore, if the administration leading the reform were more stable, there would be increased opportunities for stakeholders to be involved. The leadership would coordinate the reform, making it easier to involve stakeholders from the beginning—but if the leadership is unstable and the reforms have a new leader each year, then this involvement becomes even more difficult.

The ruling establishment in Kuwait can ensure a successful reform process and implementation by showing a high level of motivation for reforming the education system and by making it a top priority. Simply announcing the reform and including it in the government's agenda is insufficient, whereas assuming responsibility and supporting the reforms politically would push the reforms to the implementation stage. The ruling establishment knows that they are able to do it, but they are not doing so because they are still not aware of the crucial role the

education system plays in developing the state and in shifting the economy towards being knowledge-based. The ruling establishment in both Bahrain and Qatar did recognise this, which is why they used their power to support the reform.

In the past two decades, Kuwait has repeated the same mistakes: no political support, no identification of the problem, no stability, and no stakeholder involvement. Continuing the same approach will not bring about different results. Several educational reforms were announced by the MOE, several international consultants were involved, and a huge amount of money was allocated to the reform. Still, the education system is not improving; in fact, the situation is becoming much worse.

For once, let us do it differently. Let us consider the reform a national priority, and let us involve everyone as part of this reform process. Let the reform be sponsored by the ruling establishment, and let us allocate the appropriate, qualified people to handle the reform. I believe that we now have what Kingdon (2003) called a policy window. Today, Kuwait has a new ruler (as the former ruler recently passed away), a new Crown Prince, and a new Prime Minister, and a new National Assembly has risen to power. Let us take advantage of this window of opportunity to do something different, which definitely will bring about different results.

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Appendix 1: Invitation Letter

Dear [redacted]

RE: Request to conduct research interview about teacher policy reform in Kuwait

I hope this email finds you well,

My name is Ibrahim Alhouti, I am now a Kuwait University Mission Scholar from the College of Education enrolled in a PhD programme at the Institute of Education, University College London. Given my background and experience as a teacher in Kuwait government school, I decided to take the opportunity and expand on my previous experience by conducting a research on teacher policy reform in Kuwait. Trying to compare this type of reform between three different countries (Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain)

I am planning to be in Kuwait between the [21/12/2018 – 6/1/2019] to conduct my fieldwork and data collection. I am sure that your experience and knowledge would add valuable input to my research. Therefore, I am writing to request an interview with you if you are available during the period mentioned above.

Before you decide on whether to participate or not, I am attaching for your reference an information sheet that contains a summary of my research's topic and objectives. My questions will be closely related to them and it should give you a good introduction to the type of topics I will be covering during the interview.

If you have any questions, please feel free to get in touch with me via email ([redacted]) or calling me on ([redacted]). I look forward to hear back from you soon

Regards,

Ibrahim Alhouti
PhD Student
Department of Education, Practice and Society
UCL Institute of Education

Appendix 2: Interview Questions

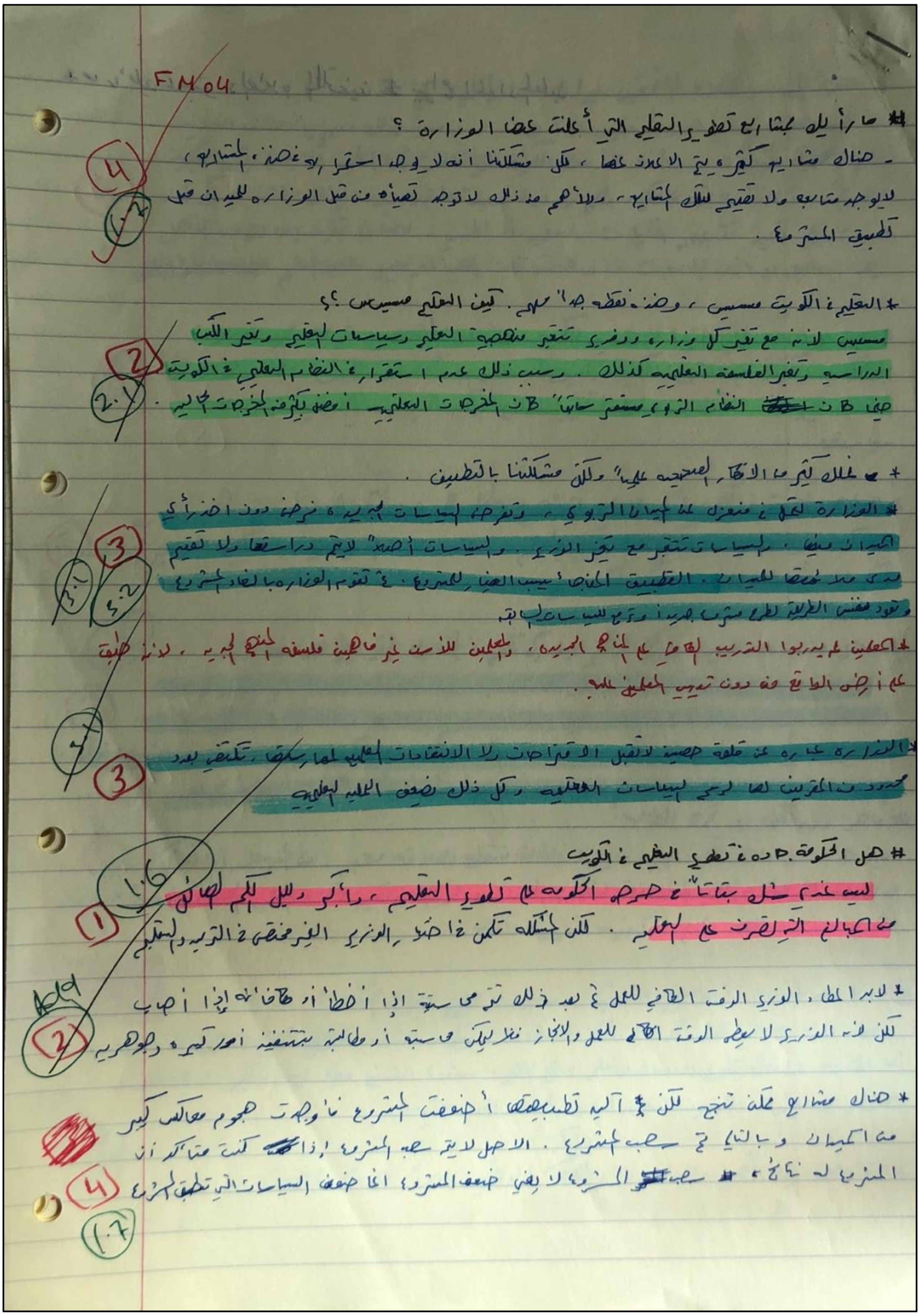
(Policymakers)

- Talk to me in general about the education reform that started in 2009. What do you think of the progress on these reforms?
- Can you explain to me the process that you go through when you decide to reform a specific policy or practice?
- What are the challenges that you are facing while implementing the reform projects?
- What is the role of the World Bank? Do they take any decisions?
- Who is responsible for the implementation?
- What type of support do you receive from the government? Do you feel that they are interested in developing and reforming the education sector in Kuwait?
- Who are your stakeholders? What is the level of collaboration between the MOE/NCED and the rest of the stakeholders?
- On what basis do the MOE/NCED set priorities for the reform projects?
- I found that the reform projects announced by the MOE and the World Bank were not similar to those announced by the NCED. Is that correct?
- Why do some projects have a chance to be implemented while others do not?
- What about teachers? Do you think that Kuwaiti teachers are well-educated?
- In 2008, the National Education Development Conference by the MOE proposed two main projects that are related to teachers: project number 5, which was concerned with developing teachers' initial training, and project number 7, which proposed to improve the in-service training. Ten years after this conference, what has been accomplished in regard to these projects?
- What about teacher standards and teacher licensing? Can you talk to me about these two projects?
- Who was involved in designing these two projects?
- Can you explain to me the implementation process?
- Was there anything you would have done differently in terms of teacher policies reform?
- Do you have any further information that you wish to add before ending this interview?

(Academic Faculty members at Education Colleges)

- Talk to me in general about the education reform that started in 2009. What do you think of the progress on these reforms?
- What type of support do you receive from the government? Do you feel that they are interested in developing and reforming the education sector in Kuwait?
- What do you think about the level of students who are joining the education college?
- What are the challenges that you are facing in the college?
- Do the MOE/NCED share their reform plans and initiatives with you for reviewing or consulting at all levels?
- Do you feel that the programmes and courses provided in the college are adequate to prepare teachers for their roles?
- Whose responsibility is it to improve the initial teacher training? MOE or the College?
- Why is there still no specific criteria for accepting students into the college?
- What is the role of the college after the students graduate?
- How do you compare the college with other colleges in the region in terms of services that you provide after student graduation?
- What about teacher standards and teacher licensing? Can you talk to me about these two projects?
- Was the college involved in designing these two projects?
- Do you have any further information that you wish to add before ending this interview?

Appendix 3: Sample of the Analysis Process



FM04

* ما رأيك بمشاريع تطوير التعليم التي أعلنت عنها الوزارة ؟
- هناك مشاريع كثيرة يتم الاعلان عنها ، لكن مشكلتنا أنه لا يوجد استقرار في هذه المشاريع ، لا يوجد متابعة ولا تقييم لتلك المشاريع ، والأهم من ذلك لا توجد تهيئة من قبل الوزارة للميدان قبل تطبيق المشروع .

* التعليم في الكويت مسيس ، وهذه نقطة جداً مهمة . كيف التعليم مسيس ؟
مسيس لأنه مع تغير كل وزارة ووزير تتغير منهجية التعليم وسياسات التعليم وتتغير الكتب الدراسية وتتغير الفلسفة التعليمية كذلك . وسبب ذلك عدم استقرار في النظام التعليمي في الكويت فيه B ن النظام التربوي مستقر سابقاً" B ن المخرجات التعليمية أفضل بكثير من المخرجات الحالية .

* لدينا كثير من الافكار الصحيحة علمياً ولكن مشكلتنا بالتطبيق .
* الوزارة تعمل في منعزل عن الميدان التربوي ، وتفرض السياسات الجديدة وتفرض دون اخذ رأي الميدان فيها ، والسياسات تتغير مع تغير الوزير . والسياسات أصلاً لا يتم دراستها ولا تقييم مدى ملائمتها للميدان . التطبيق الخاطئ يسبب الفشل للمشروع . ثم تقوم الوزارة بالغاء المشروع وتعود بنفس الطريقة لطرح مشروع جديد وتروج للسياسات الجديدة .
* المعلمين لم يدربوا التدريب الكافي على المنهج الجديد ، والمعلمين للآن غير فاهمين فلسفة المنهج الجديد ، لأنه طبق على أرض الواقع من دون تدريب المعلمين عليه .

* الوزارة عبارة عن قلعة حصينة لا تقبل الاقتراحات ولا الانتقادات العلمية لها بسهولة ، تكتفي بعدد محدود من المقربين لها لرسم السياسات التعليمية وكل ذلك يضعف العملية التعليمية

هل الحكومة جادة في تطوير التعليم في الكويت
ليس عندي شك بتاتاً في حرص الحكومة على تطوير التعليم ، والأكبر دليل الكم الهائل من المبالغ التي تصرف على التعليم . لكن المشكلة تكمن في اختيار الوزير الغير مختص في التربية والتعليم

* لابد من إعطاء الوزير الوقت الكافي للعمل ثم بعد ذلك تتم محاسبته إذا أخطأ أو مكافأته إذا أصاب لكن لأنه الوزير لا يعطى الوقت الكافي للعمل والانجاز فلا يمكن محاسبته أو مطالبته بتنفيذ أمور كثيرة وجوهرية

* هناك مشاريع كانت ستنجح لكن في آلية تطبيقها أضعفت المشروع فواجهت هجوم معاكس كبير من الميدان وبالتالي تم سحب المشروع . الاصل لا يتم سحب المشروع إذا كنت متأكد أن المشروع له نتائج . * سحب المشروع لا يعني ضعف المشروع انما ضعف السياسات التي تطبق المشروع

Appendix 4: Ethical Approval

Institute of Education

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Doctoral Student Ethics Application Form

Anyone conducting research under the auspices of the Institute (staff, students or visitors) where the research involves human participants or the use of data collected from human participants, is required to gain ethical approval before starting. This includes preliminary and pilot studies. Please answer all relevant questions in simple terms that can be understood by a lay person and note that your form may be returned if incomplete.

***Registering your study with the UCL Data Protection Officer as part of the UCL Research Ethics Review Process**

If you are proposing to collect personal data i.e. data from which a living individual can be identified **you must be registered with the UCL Data Protection Office before you submit your ethics application for review**.

If the Data Protection Office advises you to make changes to the way in which you propose to collect and store the data this should be reflected in your ethics application form.

For further information see Steps 1 and 2 of our Procedures page at:
https://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/procedures.php

Section 1 Project details

a.	Project title			Teacher Policy Reform in Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain: A comparative Study	
b.	Student name and ID number (e.g. ABC12345678)			Ibrahim Alhouti (ALH14129363)	
c.	*UCL Data Protection Registration Number			Z6364106/2018/05/54 11/05/2018	
c.	Supervisor/Personal Tutor			Dr. Susanne Wiborg (Primary Supervisor) Dr. Trevor Male	
d.	Department			Education, Practice and Society Institute of Education	
e.	Course category (Tick one)	PhD	☒	EdD	☐
		DEdPsy	☐		
f.	**If applicable,** state who the funder is and if funding has been confirmed.			Kuwait University (my employer) is sponsoring my MPhil/ PhD programme	
g.	Intended research start date			September 2016	
h.	Intended research end date			September 2019	
i.	Country fieldwork will be conducted in *If research to be conducted abroad please check www.fco.gov.uk and submit a completed travel risk assessment form (see guidelines). If the FCO advice is against travel this will be **required** before ethical approval can be granted: http://ioe-net.inst.ioe.ac.uk/about/profservices/international/Pages/default.aspx*			Kuwait	
j.	Has this project been considered by another (external) Research Ethics Committee?				

Doctoral student ethics form February 2017

Student department		
Course		
Project title		
Reviewer 1		
Supervisor/first reviewer name	Susanne Wiborg	
Do you foresee any ethical difficulties with this research?	No	
Supervisor/first reviewer signature	[redacted]	
Date	10 March 2017	
Reviewer 2		
Second reviewer name	Germ Janmaat	
Do you foresee any ethical difficulties with this research?	No	
Supervisor/second reviewer signature	[redacted]	
Date	10 March 2017	
Decision on behalf of reviews		
Decision	Approved	☒
	Approved subject to the following additional measures	☐
	Not approved for the reasons given below	☐
	Referred to REC for review	☐
Points to be noted by other reviewers and in report to REC		
Comments from reviewers for the applicant		

Once approved by both reviewers students should submit the ethics application form to the Centre for Doctoral Education team IOE.CDE@ucl.ac.uk.

Appendix 5: Information Sheet

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Participant Information Sheet for Policymakers and Academic Faculty Member in Education Colleges in Kuwait

Title of the Study: Teacher Policy Refrom in Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain: A Comparative Study

Department: Education, Practice and Sociaty

Researcher Name: Ibrahim Alhouti ([redacted])

I am inviting you to take part in my research project titled 'Teacher Policy Reform in Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain: A Comparative Sturdy'. This interview is part of my fieldwork to collect empirical data for my research towards a PhD Degree in Education from the Institute of Education – University College London. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

About me

I am Ibrahim Alhouti, I am now a Kuwait University Mission Scholar from the College of Education enrolled in a PhD programme at the Institute of Education, University College London.

About the UCL Institute of Education

UCL Institute of Education (IOE) is the world's leading Centre for education and related social science. Founded in 1902, it is today unique amongst faculties of education in its scale and in the depth and breadth of its expertise, unparalleled both in its impact nationally and in its work with education systems overseas. In the 2017 QS rankings, the Institute was placed first in the world for education for the fourth year running, ahead of Harvard, Stanford and Melbourne. For more information see www.ioe.ac.uk

I very much hope that you would like to take part in this research. This information sheet will try and answer any questions you might have about the study, but please don't hesitate to contact me if there is anything else you would like to know.

The research summary and objectives:

I am conducting this research for my doctoral studies as mentioned in the introduction section of this information sheet. My research is concerned with studying the teacher policy reform in Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain. In order to highlight the similarities and differences in designing and implementing teacher policy reform in these three countries. These three countries have conducted a number of reforms to their education system in the early part of the twenty-first century which includes different education aspects. Such as (curriculum, school structures, involving of technology, as well as teacher profession) to improve and develop their education and student outcomes, as well to shift their economies that based on the oil industry to be knowledge-based economies. The three countries under investigation share several similarities between them, such as the language, the cultural and social practice, as well as having the same political system which is the constitutional monarchy. However, these countries differ in what they prioritise in their education reform and implementation. Especially in reforming teacher policies. This variation motivated me to conduct this research to

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investigate the reasons behind that. As well to examine why some countries less engaged in reforming teacher policies as part of their reform agenda. Moreover, I am aiming to investigate how do teachers in Kuwait perceive their challenges in the absence of reforming their policies. This research will be addressed by three main research questions that involves different levels of analysis:

1. What are the similarities and differences between Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain in term of teacher policy reform? What are the reasons behind the variation between the countries?
2. Why is Kuwait less engaged in teacher policy reform than Qatar and Bahrain?

Why am I being invited to take part?

Within your current capacity as [redacted] and your experience throughout developing the education strategy plan and supervising the education sector reform projects on the NewKuwait vision 2035. I believe that your experience, insights and answers will provide valuable input towards my inquiry. Your participation in this research will be concerned with the second question only. Conducting the interview with you may help me in understanding why Kuwait is less engaged in reforming teacher policies.

What will happen if I choose to take part?

If you decide to take part, I will schedule a face-to-face interview, if a meeting in person is not possible, I will schedule a telephone or videoconference meeting. The date and time of the interview will be decided based on your availability. The interview should last for an hour, however, if we both feel that we need more time, we can reschedule for subsequent dates.

During the interview, I will share with you more information about the topic and objectives of my research study. I will be asking you questions about the teacher policy reforms, and teacher preparations as well, your experience and reflections. I will be recording the interview (by notes or using a recorder if you approve). At the end of the interview, I will share with you the interview transcript if you wish to review it.

Will anyone know I have been involved?

The data you share will not be attributed to you in person and all identities will be anonymised. I will be taking measures to ensure privacy and confidentiality takes precedent when analysing the data and publishing the findings.

Could there be problems for me if I take part?

There should be no problems with your participation in this study. If approvals from your organisation are required to grant you permission to be interviewed, I will write officially and obtained approval to approach you. If you decide to participate in this interview and later on wish to withdraw your statement, please know that you can do so by writing to me on [redacted] and the data collected from this interview will be deleted. I am also providing you with the option to review the interview transcript, should you wish to confirm your answers. You will also have the option to be informed and briefed on the published findings at the end of the research.

What will happen to the results of the research?

The data collected will form the findings sections of my PhD dissertation. Any information shared with me during the interview will only be used for this purpose and I will be keeping all records in a protected storage. I do not intend to keep a record for any further use beyond this research project and no one else will have access to the data records.

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Do I have to take part?
It is entirely up to you whether or not you choose to take part. I hope that if you do choose to be involved then you will find it a valuable experience and an excellent opportunity to share your valuable experience and reflection on the process teacher policies in Kuwait.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information sheet. If you would like to be involved, please complete the following consent form and return to me as soon as possible, my contact details are provided below

Ibrahim Alhouti
[redacted]

This project has been reviewed and approved by the UCL IOE Research Ethics Committee

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Appendix 6: Consent Form Template

Institute of Education

Title of the Study: Teacher Policy Refrom in Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain: A comparative Study

Department: Education, Practice and Sociaty

Researcher Name: Ibrahim Alhouti ([redacted])

If you are happy to participate, please complete this consent form and return to the interviewer or email a signed copy to [redacted]

I confirm that I understand that by ticking/initialling each box below I am consenting to this element of the study. I understand that it will be assumed that unticked/initialled boxes means that I DO NOT consent to that part of the study.

	Yes	No
I have read and understood the information sheet about the research	☐	☐
I agree to be interviewed by Ibrahim Alhouti	☐	☐
I understand that all personal information will remain confidential and that all efforts will be made to ensure I cannot be identified	☐	☐
I understand that I can withdraw from the project at any time, and that if I choose to do this, any data I have contributed will not be used	☐	☐
I understand that I can contact Ibrahim Alhouti at any time	☐	☐

Name _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Researcher's name _____ Signed _____

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