Between global and national prescriptions for education administration: the rocky road of neoliberal education reform in Qatar

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ABSTRACT

Utilizing a framework derived from institutional analysis, this paper examines the implementation of Qatar's education reform initiative dubbed "Education for a New Era – ENE," This initiative transferred all public schools in Qatar into Charter Schools, called "Independent Schools," starting 2004, and granted them broad decision-making authorities in pedagogical, managerial, and financial matters. By 2016, however, education administration reverted to centralized control. This study argues that the ENE initiative included contradictions that impeded the achievement of its main goals. Furthermore, the initiative was caught between global and national prescriptions for education and its role in society, which raised bureaucratic as well as popular resentment against it.

Concerned that public education was too rigid and outdated to prepare students for the twenty-first century job market, the Qatari government hired the RAND Corporation in 2001 to perform a sector-wide analysis of education and propose solutions. Based on RAND's analyses, Qatar launched an education reform initiative dubbed Education for a New Era (ENE) in 2004. Building on the principles of School-Based Management (SBM) and the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM)[1], the initiative granted broad decision-making authorities to schools and created mechanisms for accountability through systematic data collection, auditing, and testing. Emiri Decree 37/2002 created the Supreme Education Council (SEC) to lead the reform (Ministry of Education and Higher Education - Qatar, 2006). Emiri Decree 14/2009 merged the Ministry of Education (MoE) into the structures of the SEC (Abdel-Moneim, 2015).

However, in 2016, the Council of Ministers approved a law that reestablished the MoE as the entity responsible for education and ended the designation of public schools as "independent" (Alwatan, 2016). Prior to this change, the SEC had initiated cumulative policy changes over time that reversed school autonomy starting in the early years of the initiative.

This study seeks to answer the question: What factors account for the reversal of several of the tenets that shaped Qatar's ENE initiative, generating a process that curtailed school independence soon after the program's inception and culminating in the official overhaul of the initiative and the return to MoE's centralized structures? To answer these questions, I use qualitative data based on interviewing key stakeholders who played central roles in various stages during the initiative's lifetime. Specifically, I conducted 16 interviews with MoE officials, RAND consultants, and researchers/scholars from Qatar University (QU) and the World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE) in Qatar.

There is no scarcity of studies that explain the design and implementation of the program (Biygautane et al., 2016; Brewer et al., 2007; Brewer and Goldman, 2010; Guarino et al., 2009; Zellman et al., 2009), its theory/logic of change (Alkhater, 2016; Morgan, 2017; Nasser, 2017; Nasser et al., 2014), and the perceptions of the main stakeholders (Romanowski and Amatullah, 2014; Romanowski et al., 2013; Said and Friesen, 2013; Said et al., 2016). Still needed is an attempt to examine this experience within the broader public administration literature.

[1] GERM is a term that refers to new global trends in education reform based on competition between schools, education privatization, standardization of teaching and learning, frequent standardized exams to measure students' and teachers' performance, and accountability based on results. For more details: Sahlberg (Sahlberg, 2011a, 2011b, 2016).

This paper argues that the ENE initiative faced many of the problems that had faced New Public Management (NPM) reforms elsewhere. These problems include superficial mimicry and detaching form from practice (Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff, 2015). They also include market failures and the competition between professional and social norms on the one hand, and global norms on the other. This paper aims at presenting an account of the 13-year experience of the ENE reform through the stories of those who worked directly with this initiative at various times. I organize the discussion using headlines drawn from neoinstitutional analysis as an approach to understanding continuity and change in reform policies.

In the coming section, I review the literature on NPM reforms, with particular focus on developing countries. I then move on to review the institutionalist literature, discussing how I build on the explanatory strength of this rich framework in a way that transcends the dominant World Society Theory (thereafter WST) applications of neoinstitutionalism in comparative education research. I then present the methodology based on elite interviews, followed by an analysis of the results within the neoinstitutionalist framework discussed earlier. I conclude with a reflection on the question posed above, a critique of the initiative, and concluding remarks.

1. Global Prescriptions, design issues, and environmental dynamics in Qatar's education reform

As a political ideology embedded in free markets, the global rise of neoliberal market ideology, starting in the 1980s, brought serious challenges for the role of the state in various fields as governments worldwide began to implement policies that limited their role and encouraged the expansion of the private sector into fields that were under virtual government monopoly (Harrison, 2005). The NPM framework reflected this governmental embrace of market principles and policies, as the public sector continued to face an erosion of legitimacy and public confidence.

The theoretical foundations of NPM can be traced to two main ideological streams. The first is new institutional economics with its focus on market competition, user choice, and transparent information. The second stream is managerial, sometimes perceived as "Neo-Tailorism" (Hood, 1991; Mascarenhas, 1993; Peters and Savoie, 1994; Terry, 1998; Thayer, 1972; Thompson, 2013). As such, this model has faced intense challenges, including concerns over its lack of attention to politics (Gray and Jenkins, 1995; Rosenbloom, 1993, 2013), the complexity of the public sector (Moe, 1994), and the requirements for public accountability (Hood, 1991; Moe, 1994).

Especially in cases of application in developing countries, objections focused on what has been perceived as a standard NPM reform recipe championed by such international organizations as the World Bank and the IMF, as well as by international consultants and bilateral donors. This research suggests that the successful implementation of NPM reforms require a number of preconditions that are sometimes absent in developing countries. These preconditions include advanced levels of economic development and administrative infrastructure, the existence of formal market economy, rule of law, citizenship participation, and constraints on executive power (Appuhami et al., 2011; Manning, 2001; Perez, 1991; Ray, 1999; Sarker, 2006; Sozen and Shaw, 2002; Zafarullah and Huque, 2001).

In addition to technical capacity and political conditions, culture acquired special importance in studies questioning the applicability of NPM reforms in developing countries. As early as the beginnings of the 1990s, Hood (1991) warned that the spread of NPM clones by international consultants creates risks resulting from implementing managerial and free market reforms in contexts where "a culture of public sector honesty" is lacking. NPM reforms are difficult to implement, or achieve their expected results, in the face of bureaucratic resistance, lack of political will, and a culture of corruption (Appuhami et al., 2011; Kurtz et al., 2001; Lodhia and Burritt, 2004; Zafarullah and

Huque, 2001).

Despite these precautions, reformers were thrilled by NPM's promises of results-based management, the elimination of inefficiencies, and fiscal discipline. Privatization, slimmer governments, and decentralization found theoretical legitimation in neoliberal economic theories and principal-agent logic (Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff, 2015).

While NPM reforms in developing countries were introduced mainly in the context of economic reforms aiming at economic stabilization and structural adjustment (Appuhami et al., 2011), they had a number of clones in the field of education. These clones can be placed under the umbrella of education privatization, including public-private partnerships, charter schools and voucher schemes (Srivastava, 2010; Verger et al., 2016).

Competition, choice, standardization, and testing were main pillars of the neoliberal GERM, the movement that has dominated education reform discourse and practice since the 1980s (Sahlberg, 2007, 2011a, 2011b, 2016). In this design, market ideals, standardization, and testing replace professional autonomy and norms as the main guarantors of accountability and education quality (Morgan, 2017; Nasser et al., 2014; Sahlberg, 2007, 2011b).

Within this context of privatization and parental choice, School Based Management (SBM) occupied significant importance in the global education reform agenda (Verger et al., 2016). SBM refers to a wide variety of institutional designs that share a common characteristic; that is, decentralizing authority from the central government to the school level (Felipe Barrera-Osorio et al., 2009). This design finds its legitimization in principal-agent thinking and the "accountability, proximity, and competition advantages" of decentralization (Tommasi and Weinschelbaum, 2007).

The argument is that brining decision-making authority close to the main beneficiaries of the education system will allow schools to make better use of available information about local preferences, and will allow parents a better ability to hold schools accountable (Di Gropello, 2006; Moradi et al., 2012). Furthermore, less bureaucratic control and more school autonomy for principals and teachers will allow more effective use of teachers' abilities, which will also lead to higher responsiveness to parents. This market logic is expected to lead to better student performance (Chubb and Moe, 1990).

In order to create accountability toward local actors, SBM reforms often involve the creation of a school committee or council to monitor school performance, raise funds, monitor teachers' performance, and possibly perform some financial responsibilities (Felipe Barrera-Osorio et al., 2009). Studies of SBM reforms, however, have often found obstacles facing the ability of parents to exercise control over schools (Di Gropello, 2006; Vernez et al., 2012).

Despite the spread of SBM reforms across the world, there is no agreement regarding the ability of such reforms to improve education quality and students' performance (Barrera-Osorio et al., 2009; Ganimian and Murnane, 2016; Leithwood and Menzies, 1998). A number of studies opposed the theoretical foundations of SBM; namely, that reducing bureaucratic control will improve school effectiveness. For example, in the US context, Smith and Meier (1994) did not find support for the argument that less bureaucratic control of schools lead to higher student performance. Far from increasing efficiency and effectiveness, delegating administrative responsibilities to schools divert their attention away from what they should do best – teach (Cuban, 2006; Smith and Meier, 1994).

The number of rigorous empirical evaluations of SBM reforms in developing countries is still limited despite the spread of SBM reform programs (Cárdenas, 2008). There is evidence that SBM reforms have improved such indicators as access and retention, but evidence regarding their effects on education quality is mixed (Santibáñez, 2006; The World Bank, 2007b). A number of case studies found that school autonomy is correlated with better learning outcomes and students' test scores through enhancing autonomy and accountability, and higher parental involvement (Di Gropello, 2006; Gertler et al., 2012; Jimeneza

and Sawadab, 1999; King and Özler, 2005), in addition to the potential positive benefits resulting from financial allocations accompanying school independence (Santibanez et al., 2013). However, a causal relationship between autonomy and performance is questionable since both variables could be mutually reinforcing or influenced by other variables (De Grauwe, 2004).

Among the criteria for reaching school effectiveness through decentralization are the presence of committed school leadership, management preparation, professional development, and continuous guidance by experts, including support from the central government (Cárdenas, 2008; Di Gropello, 2006; Thida and Joy, 2012). The availability of resources is particularly important given the additional responsibilities that school stakeholders have to perform and the need to build the capacity of school leaders, teachers, and the community. Increasing awareness among families regarding their new responsibilities is equally important (Caldwell, 2005; Cárdenas, 2008; De Grauwe, 2004; Di Gropello, 2006; Thida and Joy, 2012).

Studies also highlighted the importance of culture and values in understanding the implementation and survival of SBM reforms. For example, in discussing the implementation of SBM in Mexico, Grindle (2002) argued that a culture of centralization has hampered the fulfillment of the reform's objective of improving quality.

Other studies highlighted the balance of support and opposition from political parties, unions, and parent groups as central to understanding the survival of SBM reforms (Corrales, 2004; Ganimian, 2009; Grindle, 2004). These studies point to the importance of mapping the interests of present and future beneficiaries of reform policies, as well as institutional biases; in addition to analyzing the ability of policy entrepreneurs to use their skills and available resources to alter existing institutional biases in a context that might not always be welcoming (Grindle, 2007).

As a system of charter schools within an arrangement based on decentralization, standardization, and testing, Qatar's Independent Schools model is an application of educational privatization inspired by neoliberal principles. Following global education reform and NPM guidelines, Qatar's ENE represents an approach to infusing market and managerialist prescriptions to managing the education sector. The program built on two main pillars: (1) school decentralization and (2) school accountability through systematic data collection, auditing, testing, and reporting. These principles were translated into the four main pillars of the program: (1) Autonomy, (2) Accountability, (3) Variety, and (4) Choice (Brewer et al., 2007; Brewer and Goldman, 2010).

Autonomy refers to school decentralization, or the move toward SBM. The initiative granted autonomy to schools in exchange for standardization and accountability, which in fact curtailed autonomy. Accountability refers to the development of standards for schools, school administrators, teachers, and curricula, and holding schools accountable to these standards. Variety and informed parental choice would result from school independence, and are key to allowing market mechanisms as a tool for accountability and quality assurance (Abdel-Moneim, 2015).

School autonomy (also read independence), variety of schooling options, and parental freedom of choice of schools to enroll their children based on transparent information about schools' quality, represent the program's attempt to infuse market mechanisms to guarantee quality into the system's design. Autonomy and accountability reflect the managerialist perspective focusing on efficiency and building capacity to respond to market demands as a way to guarantee resources and hence survival. By creating a market for schools and relying on results-based accountability, these principles reflect the two main NPM ideological streams cited above; namely, new institutional economics and managerlism. The logic of the ENE initiative can be summarized in the following points.

(1) Autonomy (*read* school independence or SBM): based on **neoinstitutional economics**, school independence will create diverse schooling options; and the availability of information will improve accountability mechanisms through market-based competition among schools for students. Based on **managerialist perspectives** focusing on efficiency and building capacity, and providing support through School Support Organizations (SSOs), will create better school capacity to compete and reach the prescribed standards.

(2) Accountability: Based on **managerialist perspectives**, holding schools accountable through standardization, testing, and auditing will enhance efficiency and make sure that low performers will leave the market (thus complementing the market mechanisms created through school independence).

(3) Variety: is expected to be an outcome of school independence and creating a market for schools.

(4) Choice: creating a free market for schools to compete should be based on parental choice to select the best schools to enroll their students. The accountability, proximity, and competition advantages prescribed by the new institutional economics stream of NPM hypothesizes a direct link between variety and choice on one hand, and improved performance and market-based accountability on the other.

Based on this analysis, it is interesting to note that the ENE initiative followed closely NPM prescriptions. A recent UNDP report distinguished four categories of NPM reforms that, combined, present a reform agenda. These reforms are (1) Market-oriented reforms, (2) deregulatory reforms, (3) governance reforms, and (4) competence reforms (UNDP, 2014). The first two categories implement guidelines from new institutional economics through creating markets and deregulating functions that were previously under the control of the government to newly created or empowered market actors. The third and fourth reform categories are closer to the managerialist stream of NPM, focusing on the implementation of decentralization, information dissemination, and capacity building. Table 1 summarizes how Qatar's ENE reforms conform to this toolkit identified by the UNDP.

Based on the direct influence of NPM prescriptions in the design of the ENE initiative, and the earlier review of ENE literature which argues that we need to understand the main tenets of institutional analysis,

Table 1
Summary NPM's Toolkit and Qatar's ENE
Source: Based on UNDP (2014).

Market-Oriented Reforms
- Internal markets: the ENE created a market for education service provision and competition among independent schools (the providers).
- Quality contracts with schools
- Freedom of parents to choose schools for their children.

Deregulatory/Regulatory reform
- School Based Management
- Financial deregulation
- Personnel management deregulation
- Pedagogical deregulation

Governance Reforms
- Decentralization: designing governance structures for SBM.
- Open government through information dissemination.
- Applying quality standards: as specified in the contracts between Independent Schools and the SEC.

Competence reforms – Increasing the capacity of public servants to act
- Training programs at the SEC and school levels.
- SBM: coaching and mentoring at the school level.

Table 2
Explaining institutional selection, rejection, and survival of the ENE initiative

Point explaining the ENE trajectory	Associated Question
1- The program logic (based on new institutional economics and agency logic) 2- Sociocultural and professional norms, and the balance of power among various groups 3- Sociocultural and professional values and norms concerning the role of the state in the society and economy, the role of education in society, and what is considered a suitable approach for education management	Why the program theory did not work as expected? Why the response to problems in implementation came in the form of system-wide changes instead of dealing with problems on a case-by-case basis? What is left of the ENE reform initiative?

such as isomorphism and decoupling, with reference to power and politics, this research argues that we need to address three main questions in order to understand the trajectory of the ENE initiative. These questions address issues with the NPM logic, especially flows in the new institutional economic logic, as well as the normative and political contestation that shapes the outcomes of the process of institutionalization. Table 2 summarizes the points that need to be addressed and the associated questions.

I argue that answering these three questions will help us understand the processes of institutional selection, rejection, and survival that accompanied the ENE initiative. They will also allow us to examine the hypothesis that the new institutional attention to norms and values should be complemented with the earlier institutionalist focus on power and politics. The first question focuses on the flows within the new institutional economics logic focusing on market mechanisms, including problems related to institutional capacity to implement reforms and market-based approaches to accountability. The second question sheds light on capacity limitations related to implementing managerialist principles, as well as the role of bureaucratic and social opposition. Finally, the third question sheds light on institutional selection based on sociocultural and professional norms and values. That is, the third questions sheds light on which of the ideological streams of neoliberalism, new institutional economics versus managerialism, had a better chance of survival and continued influence on the education landscape in Qatar.

2. Reclaiming the power of institutional analysis

A widely shared perspective among comparative education scholars interprets neoinstitutionalism, especially its application in the field of education as World Society Theory (WST), as an approach to explaining the move toward a globally prescribed system of education values and structures. This approach is influenced by a narrow interpretation of neoinstitutionalist scholarship with its focus on values, norms, and culture, as well as the influence of global values through their appeal rather than coercion. This perspective, however, misses the rich history of institutionalist analysis, and ignores the earlier roots of institutionalism during the 1940s, which influenced what later came to be known as neoinstitutionalism starting the 1970s.

At its core institutional analysis addresses individual and group choices within the bounds of existing institutions (Ingram and Clay, 2000; North, 1990, 1991). It therefore transcends the rational choice theory's focus on individual agency and interest maximization. Institutional analysis has a long history, dating back to European intellectuals such as Max Weber and Emile Durkheim (Meyer and Rowan, 2006). This explains why we often see the prefix "neo" or "new" before institutionalism in much of the contemporary comparative literature (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991).

The beginnings of the resurgence of interest in institutional analysis is contested, especially when attempting to draw lines between twentieth century studies that can be categorized as "old institutionalism" versus others that belong to the neoinstitutionalist category. Such attempts are complicated by the fact that we probably have as many institutionalist scholarships as we have social science fields of research. In the field of organization theory, institutionalist scholarship from a

sociological background started to attract attention starting the late 1970s (Powell and DiMaggio, 1991).

The mid-twentieth century contributions of Selznick (1949) and associates, such as Gouldner (1954) and Dalton (1959), are often credited as foundational blocks in what came to be called "old institutionalism," with its stress on interests, power, and negotiated institutional arrangements. Neoinstitutionalist scholarship in education is often attributed to the 1970s and 1980s work of Meyer and colleagues on the selection and survival of certain institutional forms in education (Meyer and Rowan, 1978). Both old and new institutionalisms agree on defining institutions as social constraints, and institutionalization as the emergence of stable and socially integrated patterns out of unstable, loosely organized, and narrowly technical activities (Selznick, 1996). The main differences lie in identifying the roles of conflict of interest, values, and power. While neoinstitutionalism focuses on values, legitimacy, myths, and the power of shared understandings that result in organizational routines (Sleznick, 1996), old institutionalism focuses on conflict among vested interested as central to the process of institutionalization (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991).

I argue that WST applications of neoinstitutionalist scholarship focus on a narrow interpretation of the institutionalist scholarship by focusing solely on the appeal of global (read *Western*) values, while ignoring the continued influence of power and politics from old to new institutional research. The logic of power, politics, and conflict as factors shaping institutionalization, are not alien to neoinstitutionalist analysis, as WST applications might lead us to believe. In their reexamination of neoinstitutionalism in education, Meyer and Rowan (2006) note;

> "A basic assumption of institutional thinking (old or new) is that large institutional complexes such as education, and the practices they give rise to, are contingent and contested. That is, social institutions can assume a large number of different shapes and forms, some of which appeal more to a particular group of collective actors than others. The purpose of an institutional analysis is to tell us why—out of this stupendous variety of feasible forms—this or that particular one is actually "selected" and whose interests might be best served by that selected arrangement." ((Meyer and Rowan, 2006, pp. 3–4).

According to the above quote, institutional formation is contested and reflects dynamic interactions among agents with varying interests. Since interests of the competing actors play a central role in determining the institutional outcome, "bargaining, conflict, and power" should become important factors of understanding in the world of institutional analysis (Meyer and Rowan, 2006).

However, consensus-oriented approaches to explaining the development of educational norms and institutions limit the utility of institutional analysis by neglecting the process of institutionalization and emphasizing other exogenous factors such as "educational models" (Garnier and Schafer, 2006). Again, these approaches have probably been influenced by neoinstitutionalist research that concluded a significant influence for the contemporary world system, such as Meyer and Hannan's (1979) work on explaining school expansion starting the second half of the 20th century.

However, neoinstitutionalist scholarship also addressed the

influence of forces that resist the spread of global prescriptions. In their seminal analysis of the spread of universal education, even among poor countries, Boli et al. (1985) suggest that mass education has been encouraged by legitimated structural and cultural elements that promote mass education, as well as other forces that delegitimate prior structural arrangements and cultural prescriptions. They also note that certain "alternative social organizational forms" can either inhibit or encourage the spread of mass schooling. These conclusions suggest competing factors that shape the processes and outcomes of the institutionalization process.

The bias of WST applications of neoinstitutionalism even leads to misrepresenting some of its basic tenets. Neoinstitutionalist analysis asks questions and provides insights into institutional selection and survival, organizational responses to changes from above, and power dynamics shaping institutional reform (Colignon, 1997; Dacin, 1997; Meyer and Rowan, 1977). By focusing solely on the spread of modern schooling systems because they become cognitively normative, while ignoring power dynamics among competing interests, WST applications of neoinstitutionalism ignores the examination of the process of institutionalization as power and politics, as it presents the institutionalization of new values and norms as passive adoption of institutional prescriptions from the core to the periphery.

One purpose of institutional analysis in education, as developed during the 1970s and 1980s, is to explain the selection and survival of certain institutional forms (Meyer and Rowan, 2006). Neoinstitutionalism aims to understand how social expectations, and institutional values and norms, affect organizational structures, behavior, selection, and survival (Dacin, 1997). As explained above, neoinstitutionalism did not ignore power dynamics that shape the process of institutionalization (Bidwell, 2006b; Meyer and Rowan, 2006). From this perspective, institutionalization is perceived as a political process that combines values and structures. Structures, which also embody value commitments, arise and survive as long as they serve the interests of powerful elites, assuming that they are in accord with the societal core values and normative inclinations (Bidwell, 2006b; Sumner, 1906). Over time, values and practices within an organization become entrenched as staff become unwilling to depart from what they value so highly (Colignon, 1997; Selznick, 1948, 1949, 1957). According to Colignon (1997), "interests, agency, conflict and domination define an inherent – but neglected – route to institutionalization."

Neoinstitutionalists argue that educational organizations are held together by shared beliefs and values rather than concerns for technical efficiency (Meyer and Rowan, 2006). They are loosely coupled because their structures were derived more from their attempt to maintain their legitimacy in society than from demands for technical efficiency, and because they cannot be held together by tight relations extending from top to bottom (Hasse and Krücken, 2014; Meyer and Rowan, 2006, 1978, 1987; Rowan, 2006; Weick, 1976). Structural similarities among schools reflect the organizational drive to conform to widely-held social "myths" about "good schooling" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Rowan, 2006).

The logic of decoupling has therefore acquired special attention in the institutionalist literature, both old and new. This logic reflects the ability of schools to preserve their teaching core behind a façade of conformity to institutional structures (Hallett, 2010; Hasse and Krücken, 2014; Meyer and Rowan, 2006, 1977, 1987; Oplatka, 2004; Rowan, 2006).

Legitimacy is derived from organizations' drive to create and maintain a fit with their social and institutional environments (Meyer and Rowan, 2006). Although organization theory predicts that loosely coupled organizations will be unstable, stability is actually maintained through the drive toward organizational conformity to institutionalized myths. In such institutionalized organizations, legitimacy, rather than technical efficiency, is the main constraint on behavior (March and Olsen, 1976; Meyer and Rowan, 2006, 1977, 1987). Therefore, what seems to be an "organized anarchy" (Boonstra, 2004) is actually

organized by institutionalized myths about education and schooling (Meyer and Rowan, 2006).

Arguably, this drive for conformity is stronger at an organization's founding, given the concerns about gaining legitimacy and survival (Dacin, 1997). The drive to maintain this fit, even at the cost of technical efficiency, creates what institutionalists call isomorphism. According to this logic, both new and existing organizations will adopt structures and behaviors that are defined by social expectations and what are understood to be legitimate practices (Dacin, 1997). This is particularly true in the field of education, as a societal sector based on the society's core values, and educational organizations as expressing those values, partly in order to gain and maintain legitimacy (Hasse and Krücken, 2014). Neoinstitutionalists focus on how people construct meaning within institutionalized settings. From this perspective, globalized conceptions of schooling could come into conflict with local conceptions and traditions (Ramirez, 2006).

Finally, a related theme in neoinstitutionalism is that of economic exchanges. This perspective views education as a field where business and market forces are active, and where institutional change is a struggle guided by economic interests over favorable institutional arrangements. This struggle takes place within historical, cultural, and institutional configurations (Meyer and Rowan, 2006; Rowan, 2006). Therefore, the main actors include not only the state and the professions but also such actors as firms, interest groups, and families; and both markets and politics are included as forces in institutional environments. In the field of education, the struggle is over the "technical core" of schools. Important organizational actors include organizations directly providing educational services and those that interact with, or attempt to govern, them (Rowan, 2006). These include various consultants, publishing firms, and tutoring organizations in direct or indirect economic relations with the government and/or students and their parents.

Based on the above review, I argue that the main tenets of neoinstitutionalism has, and should, build on the insights of "old institutionalism" starting the 1940s, with its focus on power and interests. Building blocks of institutional analysis such as decoupling, isomorphism, and the drive to build and maintain legitimacy should be examined with a focus on power and politics. Institutional analysis directs attention to the fact that resistance to global prescriptions for reform, or top-down reforms, stems from culture and values as well as power and politics (Wiseman et al., 2014); this reflects the perception of institutionalization as a political process (Bidwell, 2006a) – a perspective often missed by WST applications of institutional analysis.

One reflection of WST's misrepresentation of some of neoinstitutionalism's basic tenets is the use of the concept "isomorphism," which is sometimes represented as a desired state, or a model that all states should share or adopt. As such, comparative education research utilizing WST applications of neoinstitutionalism has largely ignored the power dynamics shaping the selection and survival of educational structures and norms, historical and cultural processes, state-society relations, as well as the role of individual and collective agency (Astiz, 2006; Wiseman et al., 2014). Furthermore, and based on legitimacy considerations, both old and new organizations will adopt structures and behaviors that are defined by social expectations and what are understood to be legitimate practices (Dacin, 1997).

Similarly, decoupling should be perceived within the context of individual and/or collective agency response to institutional prescriptions from above within existing institutional settings and constraints. As such, decoupling could be an individual and/or collective response to limited resources and perceived gap between local and global norms and values. Similarly, isomorphism could be perceived as a dynamic process that pulls organizations into either conformity with global norms prescribed by elite and global agents, or societal and institutional norms with roots in the society's history and values system.

This perspective is arguably more in line with some empirical evidence regarding the dynamics of institutional development in the field

of education. Research on international policy transfer in education found that the pursuit of neoliberal models borrowed from international donors clashed at times with local norms and cultural heritage, leading to either reinforcing existing practices or to modifying and locally reinterpreting the international prescriptions (Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe, 2004, 2006). One lesson from this research is that interactions between global economic and cultural forces and local contexts should not be restricted to one-sided analyses of the influence of global institutional prescriptions that shape institutional formation in the periphery. It also challenges the rather deterministic perspective of WST applications of institutional analysis in education, which perceives formative influences on global education from international organizations, such as the World Bank, as well as bilateral donor agencies and international consultants headquartered in Western countries, such as RAND Corporation (Clayton, 1998).

Similarly, research on schools' establishment of interactions and partnerships with the private sector found that individual and group agency, as well as institutional capacity, play central roles in determining institutional outcomes (Bennett and Thompson, 2011). The attitudes and beliefs of non-state actors, including teachers, may facilitate or hinder the implementation of new knowledge and policy directives (Coburn, 2005).

Therefore, instead of discussing harmonization of educational practices and institutionalization based on isomorphic trends with global logics of education because of the normative appeal of these logics, I argue that a more realistic perspective is to think about national educational developments in terms of dynamic interactions between global and local logics, practices, and elite experiences. In this sense, the discussion of institutionalization should transcend the focus on whether certain institutional models receive local acceptance or rejection toward a discussion of selection. Therefore, the balance of influence between global and local norms and prescriptions can pull the new institutions into opposing directions. Political and bureaucratic elites do not agree about the appeal of global prescriptions, and their choices are bound not only by the legal frameworks establishing the new institutions, but also by their normative institutional heritage, their societal, cultural, and environmental context, as well as perceptions of their organizational capacities.

In this paper, I use four pillars of institutional analysis within a change context where there is an attempt to replace an established institutional framework from above. These pillare are: (1) decoupling, (2) cultural and institutional norms, (3) isomorphism, and (4) the broader institutionalist context. Given the lack of information on economic exchanges, as well as a lack of clarity on public policy decision-making in Qatar, I exclude "economic exchanges" from this discussion.

In the Qatari situation, the globalized elites, including the Emir's wife Sheikha Moza, found the globally prescribed norms and rules such as school decentralization and standards-based education, to be appealing. However, conflict and dynamic interactions between these elites and other agents in the bureaucracy and society are more likely to shape the institutional outcomes of setting institutional change from above. That is, the factors determining the final outcome of institutionalization in this scenario are likely to be the power basis of the different agents, the ability of the imported prescriptions to respond to existing problems, the seriousness of unexpected consequences stemming from implementing new institutional prescriptions from the society's perspective, and the factors shaping response to these consequences.

3. Design and implementation of Qatar's ENE

3.1. The original design

Based on the Qatari leadership's invitation, RAND presented three options for reform: (1) reforming the existing MoE system, (2) creating a system of charter schools (called Independent Schools), or (3) education privatization. The Qatari leadership preferred the second option, while considering the privatization of education in the long-term (Brewer, 2017; Brewer and Goldman, 2010).

The governance structure of the ENE reflects what the World Bank (2007a, 2009) calls a Quality Contracts Instructional Vision. This vision favors school decentralization and market forces. Educational quality assurance takes place through the state's role in granting and revoking school operating licenses based on established standards, and disseminating information for informed parental choice. The state establishes minimum operating requirements and finances schools on a per-student basis. Market forces guarantee the survival of "good schools" that succeed in attracting enough students, while driving out "bad schools" that fail to do so. On the other hand, schools have discretion over instruction and student assessment.

Independent schools were at the core of the ENE initiative. These schools were privately operated and publicly financed, similar to charter schools. Although they were supposed to be created through private initiatives, Independent schools were mostly public schools that had converted to independent status (Alkhater, 2016). This conversion started in 2004, and the transformation was complete by 2011. In 2012, the SEC introduced school vouchers, which allow Qatari students to enroll in any of the private schools that participate in the program (Alkhater, 2016).

Independent schools were designed to be autonomous entities run by an operator selected through a tendering process (Alkhater, 2016). In the original design, this operator could be of any nationality. A school principal/director, a position that later merged with that of the operator, was responsible for running the day-to-day operations of the school, and would be assisted by an academic vice-principal and an administrative and financial vice-principal (Nasser, 2017).

Schools had autonomy over pedagogical, financial, and personnel matters. In terms of pedagogy, schools were responsible for designing their instructional approach and selecting learning materials that meet the standards. Schools also had wide freedom to make financial decisions, select their own teachers, and make other personnel decisions including hiring and firing decisions (Nasser, 2017).

The SEC was created in 2002 as the entity responsible for the ENE initiative (Brewer et al., 2007; Brewer and Goldman, 2010). Until 2009, the MoE and SEC were the two entities responsible for K-12 education in Qatar: the former for public and private schools and the latter for independent schools. Emiri Decree 14/2009 merged the two institutions, and the MoE came under the auspices of the SEC. The Minister of Education and Higher Education became the Secretary General of the SEC, and MoE employees came under the administrative supervision of the SEC (Abdel-Moneim, 2015).

The SEC included two main institutions responsible for policy setting and oversight: the Education Institute and Evaluation Institute, respectively. The Education Institute was responsible for setting standards for schools, teachers, and school leaders, as well as setting curricular standards for grades 1–12 in Arabic, English, Math, and Science. It was also responsible for contracting with and supporting new Independent Schools, allocating resources to them, and performing periodic audits. The Education Institute recruited teachers from Qatar and abroad, and was responsible for developing training programs for them. The Evaluation Institute performed the main tasks of evaluating students and schools (Brewer et al., 2007). Schools were held accountable through audits, testing, and systematic real data collection benchmarked to international standards, although standardization and independence are likely to work in opposite directions (DeAngelis and Burke, 2017).

The Qatar National Professional Standards for School Teachers and Leaders (QNPSTSL), applied in the 2007–2008 academic year, described the knowledge and skills needed from school leaders and teachers, and provided a framework for the tasks and professional development they need in order to advance throughout their careers (Romanowski and Amatullah, 2014). The National Curricular Standards

for Arabic, English, Math, and Science were based on international benchmarks, and teachers had to develop curricula that align with these standards (Nasser et al., 2014).

In order to help teachers and school administrators meet professional standards and cope with the heightened demands of the system, the government contracted several School Support Organizations (SSOs) to assist in various tasks, including developing standards, registration, and licensing for teachers and administrators, and teacher training (Romanowski and Amatullah, 2014).

Student testing was administered by the SEC as well as by individual schools, in addition to participation in international standardized exams, mainly the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). The Evaluation Institute spearheaded the efforts to create the Qatar Student Assessment System (QSAS) as an information tool to allow monitoring school quality and providing data on student performance for teachers, school administrators, and policy-makers. The Evaluation Institute administered the Qatar Comprehensive Educational Assessment (QCEA) as an end-of-year exam to all students in grades 1–12. The 2004 QCEA was first administered before the standards were introduced in 2005, and was meant to provide baseline data for evaluating the reform (Brewer et al., 2007). Individual schools administered internal assessments, known as the Student Continuous Assessment (Alkhater, 2016).

The Evaluation Institute performed periodic compliance reviews and oversaw the evaluation of all schools in Qatar. The Evaluation Institute also produced "School Report Cards" using data from the Qatar National Education Data System (QNEDS), which also includes QCEA data, as well as Terminal School Reviews (TSRs) focusing on specific areas such as teaching and learning (Abdel-Moneim, 2015; Brewer et al., 2007).

It is important to note that Independent Schools had roots in the Qatari schooling experience. "Scientific schools" had existed in Qatar since 1999 and enjoyed a degree of independence from the MoE (Zellman et al., 2009). They were selective in student admissions, provided a superior educational experience, and did not have to follow the Qatari curriculum in science and mathematics, which were taught in English (Baker and Kanan, 2005).

3.2. Trajectories in implementation/changes in the program

The ENE witnessed significant changes that eventually reversed the original independence granted Independent Schools by curtailing their financial, pedagogical, and personnel decision-making authorities.

3.2.1. Financial independence

Independent schools were designed as Limited Liability Corporations with the right to keep profits. This, however, changed in 2005–2006 when, only one year after the initiative was implemented, Independent Schools were denied the right to keep profits (Alkhater, 2016). Furthermore, surpluses were placed in holding accounts, and caps were established on operator salaries. The SEC also capped start-up funds and suspended grant funding (Guarino et al., 2009). Over time, the SEC's Office of Financial Administration gained control over almost all budgetary decisions of schools (Abdel-Moneim, 2015).

3.2.2. Pedagogical independence

The ENE initially used English as the language of instruction. In September 2011, Independent Schools shifted to a bilingual approach for teaching math and science (Romanowski et al., 2013). The SEC started to issue a list of sources that teachers could use to design their curricula. The SEC even started issuing weekly teaching schedules to schools (Alkhater, 2016).

3.2.3. Personnel management independence

Originally, school operators could hire teachers from any

educational background, with or without pedagogical training, and from any nationality. In 2005, the SEC set minimum salaries for Qataris and minimum percentage targets for Qatari teachers (Zellman et al., 2009).

In the original ENE design, the school leadership was composed of a school operator and a principal. The operator was supposed to be the educational entrepreneur who presents a distinguished approach to schooling and sign a contract with the government based on this proposal. The principal was the person responsible for the daily operations of the school, and was supposed to have pedagogical training, especially if the operator was not an educator (Zellman et al., 2009). In 2006, the SEC stipulated that all school operators have to be Qatari, be qualified educators, and serve as the school's principal (El-Kheleify, 2012).

In summary, it became clear over time that Independent Schools, which formed the core of the ENE initiative, had ceased to be independent. Independent schools had to consult the SEC's office of Human Resources before making hiring decisions, and consult the Financial Administration before making most budgetary decisions. Given the intrusion of the Education Institute in almost all spheres related to teaching, it became impossible to speak of "autonomy" for Independent Schools (Abdel-Moneim, 2015).

4. Methodology

The analysis is based on 16 in-depth interviews, with interviewees from three groups: (1) the MoE, SEC, and related organizations, (2) independent scholars, and (3) the RAND team who developed the original design of the ENE. The interviews were conducted between March and June 2017.

I selected interviewees for the first group, the MoE and related organizations, using a snowballing technique, starting with officials in leadership positions who suggested other participants from different levels and offices in the Ministry, culminating in a sample of eight participants.

The second group represents independent scholars and intellectuals. Participants from this group mostly came from QU's School of Education and WISE. I selected members of this group based on their research interests, reflected through academic and/or newspapers publications that focused on the ENE. I also consciously selected members who represent supporting and opposing positions toward the initiative. This group includes six interviewees.

Regarding the RAND group, I created a list of names based on the authors of the main RAND Qatar publications, and contacted researchers with a continuing focus on education on the Middle East. I was only able to conduct two formal interviews with this group. Other members considered their work on Qatar's ENE a distant past.

The interviews were semi-structured. Most were conducted in Arabic. I pre-tested the interview protocol in both English and Arabic.

All interviews were one-on-one, with only two exceptions, both of officials from the MoE. One interview included three participants, and the other two participants. In both cases, the original interviewee invited subordinates, who also happened to work in the top echelon of the Ministry, to join.

I coded the responses based on the framework derived from the literature review on institutionalism. I also allowed for coding up through creating categories based on the interviewees' responses.

5. Review of the interviews' results

This section presents the interviews' results. Under each sub-section, I pose relevant questions and summarize the areas of agreement and disagreement.

5.1. Decoupling

Institutional analysis uses the term "decoupling" to refer to the ability of organizations to maintain control over their technical core while creating a façade of institutional conformity. The relevant questions are:

1) Did schools improve their quality of teaching following the implementation of the ENE? Why or why not?
2) How can we interpret low students' outcomes after implementing the ENE?

Regarding the quality of teaching, there was almost unanimous agreement among the interviewees that the quality of teaching had improved. Student-centered and active learning, problem-solving, teamwork, extracurricular activities, competition, critical thinking, and differentiated learning became established practices. Compared to teaching in MoE schools before the initiative, this was a clear improvement.

However, a main trend among the interviewees argued that the improvements in teaching have been prevalent mainly in the earlier cohorts of Independent Schools. As more schools started to join, the teaching quality did not improve, and problems with accountability started to surface. The question here becomes: what explains the variation in students' performance across schools, an observation noted in several interviews? The answers focused on one main interpretation: capacity and the challenge of scaling up.

5.1.1. Capacity and the challenge of scaling up

Schools that already had qualified teachers and leadership were able to prepare better curricula, improve teaching methods, and make better use of SSOs and other training opportunities. This also explains why, according to the majority of interviewees, the first cohort of Independent Schools performed better than schools that converted to independent status later on. The first Independent Schools included the scientific complexes, which were already more selective and enjoyed leadership that was more committed. As new schools started to join the initiative, the lack of the needed leadership and capacity started to surface. According to a member of the RAND Qatar team:

"The first cohort of school leaders were part of the reform. They attended meetings, and were very involved. I believe the first cohort had knowledge and understanding [of the initiative]. We had their buy-in." (Personal Interview).

The above statement reflects the importance of buy-in by the new school operators, which began to wane as more schools started to join the initiative. Another explanation for the better performance among Cohort I schools, as cited in a few interviews, is the limited ability to attract energetic operators. Two issues were cited as explanations for this situation. The first concerns the supply of such operators, especially after the initial enthusiasm started to wane. According to a RAND team member:

"It was not that hard to find the first 15–20 enthusiastic school leaders who really wanted to start a school. I remember putting an ad in the paper saying we would like to run a school. And we had an auditorium full of people, like 150 people." (Personal Interview).

The above quote reflects the enthusiasm that accompanied the early stages of implementation, which started to wane later on, leading to a scarcity of potential energetic operators. The second cited reason for the subsequent lack of energetic operators was the curtailing of operators' independence. Restrictions included the requirement that all operators be Qatari and that the operator also act as the school principal. According to a former MoE officer and school operator, this requirement discouraged potential school operators who had ambitious visions for schooling, but were not necessarily educators.

A number of interviewees also noted the lack of a sufficient supply of teachers prepared to do the job. Four main arguments surfaced as explanations for this limitation. Firstly, Qatari teachers, especially women, suffered from excessive workload, which created conflict between work and family obligations. The extra burden on teachers included the new requirements to develop curricula, teach in English in the early stages of the initiative, and attend training programs. Furthermore, there was the sense of insecurity, and sometimes "humiliation" according to one interviewee, that resulted from the school operator gaining control over personnel matters. These matters include hiring, firing, promotion, and taking disciplinary action. According to a WISE researcher, this was alien to Qatari teachers, who were only accustomed to the central government controlling these matters. As a result, many teachers quit the profession.

Secondly, the College of Education at QU had suspended most of its programs and research activities for almost 10 years, between 2000 and 2010. This further complicated the teacher supply problem.

Thirdly, the reliance on teachers from other Arab countries such as Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Palestine increased. Although Qatar has relied on foreign teachers for quite some time prior to the initiative, a common perspective among Qatari interviewees was that the initiative tilted the balance in a way that favored non-Qatari over Qatari teachers[2].

Non-Qatari Arab teachers required training not only in standards, but also in understanding the culture of the students, especially boys, who often lacked motivation and sometimes even respect for foreign teachers (Knight et al., 2011). Two interviewees noted that most foreign teachers would come on 3-year contracts. When these teachers left after their contracts expired, the training they received in teaching and curricular standards would essentially become a wasted investment.

Institutional prescriptions regarding the definition of "legitimate" employment also matter. A majority of interviewees mentioned the extra burdens on teachers because of the initiative. Especially for female teachers, the increased workload was unacceptable. A WISE scholar noted that "Qatari female teachers found that they had to teach from 7am to 1 pm, and then go to training courses from 1 pm to 4 pm, in addition to preparing for classes and grading assignments." A number of them has therefore preferred to resign. A professor at QU argued that these extra burdens led to a number of social problems such as increased cases of divorce. She said, "Schools should have distributed the daily schedule of teachers in a way that fits training within their time at school… Instead, the new requirements consumed teachers' times from 6am until midnight, as if the school owned them!"

Fourthly, most training was conducted on-the-job, which did not allow teachers the necessary time to understand the philosophy of the program, and then implement its bits-and-pieces in their classroom teaching. With the low supply, increased burdens, and lack of the necessary training, teacher accountability started to shift toward what an interviewee from the MoE called "accountability to the test" (Personal Interview). This interviewee used this term to show that scores on exams became more important than teaching and learning – an observation found elsewhere in systems where students' performance on standardized exams become the main source for holding teachers accountable (Abdel-Moneim, 2015; Meier and O'Toole, 2006).

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[2] Gender segregation in schools, cultural norms, and labor market characteristics create differences between male and female teachers' markets. Female students have to have female teachers, while male students can have female or male teachers up to grade 4, when only male teachers can teach to boys (Stasz et al., 2007). However, male Qataris generally do not find the teaching job appealing, as they have better opportunities and lucrative salaries in the public sector. As such, there is a higher number of non-Qatari male teachers, compared to a more balanced distribution between Qatari and non-Qatari female teachers in public schools (Guarino et al., 2009).

In many cases, classroom teaching was decoupled from the institutional provisions set by the ENE initiative, including the focus on skills, critical thinking, and student-centered learning. This could explain the mixed research results regarding classroom teaching following the implementation of the ENE (Knight et al., 2011; Romanowski and Amatullah, 2014). A former school operator noted that a mother complained in a radio program that her son got 100 % in his final exams "although he did not understand anything." He recalled her saying, "Do you think we are happy? No, they're fooling us." Such indicators of decoupling of form from practice could explain why, despite some overall improvements in terms of teaching methods and pedagogical approaches, Independent Schools continued to lag behind private schools in international standardized exams (Cheema, 2015). According to an article by journalist and writer Faysal Al-Marzouky, cheating was systematic and orchestrated by teachers and administrators in some independent schools. Al-Marzouki mentioned a case when one school administrator directed her students to copy exam answers from a form she had, another case when one of the school administrators wrote the answers on the board, and a third case when answer papers were presented although the students never attended the exam (Al-Marzouki, 2009).

In addition to inflated grades, a number of instances showed how the Qatari school bureaucracies and teachers implemented tactics not to improve the performance of students, but to improve how their performance is measured according to the new accountability system based on students' scores (Abdel-Moneim, 2015). One interesting observation is that the scores of grades 4–11 students on the 2010/11 Student Continuous Assessments, conducted internally by Independent Schools, showed that students' performance was extremely high, while the national QCEA showed that only 5 % of the students met the national standards in mathematics, 12.3 % met the national standards in science, and 15.7 and 17.9 % met the national standards in Arabic and English respectively. This discrepancy suggests that school bureaucracies could have been manipulating scores produced internally to portray a better image of their performance. The failure rates increased significantly when the Evaluation Institute decided that national assessment become mandatory and weighted 30 % of the students' overall grades. The published failure rate in 2011/12 was 21.7 % (Alkhater, 2016).

One of the most embarrassing examples are cases of mass cheating in exams where teachers actively took part (Al-Marzouki, 2009). This is arguably a result not just of the new accountability system, but also a result of capacity limitations and challenges that school administrators and teachers faced because of abrupt policy changes by the SEC (Romanowski et al., 2013).

In summary, schools that were in the best position to make the most use out of the training and support provided by the SEC were those that already had the capacity to do so. As the speed of converting MoE schools to Independent Schools escalated, the lack of capacity started to surface. The lack of qualified teachers led to further problems, including a lack of cultural sensitivity among Arab teachers and teaching to the test.

Despite variations among schools and the continuing lag of public schools behind private schools in terms of student performance, it is possible to conclude that instructional strategies consistent with the purposes of the ENE took root in Qatari schools. A professor at QU noted:

"If you ask me now [whether] the school system improved, I will say yes. The schools use different teaching strategies, they are using different language, educational language that was never used before … I used to give workshops on critical thinking and it was like cutting edge. If I gave that now, they would probably laugh at me. Most of them would say 'we already know this'." (Personal Interview).

5.2. Cultural and institutional norms

Qatar's education reform started within a "pre-existing" system of institutions, norms, and values that defined legitimate schooling. The interviews showed a number of clear contradictions between the institutional structures set by the initiative on the one hand, and the social and institutional norms on the other.

Power and politics played a central role when it came to defining the problems that resulted during implementation, the sources of these problems, and approaches to dealing with them. As will be clear in this section, two groups with clearly opposing perceptions and power bases emerged: the first group is composed of international consultants and scholars. The second includes MoE bureaucrats and Qatari academics. The first group argued that the program was misrepresented in the media and public discourse as a foreign plot. The second group accused international consultants, mainly the RAND Corporation, of designing and swiftly implementing an education strategy that was alien to society and culture.

The balance of power favored the second group of Qatari bureaucrats and academics as they have more stable societal roots. A RAND team member discussed this divergence between international and local staff working on the initiative, and complained that the initiative failed to acquire the buy-in of the mid-level bureaucracy, who clearly has more power than the thin layer of pro-reform Qataris heading the newly created institutions. In his own words:

"There were multiple constituencies and sometimes they were battling each other. On one side was the elite – the western educated and more liberal elite – who wanted to change the country versus the rest. Sheikha Moza and Dr. Shiekha Al-Misnad (former President of QU) symbolized this group… they were quite radical, visionary, and significantly away from the majority of the population… On the other hand was clearly the bureaucracy versus the new reformers. Obviously, the bureaucracy was huge. One of the interesting observations is the fact that in a country like Qatar, every family had someone who worked in the MoE. So any change looked like it might threaten job security; and the situation in the ministry affected every family." (Personal Interview).

Those who opposed the initiative had more stable roots in the Qatari education sector. RAND team members and other consultants, by definition, moved around more frequently. While it is natural for consultants to perform their jobs and leave, the scale of the policy change that resulted from the ENE probably needed more support of the initial designers who collaborated directly with the Qatari political and bureaucratic "globalized" elites, such as Sheikha Moza and Sheikha Al-Misnad. Despite the presence of a relatively large number of RAND staff in the US and Qatar to support the initiative, the initial designers moved on. Judging by curriculum vitae published online, many of the original RAND team members who designed the Qatar initiative left the country shortly after implementation started[3].

A related problem that faced the reformers, especially the international consultants, is the inability to understand the Qatari political system and nature of decision-making. Consultants coming from western democracies found it difficult to understand the politics conducted in informal settings such as the *majlis* (a space in Qatari homes for discussing public matters). These consultants found it difficult to

[3] For example, based on published online CVs, Dominic Brewer, the lead RAND consultant on Qatar's initiative, moved to the University of Southern California in 2005. Louay Constant was a Senior Policy Researcher in RAND Qatar only until 2007. Dominic Brewer's CV is available through New York University's website at: https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/uploads/008/096/Dominic%20James%20Brewer%20CV_June%202014.pdf. Louay Constant's CV is available through RAND Corporation's website at: https://www.rand.org/about/people/c/constant_louay.html.

understand and respond to debates conducted in such informal settings in order to sell their reforms. According to a RAND team member;

"There is no formal system. There are lots of dialogue on the social scene, but there is no way to aggregate it. There were no votes to win in a legislature, and we failed to sell the reform" (Personal Interview).

In other words, unlike in the US system where consultants would be invited to a Congressional Hearing to discuss policy, the RAND team found no way to sell the reform beyond the top echelon of western educated and reform oriented elites in the newly created SEC. This explains why a RAND team member, in hindsight, described the prevailing assumptions at the beginning of implementing the initiative as "naïve."

In discussing the balance of power between support and opposition groups, it is important to keep the international and regional context in mind. The ENE initiative started after the 2001 September attacks in the US, a period of time when education reform in the Middle East acquired special attention as an avenue for countering terrorism. This strengthened the position of reformers in the face of conservative forces in the region. For example, a Saudi daily newspaper criticized the ENE as originating from a "Jewish foundation," in reference to RAND Corporation. Similar accusations took place in the Kuwaiti parliament (Abdel-Moneim, 2015). However, at the time, the international context was supportive of reform, and the society was thrilled by the promises of better education and the regional leadership position that Qatar would gain because of these reforms.

Popular uprisings that later came to be known as the "Arab Spring" started in Tunisia in late 2010, followed by similar uprisings in Egypt, Libya, Syria, and Yemen, and more recently in Sudan and Algeria, as well as in other regional countries on a smaller scale. These uprisings led to ousting or seriously challenging long-standing dictators. In this environment, concerns with internal stability arguably gained priority, and pleasing the conservative sentiments of the population has therefore become prominent. This could explain the waning support for the program among the political elites. It could also explain why RAND Corporation became the scapegoat for all the reform ills as an international agent of change that did not suit the internal context.

In 2013, a new Minister of Education and school leaders were appointed, and a school voucher system was introduced in 2012 (Alkhater, 2016). While the voucher system was one of the options originally presented by RAND in 2001 as an approach to education privatization, it is possible to argue that in 2012 the voucher system was an alternative to Independent Schools, which had started to resemble the public schools they came to replace as they give more freedom to parents to choose either the traditional system, represented by public schools, or a more "liberal" system, represented by private Schools.

In the remaining part of this section, I discuss the contradictions between the international consultants and western oriented reformers on one hand, and bureaucratic and societal groups on the other. I organize the discussion under the following headlines:

5.2.1. Educational values versus market ideals

According to a RAND team member, the market mechanisms envisioned in the original ENE design never materialized. She noted that "choice as a concept was never implemented." Parents had limited ability to choose schools for their children given the limited number of schools, and the cap on the number of students per school. School report cards were not distributed to parents, and were therefore of limited use to inform their choice.

On the other hand, a number of MoE interviewees cited concerns they had about the dominance of market values, and these concerns were among the main reasons behind revoking much of the authorities that had been granted to Independent Schools. For example, one interviewee from the MoE argued: "Requiring the operator to have a

degree in education and that the operator is also the principal – the purpose is to prevent the school from becoming a business."

A number of interviews reflected a view that equates private sector ideals with the search for personal gain even at public cost. An MoE official noted;

"They [the reform initiative] started with business people and not educators, and this caused mistakes… Non-Qataris, non-educators, and business people joined [the initiative], and their primary goal was profit. Budgets were invested in alternative causes. At other times, they did not have a clear academic vision." (Personal Interview).

The fear that market values could substitute the profit motive for the public good also clearly influenced positions toward SSOs, which were abolished only 18 months after implementing the initiative. A RAND team member noted; "it was partly: 'we don't need these foreigners and their expertise; we are spending too much money on these organizations.' There is an element of pride here." There were fears that these organizations are only seeking money, and concerns mounted that they could represent opportunities for corruption, especially given that the school operator originally had the right to determine the school's training needs.

Skepticism about market ideals was prevalent among the MoE bureaucrats who continued to lead the initiative after the merger between the MoE and SEC. A former MoE official and school operator said: "The deep state, and the deep Ministry, did not believe in the initiative."

It is also possible to note a sense of superiority among public servants that was embedded in educational institutions. The SEC, and other Supreme Councils such as the Supreme Council for Health, were created to lead reforms in their respective fields, as traditional government ministries were perceived as too rigid. However, with cases of corruption and mismanagement surfacing in the media and the rise of public opposition, the traditional form of government organizations enjoyed a legitimacy boost. According to a researcher at WISE;

"[W]hen the idea of supreme councils emerged in the early 2000s, the main objective of these councils was to bypass the bureaucracy of the government and have the independence and flexibility to make decisions… Supreme councils report directly to the head of state, so the Council of Ministers and the Prime Minister are not involved. This created some tension for a few years. Initially, supreme councils won the game and managed the reform of education, health, etc. Later, the traditional government model was deemed more stable and less controversial, especially after the strong opposition from the public to the education reform and the perceived chaos of following the councils' model." (Personal Interview).

An important dimension of the contestation between global reformers and the state bureaucracies and national families, took place in the media, mainly over defining the sources of implementation problems and how to address them. Interviewees from the RAND Corporation expressed, with some bitterness, how the media misrepresented the initiative in ways that distorted its intentions and approach to reform. For example, a RAND team member said that the original financial rewards for school operators who succeed in attracting the best students and improving their schools were never implemented; "Nobody from Cohort I received a penny." However, she noted that "the media and public were outrageous about allowing school operators to make profits, and they claimed that school operators were dealers who gained millions from the initiative." On the other hand, most interviewees in the MoE endorsed the perspective that the main winners from the design of the ENE were the "international consultants and corporations from all over the world who flocked the country to benefit from education reform" (Personal Interview).

One organization that was repeatedly mentioned in a number of interviews without even directly asking about it is the MoE's Schools Direction Administration. A majority of the interviewees from the MoE

and QU expressed regret at the downsizing of this administration during the reform, arguing that it used to provide valuable support and direction to teachers. Subject coordinators at Independent Schools failed to provide the necessary guidance and accountability mechanisms. All interviewees who spoke about this organization welcomed its return.

5.2.2. Sociocultural norms about the role of education

One popular narrative among those who opposed the ENE initiative argues that it is foreign to society, like "a penguin in the desert," as described by former President of QU Abdullah Al-Kubeissy (Al-Kubeissy, 2008). The majority of interviewees noted the contradictions between the program and the popular prescriptions for the social role of education. A smaller number argued that the media exaggerated these contradictions. The first group was mostly Qatari. The second was mainly foreigners and technical/consultants.

The second group of researchers and consultants argued that the media exaggerated the role played by foreign consultants, created an "anti-Western view," and neglected the fact that the Qatari leadership chose to establish the Independent Schools from among the options proposed by RAND. There was also the argument that the media made up allegations regarding the effects of the program on religion, history, and culture. As mentioned above, the failure of communications on the part of the ENE, the argument goes, led to raising public opposition.

On the other hand, concerns that the program came to dilute the Islamic and Arab culture of the country seemed real for a group of respondents. They cited the use of English as the language of instruction at the beginning of implementation; as well as curricular content and standards that did not cover religion, Arabic, and social studies classes, leaving the teaching of these classes "at the whims of the school operator" (Personal Interview). As noted earlier, a widespread perception among Qataris blamed the ENE for the increase in foreign teachers and the loss of jobs in the teaching profession among Qataris, especially Qatari women (Alkhater, 2016).

Former QU President Abdullah Al-Kubeissy, who participated in the earlier stages of designing the ENE, compiled a book that includes his critique of the ENE, the SEC response to this critique, and various commentaries from a number of Qatari scholars and intellectuals (Al-Kubeissy, 2008). The critiques of the initiative ranged from issues of cultural misfit, to corruption in the allocation of contracts to Independent Schools, to conspiracy theorizing about a foreign plan to dilute the Arabic and Islamic identity of the new generations. According to a Professor at QU:

> "If you look at the complaints that came out – we are losing our Arabic identity, kids are not learning enough about Islam, excessive control over us, those overbearing teachers – these are legitimate complaints. If you remove these out, I think overall the reform would be accepted." (Personal Interview).

Although establishing causality between public discourse and policy change is difficult given the rather non-transparent character of policy decision-making in Qatar, it is still possible to see a link between this discourse and the decisions to curtail many aspects of the ENE. The outrage expressed in a number of media outlets against the initiative and its leadership is a practice that is considered rare in Qatar (Alkhater, 2016), and is therefore likely to have attracted attention from the political leadership. According to an MoE official, "Sheikha Moza used to represent the Qataris in the SEC. She used to listen to Qataris and implement what they wanted." Other interviewees mentioned the attention that the Emir and Sheikha Moza have given to public discourse and the social media.

5.3. Isomorphism

Isomorphism is another sphere where the balance of political power and considerations of legitimacy play a role in organizational selection

and survival. Whether norms and practices would converge toward a global or local direction depends to a good deal on individual and collective agency championing different perspectives.

A trend within the institutionalist literature in education discusses isomorphism in terms of schools and school systems, which were originally designed to present diverse schooling options, moving toward a similar model that reflects what society understands as good schooling.

A number of interviewees noted that the Qatari K-12 education market did not have the variety of schooling options that had been expected at the beginning of the initiative. The question here is: Why has the goal of creating variety in schooling options never materialized?

Specialized schools existed in Qatar before the creation of the SEC. For example, Qatar Technical School has existed since 1998, when it was called the Independent Secondary School of Industrial Technology (SSIT). It was then transformed to independent school status in 2007, when the SEC granted Qatar Petroleum its operating license (Supreme Education Council, 2007a, 2007b). The SEC also opened new specialized schools, such as the Banking Studies and Business Administration Independent School (QBSBAS), which opened its doors in 2015-16, in cooperation with the Qatar Central Bank (Qatar Central Bank, 2014; Supreme Education Council, 2015).

In explaining the absence of school variety following the implementation of the initiative, interviewees' responses revolved around four main explanations: (1) the limitations of the principal-agent logic, (2) tight coupling, (3) educational values, and (4) capacity.

(1) Limitations of the Principal-Agent Logic

According to the principal-agent logic, SBM would bring schools closer to their beneficiaries; that is, parents and students, which will therefore improve accountability and responsiveness. Competition among schools and continuous testing and auditing are also important avenues for accountability.

The newly established mechanisms, however, could not fill the vacuum that resulted from curtailing centralized institutions that guaranteed financial and administrative control. A majority of interviewees noted cases of financial and administrative mismanagement by school operators following the implementation of the initiative because they misused or misunderstood the decentralized authority they gained. A number of interviewees argued that some school operators dealt with the schools as if they were "an inheritance," or private property. Manipulating financial resources to achieve personal gains and hiring family members and friends to leadership positions in schools were among the often-cited examples.

While few interviewees argued that attempts were made to engage parents in the design process, a larger percentage agreed that parents played a limited role in monitoring schools. Given this situation, the leadership of the SEC felt pressure to improve its financial and administrative accountability. Centralized control was the most attractive avenue, given the history of centralization under the MoE. A RAND team member described the process of recentralization as "an institutional instinct to control." A Professor at QU described it as an institutional response to uncertainty and capacity limitations;

> "You had this system where principals adapted the best they could but I don't think they had the skills needed.... Anytime you are overwhelmed, anything you get anxiety about, what do you do? You retreat to what you know best." (Personal Interview).

It is therefore possible to conclude that the move back to centralization represented an institutional response to uncertainty. As a move back to what is considered acceptable bureaucratic practices, this conformity also reflects a desire to gain, or regain, the legitimacy of the institutions responsible for leading the education sector. The outcome was isomorphism toward local, as opposed to global, prescriptions for education administration.

Two interviewees in leadership positions at the MoE argued that

"the drive toward centralization was motivated by attempting to improve accountability (Personal Interview). This statement also reflects problems with the design of the program where school based accountability mechanisms, and parental involvement failed to fill the vacuum created by the withdrawal of centralized accountability mechanisms, including the Schools Direction Administration discussed earlier.

(2) Tight Coupling

As argued earlier, tight coupling is part of the ENE's design. Mechanisms for tight coupling included standardization, auditing, data collection, and testing. Commenting on this situation, an MoE official noted that, in the final analysis, schools became "accountable for testing." Independence was clearly present only on paper. She summarized this by saying, "If you want variety, you will be contradicting yourself if you pursue standards-based reform."

According to a number of interviewees, the policy changes that took place in the first few years of implementation created an effective end to the goal of variety. The policies that attracted the most attention were merging the positions of school operator and principal, and centralizing personnel and training policies. Two interviewees at the MoE noted that merging the positions of school operator and principal "aimed at having one center for accountability." On the other hand, an MoE official who later became a school operator and entrepreneur argued that; "accountability requires independence," and that policies such as requiring the operator to also be the principal ended the possibility of encouraging visionary operators to lead schools.

The disagreement mentioned above is symbolic of the dividing lines discussed earlier. One side represented voices within the SEC, and probably within the broader education sector, calling for maintaining control. The other side championed a more market-based approach. The first side represented the bureaucracy; the second represented the private sector. Support for tight coupling was echoed in almost all of the interviews at the MOE.

Two interviewees noted that tight coupling and the sometimes unpredictable reactions by the SEC to problems in implementation created fears among school operators/principals, thus limiting creativity. An MoE employee noted that the initiative's design was a reason for the lack of creativity in the proposals to establish Independent Schools. She argued that "it is difficult to find entrepreneurship and new ideas when standards and legal jurisdictions were already set for them. Withdrawing licenses was applied harshly… They needed support for creative ideas" (Personal Interview).

(3) Educational Values

As mentioned above in the discussion of market versus education values, there was a common belief that the bureaucracy embodies the societal values and technical capacity that allow it to represent the schooling options that best reflect parental needs and goals. An MoE official said that she worked hard to oppose allowing schools control over curricula. According to two professors from QU, the purpose of education is to preserve societal culture, and prepare students for work in the public sector, which is the aspiration of most Qataris.

From a sociocultural perspective, a scholar from WISE noted that Qatari culture supports schooling variety within certain limits. The conservative culture is not likely to support schools that focus on music or arts, for example. A former MoE official and school operator argued that school variety would require change in the social perceptions of certain occupations such as mechanical technicians. The society, however, was ready to support Scientific Schools that provided higher standards of education. These schools were not "scientific" in the sense of pedagogical orientation, but only in focusing on higher standards of teaching and learning.

(4) Capacity

The ENE design assumed that a variety of schooling options would follow naturally from opening doors for creative school operators to present plans for new schools. This, however, required more understanding and exposure among potential school operators than existed at the time. A RAND team member noted that applications to operate new independent schools did not match the expectations of the initiative.

A majority of interviewees in the MoE, as well as all interviewees at QU, noted that teachers did not have the technical capacity to design their own curricula. A professor at QU described delegating the task of curriculum development to teachers as "catastrophic." A former MoE official and school operator noted that "designing curricula based on national standards requires training that teachers did not have." A related problem that surfaced during the interviews is the fact that training, as important as it was, usually happened on the job; that is, school operators and teachers were not prepared to perform their expected roles before the initiative started, but rather had to receive their training during implementation. According to a researcher at WISE:

"The problem was that training and support started after appointment. In other words, a school operator would start receiving training after obtaining the license. Similarly, teachers would receive training after being appointed. Since most educators are foreign, it was difficult to train teachers in their home countries before coming to Qatar. Therefore, training was not pre-service, it was on-the-job" (Personal Interview).

The above point highlights the issue of the speed of implementation. All interviewees agreed that implementation went too fast. However, disagreement surfaced again between a consultant/technical group and another Qatari MoE/QU group. Disagreements focused on assigning blame for the fast speed of implementation. A RAND team member said that "we probably needed to spend few years working with a group of 30 or 50 principals, before we even go into any implementation." This group stressed that the political leadership insisted on this fast pace of implementation. On the other hand, interviewees from the MoE and academics at QU insisted that "RAND was behind the fast pace of implementation." A RAND team member summarized this contestation over defining problems and who to blame for these problems as follows:

"It is a typical story of large-scale education reform: a wave of enthusiasm, buying some visionary leaders, too fast implementation coupled with mistakes and ultimately the old guards reassess themselves and things go back to where they were before." (Personal Interview)

Popular culture interacted with capacity limitations in galvanizing opposition to decentralization in yet another way. Since teachers were not prepared to design their own curricula and teach in English, some of them simply relied on downloading content from the internet, sometimes without paying enough attention to reviewing this content. A professor at QU recalled complaints that were repeatedly mentioned in a popular radio program called *Watani Alhabib* (My Beloved Country). She recalled people objecting to seeing "pictures of alcohol or the flag of Israel" in their children's educational material. The governance structures within schools, which included the subject coordinator and Deputy Principal for Academic Affairs, usually did not have the capacity to take over responsibility for the curricula and evaluating the performance of teachers.

5.4. The broader institutional context

The broader institutional context includes both formal and informal institutions that contribute to shaping the environmental dynamics leading to institutional selection, survival, or change. Formal institutions include labor laws and institutional structures inherited from the

Table 3

Answering the Study Questions

Question	Expectation	Outcomes	Explaining outcomes
(1) Why the program did not work as expected, and as predicted by the theory?	(1) Decentralization, school independence, and informed parental choice would lead to market-based accountability and better responses to parents and students. (2) Decentralization and autonomy would lead to school variety. (3) Standardization and testing would create accountability for results. (4) New accountability structures in schools, such as subject directors and the academic vice-principal, would substitute guidance that the MoE formerly provided.	(1) The characteristics of the education market, including the limited number of schools, restricted market competition. (2) Societal values regarding the purpose of schooling restricted the potential for school variety. (3) Standardization and testing hindered variety and created "accountability to the test," rather than accountability for quality education. (4) School based accountability mechanisms failed to fill the gap created by the government withdrawal.	(1) Problems with the logic of new institutional economics, managerialist thought, and the agency logic. (2) Capacity limitations. (3) Social norms and expectations about schooling. (4) Contradictions between school independence and tight coupling.
(2) Why the response to problems in implementation came in the form of system-wide changes instead of dealing with problems on a case-by-case basis?	Problems in implementation will be solved on a case-by-case basis.	Response to problems in implementation came in the form of sector-wide changes.	(1) Cultural and social variables, (2) Balance of power between the support and opposition forces surrounding the ENE initiative. (3) Regional and international developments: 9/11 gave support to education reform in the Arab world; the "Arab Awakening" supported conservative forces.
(4) What is left of the ENE reform initiative?	(1) Market mechanisms and training will substitute for professional norms (2) Managerialist reforms will create capacity, allow schools to take over new tasks, and develop pedagogical techniques (3) Reform in teaching methods and pedagogical techniques will lead to better schooling.	(1) In 2016, almost all the facets of the new institutional economics stream of NPM were abolished, including school independence. The designation of Independent Schools as LLCs was abolished shortly following the beginning of implementing the initiative. (2) Some of the managerialist reforms survived. (3) Pedagogical reforms outlived the ENE initiative.	Sociocultural and professional values and norms determined institutional selection and survival.

previous centralized educational structures. Informal institutions include sociocultural norms regarding the role of the state in society.

A trend among interviewees remarked on "the culture of centralization" as an impediment to the ENE initiative. Al-Khater (2016) notes that the only governance model that Qatar has ever known is a highly controlled and centralized one, which means that the legal and administrative infrastructure for decentralization was not present at the time of the ENE. An interviewee from WISE noted that the problem was further complicated by the reliance on teachers from other Arab countries, who also come from highly centralized systems. A RAND team member noted that the initiative "was like a foreign body in a context that does not support it." According to a QU professor, "The school is supposed to change culture, getting people to learn, getting parents involved. But what is really happening? Culture changes schools back" (Personal Interview).

Interviewees also discussed extra burdens as diverting resources away from the classroom, sometimes even encouraging cutting corners and focusing on satisfying paperwork requirements at the cost of real change in classroom teaching.

Teachers also complained because of what they perceived as the "controlling" practices of school operators. The distance between public and private sector ideals in Qatar becomes apparent here. Qataris are used to working in the government, which is the employer of the majority of nationals (Bunglawala, 2011). Working in the government provides job security and fixed work hours, which were missing in Independent Schools.

According to a major trend among the interviewees, especially those in the MoE, centralizing policies, especially personnel and financial policies, was a direct outcome of teachers' complaints. A high-level official in the MoE stated this idea clearly: "The policy [of independence] did not change until we started having queues of teachers complaining about the system" (Personal Interview).

6. Conclusion

Qatar's ENE initiative is a reflection of a neoliberal education reform movement that dates back to the 1980s. It reflects this movement's obsession with market ideals, standardization, and the focus on measurable outcomes.

This paper argued that, in order to understand the trajectory of the ENE, we need to answer three questions concerning: (1) the program's logic based on the neoclassical economics and managerialist streams of NPM, (2) cultural and social variables, including sociocultural norms and balances of power, and (3) the Sociocultural and professional values that directed institutional selection and survival. These points were reflected in the following questions:

(1) Why the program theory did not work as expected?
(2) Why did the response to problems in implementation come in the form of system-wide changes instead of dealing with problems on a case-by-case basis?
(3) What is left of the ENE reform initiative?

Table 3 below summarizes the main results of this study concerning these questions.

The answer to Question 1 reflects limitations in the theoretical foundations of the ENE. Regarding the new institutional economics stream, the ENE initiative faced a number of classical market failures, including information asymmetry which did not allow parents a say in school management. School capacity limitations and the small number of schools did not allow for functional market mechanisms. Furthermore, there were clear contradictions between school independence and tight coupling through standardization and auditing.

The answer to Question 2 tells clearly that we cannot understand the influence of culture and norms as central factors in understanding the process of institutionalization without analyzing power. WST

Table 4
Changes in the governance structures of Qatar's educational system after 2016 (darker shades reflect complete change).
Source: Based on UNDP (2014)

Market-Oriented Reforms	Governance Reforms
➢ Internal markets: the ENE created a market for education service provision and competition among independent schools (the providers). ➢ Quality contracts with schools ➢ Freedom of parents to choose schools for their children.	➢ Decentralization: designing governance structures for SBM. ➢ Open government through information dissemination. ➢ Applying quality standards: as specified in the contracts between independent schools and the SEC.
Deregulatory/Regulatory reform ➢ School Based Management ➢ Financial deregulation ➢ Personnel management deregulation ➢ Pedagogical deregulation	Competence reforms – increasing the capacity of public servants to act ➢ Training programs at the SEC and school levels. ➢ SBM: coaching and mentoring at the school level.

applications of neoinstitionalism, as discussed earlier, focus on the appeal of global prescriptions as key influences, even determinants, of institutionalization. This study shows that the appeal of global values and norms is not uncontested. It is therefore important to understand the extent to which global norms are shared and the power bases of opposition groups.

Question 3 focuses on what is left of the ENE. Based on interview data and review of educational changes, it is clear that the Qatari government has abolished all market-based (*read* new institutional economic reforms). Managerialist reforms, including teacher training and pedagogical reforms, continue to have an influence. Reflecting on Table 1, which summarizes the effects of NPM on the ENE design, Table 4 below shows the level of change in education governance in Qatar after 2016. Darker shades show the areas of the ENE that were reversed. Areas in lighter grey show moderate change.

Reflecting on the earlier discussion of Table 1, the top-left and bottom left cells reflect the new institutional economics stream of NPM, which prescribes the creation of markets and deregulation. The top-right and bottom right cells are closer to the managerialist stream of NPM, focusing on the implementation of decentralization, information dissemination, and capacity building. The first, new institutionalist economics stream, faced capacity issues as well as social and institutional opposition. The second, managerialist, stream presented more acceptable reforms. Empirical evidence as well as interview results show a level of satisfaction with the training opportunities, but not with the extra working hours, excessive responsibilities and training requirements, and freedom of school administrators to hire and fire. As a result, managerialist reforms related to capacity building and teacher empowerment were more likely to survive.

This observation explains the consensus that education practices have improved, and that data-based decision-making have become the

norm, it is also true that information dissemination, quality standards, and a focus on training are now well-established. It is possible to conclude that the ENE initiative has ended up bringing an improvement to the original institutional structures of the MoE, rather than providing an alternative to them.

7. Concluding remarks

The ENE experience shows that the process of education reform is iterative, and is therefore not likely to present measurable outcomes a priori. This does not mesh well with the NPM's prescriptions for focusing on results and measurable outcomes (Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff, 2015).

Secondly, even in contexts where the contractual principle-agent relations seem clear, effective governance requires creating harmony among the stakeholders and beneficiaries in a particular policy area, as well as within the society. Third, and related to the previous point, both power and values are core forces in the institutional process.

Fourth, adequate state capacity in the education sector is required not only to guarantee monitoring and accountability, but also to maintain public trust. Absent this trust, it would be difficult to maintain the legitimacy of reforms. Finally, institutional reform is a dynamic process, and it rarely involves the dominance of one construct of prescribed reforms over another.

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