INTERROGATING THE PARADOX: DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP AND
‘SHEIKHOCRACY’ IN JORDANIAN SCHOOLS LEADERSHIP

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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I am the author of the thesis entitled:

Interrogating the Paradox: Distributed Leadership and ‘Sheikhocracy’ in Jordanian Schools Leadership

submitted for the degree of: Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

School reform has become a major concern across the world as governments work to build robust education systems to cope with global change. Globalisation has led many countries to view Western—often marketed as universal—approaches to schooling as the best model for education reform. In addition, commodification-of education influences countries to introduce Western education reform programs (Nguyen et al. 2009). However, imported education reform programs transmit the values of their culture of origin. These values are mediated through the host countries’ cultural lens.

In 2003, Jordan began an ambitious 10 year multi-donor education reform program to build human capital to support its competition in the global economy. The program calls for school decentralisation and distributed leadership across Jordanian public schools. This research outlines obstacles to implementation of the reform program from the perspective of principals in Jordanian public schools.

This study draws on critical realism and retroductive grounded theory. The study uses Bourdieu’s theory of practice to examine the interplay between structure and agent (that is, tribal culture and school practitioners). Data collection took place through semi-structured in-depth interviews and focus group meetings with 24 principals from Jordanian public schools. These interviews and meetings took place over two-and-a-half years.

The findings demonstrate that Jordanian tribal leadership styles are seen in Jordanian public schools. The data indicates that the Jordanian tribal doxa generates mechanisms that sustain tribal leadership practices in Jordanian public schools. The
research reveals that distributed leadership practices may not be effective in Jordanian public schools. In this way, this research calls into question the benefits of education policy migration.

This is the first study to examine education reform in Jordan from a sociological perspective. As such, this study is relevant to the literature on neoliberalism and education reform models. In addition, this study’s novel application of critical realist grounded theory and Bourdieu’s theory of practice has generated a culturally defined theory of leadership. This is an important contribution to the literature on culture bound leadership styles.
Key words

Tribal culture, sheikhocracy, distributed leadership, education reform, Bourdieu, theory of practice, critical realist grounded theory
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<td><em>Al faza’a</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>CIDA</td>
<td>Canadian International Development Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRGT</td>
<td>Critical realist grounded theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DL</td>
<td>Distributed leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERfKE</td>
<td>Education Reform for Knowledge Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JERP</td>
<td>Jordan Education Reform Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAIKE</td>
<td>National Assessment for Knowledge Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PISA</td>
<td>Program for International Student Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDDP</td>
<td>School and Directorate Development Program</td>
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<td>SDIP</td>
<td>School and Directorate Improvement Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDT</td>
<td>School Development Team</td>
</tr>
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<td>SIP</td>
<td>School Improvement Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sheikh</td>
<td>An honorific title in the Arabic language for the ruler of a tribe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sheikhocracy</td>
<td>Tribal leadership</td>
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<td>TIMSS</td>
<td>Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study</td>
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Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter introduces the topic of this thesis and outlines the author’s research process. The background highlights the gap that this research addresses in the relevant literature. This is followed by an outline of the research aim and questions. Next, the chapter describes Jordan’s geography and history, including previous education reform programs in Jordan. This is followed by an outline of school decentralisation, distributed leadership, and the emerging concept of sheikhocracy. Next, the researcher’s position as an insider/outsider in the research process is introduced and the research methodology is outlined. The chapter concludes with an overview of the thesis structure.

1.1 Background

Education reform has become a major policy concern for countries across the world (Hallinger & Leithwood 1996; Nguyen et al. 2009; Sperandio et al. 2009). This has led to pressure on governments to implement best practices for school improvement and capacity building (Sperandio et al. 2009). Hallinger and Leithwood (1996) argue that notions of what constitutes best practice in schools have cast doubt on the ‘applicability and effectiveness’ of traditional models of education administration amidst global education changes (Hallinger & Leithwood 1996, p. 98).

They also claim: ‘Dissatisfaction with system performance has led to an international effort to rethink the organisation of schooling as well as its administration’ (Hallinger & Leithwood 1996, p. 98). At the same time, perceived benefits of Western educational theories and practices claimed to hold universal applicability have led to marketing and widespread implementation of Western
models for school improvement and leadership (Nguyen et al. 2009; Sperandio et al. 2009).

These developments have seen education systems around the world compete to preserve their place in the global education market (Sperandio et al. 2009). At the same time, governments across the world are investing in their education sectors in the hope that this will enhance their social and economic infrastructure (ibid).

1.1.1 Reform in the Arab world

This global focus on education reform also is evident among Arab governments. Many Arab countries have introduced Western education reform programs to improve their education systems (Akkary 2014; Akkary & Risk 2012, 2014; Romanowski 2014, 2017). Arab countries have invested millions of dollars in education reform over the last 60 years. However, these programs have not yielded their objective to help Arab countries meet the challenges of the 21st century (Akkary & Rizk 2014). This has led to scepticism in Arab countries about the portability of international education reform programs that are alleged to have universal relevance and benefits (Akkary & Rizk 2014; Danielewicz-Betz 2013; Romanowski 2017).

Until recently, Non-Western countries have implemented these programs because of their ‘symbolic quality’ (Sperandio et al. 2009, p. 719) ‘as the panacea to catch up with modernisation’ (Akkary & Rizk 2014, p. 223). The global dominance of Western cultures that originated these programs leads to expectations that Western programs will improve Non-Western countries’ education systems (Nguyen et al. 2009). These expectations, however, do not take into account the question of Western programs’ workability in Non-Western countries, nor the
unstated Western values that underpin these programs (Akkary & Rizk 2014; Hallinger & Leithwood 1996; Nguyen et al. 2009).

The need to initiate and complete reform programs poses another question concerning timeframes for school improvement. Oftentimes, educators do not receive adequate training to build their capacity to implement reform programs (Akkary & Rizk 2014). Therefore, practitioners might not know how to respond to reform programs. This increases the likelihood of false transformation in schools (Elmore 2000; Sperandio et al. 2009). Sperandio et al. (2009) argue that:

Such adaptation also raises questions as to whether program adoption changes practice and contributes to the standardisation of education on a global scale, or simply makes schools and school systems appear in tune with current educational thought, while in reality they are responding to local cultural priorities and understanding (p. 707, 708).

The influence of neoliberal market values in the education sector means ‘education is simply a tradable commodity to be sold to nations developing a knowledge economy’ (Devos 2003, cited in Romanowski 2017, p. 71). This school of thought has led to research interest in cross-cultural studies that question the benefits of Western education models in countries with different cultural values than Western countries’ (Nguyen et al. 2009; Romanowski 2014, 2017, Sperandio et al. 2009).

Studies have expressed concern that Non-Western countries’ cultural values may impede implementation of Western education models (Danielewicz-Betz 2013; Dickson et al. 2003; Sperandio et al. 2009; Khan & Varshney 2013). However, not many studies have examined the factors that produce and sustain cultural values in education sectors. Nor have many studies probed the interdependence of cultural values at the national and organisational levels. Scholars have produced research on
the effects of Arab social culture on organisational culture in management and business (Abdalla & Al-Hamoud 2001; Ali 1999; Ali & Al-Kazemi 2007) and psychology (Ali 1988, 1992; Ali, Taqi & Krishnan 1997). However, few studies have addressed this issue in the education sector, including in schools in which reform programs are being implemented (for example, Akkary 2014; Akkary & Risk 2012; Litz & Scott 2016; Romanowski 2013, 2014).

1.1.2 Reform in Jordan

In 2003, the Jordanian Ministry of Education (MoE) began its ambitious 10 year multi-donor Education Reform for Knowledge Economy (ERfKE) program (Tweissi, et al. 2014). Jordan implemented this program in response to King Abdullah II’s vision, articulated in 2002, to transform Jordan’s education system to ‘give Jordan a prominent role as the regional technology hub and an active player in the global economy’ (ibid, p. 12). The program had two phases: ERfKE I, from 2003 to 2009, and ERfKE II, from 2010 to 2015.

In 2010, Jordan launched the School and Directorates Development Program (SDDP) to decentralise education authority in Jordan. Jordan implemented SDDP under the auspices of ERfKE II to reform the education system through schools and education directorates (ibid). SDDP established distributed leadership as the new leadership stance in Jordanian public schools. According to MoE:

As professionals, principals and teachers must be more than just implementers of other people’s decisions. They must also become decision makers themselves, sharing the responsibility for bringing about improvements in their schools (CIDA & MoE 2010, p. 1:1).
The focus of ERfKE II and SDDP was to reform education policy in Jordan to help the country and its citizens compete in the global economy. 18 studies and reports were conducted to evaluate ERfKE II between (2010-2015) ‘to investigate whether the educational policies in various project’s components were effective, relevant, efficient and successful’ (NCHRD 2017, p.6). Success indicators in the data of developing knowledge economy skills were measured through National Assessment for Knowledge Economy Study (NAfKE) and students’ achievement through international studies (TIMSS2011 and PISA2012) among other factors. These studies revealed that despite their overarching goal of successful participation in the global knowledge economy, ERfKE and SDDP to date have not led to significant improvements in Jordanian students’ results in international standardised tests (Ababneh et al. 2014; Akkary & Rizk 2014; NCHRD 2017).

For example, 2017 completion report on ERfKE showed that ‘Jordanian students’ performance in mathematics, science and reading is below the international average’ (NCHRD 2017 p. 8). Jordanian students’ mathematics and science results in the annual Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)\(^1\) declined in 2011 and 2015 compared to previous years. Results of the 2015 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)\(^2\) also showed no significant improvement in mathematics, science and reading among Jordanian students (ibid). The report concludes that:

\(^1\) TIMSS is an international comparative study of student achievement that is directed by the International Association for the Evaluation of Education Achievement.

\(^2\) PISA is an international study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) that evaluates education systems in OECD member and non-member states.
There were many factors related to students, schools, and teachers still hindering the system from achieving its objective to bring Jordan to a high rank in the international students’ assessment studies (p. 17).

These results suggest there may be obstacles to implementation of ERfKE in Jordanian schools.

1.2 Rationale for this study

Growing evidence in cross cultural research shows the influence of local culture on implementation of foreign reform programs (Akkary & Rizk 2014; Dickson et al. 2003; Hallinger & Leithwood 1996; Nguyen et al. 2009; Sperandio et al. 2009; Sakarneh 2014). However, no study to date has examined the effects of Jordanian national culture on the success of school reform programs in Jordan. None of the studies evaluating ERfKE (Ababneh et al. 2014; NCHRD 2017; Hua et al. 2014; NCHRD 2009; Shyne 2008; Tweissi et al. 2014; Sharif et al. 2008) has explored the role of cultural values at the macro level in shaping practices at the school micro level. Nor have these studies addressed the significance of differences between Jordanian cultural values and the values that underpin the ERfKE program.

As such, this research will fill a gap in the literature on cross-culture and school reform in the Jordanian education sector. The grounded theory that emerged from this research will show the effects on reform agendas of practices that Jordanian culture generates at the organisational level. As such, this research has the potential to generate a paradigm shift in implementation of education reform programs in Jordan.
1.3 Research aim

The overarching aim of this research is to unfold the factors that are contributing to the implementation of ERfKE in Jordanian public schools from the standpoint of field practitioners. It examines principals’ views on education and administrative practices in the Jordanian public education sector from 2010 to 2016. I am interested in examining whether leadership practices of principals in Jordanian public schools are informed by principals’ openness to and understanding of MoE policies on distributed leadership. In addition, I am interested in examining social and professional factors that hinder or assist implementation of ERfKE in Jordanian public schools. My research aims to explore:

1. Influence of practices in the Jordanian education sector on full implementation of education reform programs in Jordanian public schools.

2. Compatibility between Jordanian public school principals’ understanding of distributed leadership and distributed leadership as defined by Western cultures.

3. Whether principals consider that practices of senior MoE officials align with the vision and mission of ERfKE.

4. Ways that MoE could more effectively communicate policies to schools, incorporate feedback from schools into development and implementation of reform policies, and provide support to schools to implement education reform programs.
1.4 Research questions

The research is guided by the focal question: **according to principals in Jordanian public schools, what factors impede implementation of education reform in Jordanian public schools?** The research also engages with sub-questions that inform the research design:

1. **How do Jordanian principals describe distributed leadership in schools?**

This question aims to uncover principals’ level of understanding and acceptance of distributed leadership. It examines principals’ understanding of what is meant by distributed leadership and how they enact MoE policy. In this way, the question uncovers principals’ policy convictions, their motivation to respond to demands of government and their perception of policies’ effects in schools. Responses to this question can guide policymakers to be more responsive to principals’ needs and develop induction and training programs to support implementation of distributed leadership in schools.

2. **How does distributed leadership compare to traditional leadership practices in Jordanian schools?**

This question examines traditional practices of leadership in Jordanian schools. Understanding traditional leadership practices might explain principals’ attitudes—and in some cases resistance—to distributed leadership. It may also enhance awareness of the intrinsic factors that drive principals’ leadership practices.

3. **How does Jordanian culture mediate and shape educators’ practices at the organisational level (that is, in schools)?**
This question examines principals’ views on how Jordanian culture and values affect school culture and shape the practices of school practitioners. The question unfolds contradictions between the values that underpin Jordanian culture and those that underpin distributed leadership as it is advocated by MoE. The answers to this question can help MoE and education policymakers understand how education reform programs are mediated through the Jordanian cultural lens. This can redirect education reform and training programs that aim to transform educators’ practices to dig deep into underpinning values that sanction these practices in schools.

4. **How do principals perceive the effect of distributed leadership on pedagogy and learning?**

This question examines principals’ perception of how distributed leadership can influence teachers’ and students’ performance and school improvement. It explores the effect of this leadership stance on teachers’ empowerment and capacity building. It also examines principals’ views on factors that could enhance teachers’ acceptance of distributed leadership in schools.

5. **To what extent do Jordanian principals perceive their professional learning supports them to implement distributed leadership in schools?**

This question examines the adequacy of principals’ qualifications and professional learning to engage in distributed leadership practices. It uncovers principals’ perceptions of the role of MoE in supporting implementation of distributed leadership in schools.

6. **What factors hinder implementation of distributed leadership in Jordanian schools?**
This question highlights hegemonic social, cultural, academic, and other factors that are at odds with distributed leadership and impede its implementation in Jordanian schools. Responses to this question also highlight features of Jordanian culture that conform to distributed leadership and could support its implementation in schools.

7. What could MoE do to support implementation of ERfKE in Jordanian public schools?

This question gives principals an opportunity to suggest how MoE could better support implementation of ERfKE in schools. This approach is consistent with the author’s epistemological stance, which positions principals that participate in this research as co-researchers.

1.5 Research context

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is one of 23 countries that make up the Arab world (see Figure 1-1).

![Figure 1-1: The Arab world](image)
Jordan is located south-west of Asia at the meeting point of three continents: Asia, Africa and Europe. Although politically stable, Jordan occupies a strategic place in the centre of the Middle East. It extends over an area of 89,342 square kilometres (Atlas 2017). Jordan bears traces of the many civilisations that have occupied its territory (Encyclopedia Britannica 2017). The modern state of Jordan came into being in 1921, when Britain and France declared it the Emirate of Trans-Jordan under their division of the Arabian Peninsula (Szczepanski 2017). Jordan remained a British mandate until it gained independence on 25 May 1946. The Kingdom of Jordan is a constitutional monarchy. Prince Abdullah II became King of Jordan in 1999. He is vested with extensive powers (ibid).

Jordan’s 1952 constitution declares Jordan part of the Arab nation. Arabic is the official language. Islam is the official religion and around 92 percent of Jordanians identify as Sunni Muslim (Szczepanski 2017). The government’s Statistical Yearbook 2016 estimates that the population of Jordan is 9.798 million. Jordanian society is organised along tribal lines (Bin Mohammad 1999). Jordanian cultural values are influenced by Arab and tribal values. These prioritise notions of group solidarity and kinship. Chapter Three examines these values in more detail.

Jordan has limited natural resources. Therefore, its main opportunity to join the global economy is to invest in education to build its human capital (Alshurfat 2003). Bin Talal (1998, p. 11) states:

Our investment in education is recognised as investment in human resource development. This country [Jordan] abounds in human resources, with a vast potential for development.

Human capital is highly valued and its focus is upon the wholesome development of values, knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs in a society
which in few short decades have moved from early beginnings to sharing in global education (Alshurfat 2003, p. 25).

### 1.5.1 Education reform in Jordan from 1951 to 2015

For many decades, the Hashemite monarchy has prioritised education in domestic social and economic policymaking. This has resulted in significant development in the Jordanian education sector and improvements in education outcomes (Georg-Eckert-Institut für internationale Schulbuch 2011). In 1952, Jordan introduced legislation to guarantee every Jordanian the right to education. Since then, reforms of the education system have led to better quality and quantity of education in Jordan (ibid).

However, quality of schooling in Jordan has remained mediocre, despite reforms to increase access to schooling and improve curriculums. In 1987, the late King Hussein publicly called for comprehensive education reform in Jordan (Georg-Eckert-Institut für internationale Schulbuch 2011; Alshurfat 2003). The Jordanian government undertook to provide an extensive analysis of the education system. In 1987, the government introduced the Jordan Education Reform Project (JERP). JERP had three phases: 1989–1995, 1996–2000, and 2000–2005. Implementation of JERP was ‘supervised and financially supported by international donor institutions’ (Georg-Eckert-Institut für internationale Schulbuch 2011, p. 17). In 2002, King Abdullah II expressed his desire to accelerate reform in Jordan’s education sector.

### 1.5.2 Education Reform for Knowledge Economy (ERfKE) 2003–2015

In 2003, the government launched the ambitious, multi-donor ERfKE program. The program had two phases: ERfKE I, from 2003 to 2009 and ERfKE II, from 2010 to 2015. The program aimed to reform education policy in Jordan to help the country
and its citizens compete in the global economy. One focus of ERfKE II was to improve Jordanian schools. To this end, MoE partnering in 2010 with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to launch SDDP. SDDP was intended to devolve control over public education in Jordan from MoE to public schools. This was to be accompanied by capacity building to help schools function autonomously. The program’s desired education outcomes were higher rates of enrolment in pre-tertiary education and higher scores in Jordan’s national assessment test (CIDA & MoE 2010).

SDDP required each school to undertake a self-review process that canvassed opinions from all school stakeholders. Principals, teachers, parents, students and the local community were to ‘examine the school’s current approach to providing services to students and identify patterns of weakness that require improvement’ (CIDA & MoE 2010, p. 1:2). This process was intended to inform development of a School Improvement Plan (SIP). SIPs covered four themes: teaching and learning, student environment, school and community, and leadership and management.

SDDP made school stakeholders responsible for school development. Each school’s principal and School Development Team (SDT) would build and implement their school’s improvement plan. SDTs comprised four lead teachers at the school. These teachers were to engage with other teachers and the local community to supervise implementation of their school’s improvement plan. Building and implementing SIPs represents a formalised pattern of distributed leadership that can be described as ‘planful alignment’ (Leithwood et al. 2009). ‘In this pattern, the tasks or functions of those providing leadership have been given prior, planful thought by organisational members’ (Mascall et al. 2009, p. 84).
1.6 Decentralisation: Sheikhocracy\(^3\) vs distribution

Decentralisation, in whichever form chosen, is about citizens and professionals having the authority needed to take responsibility for decision-making and decision implementation in response to the opportunities and threats facing them and their organisations as they contribute to personal and national development and the defence of the Constitution. At the heart of the Devolution lies the principle of Subsidiarity (MoEDCU 2008, p. XII).

There is a global move to decentralise education decision making from governments to schools (Naidoo 2005; Stinnette 1993; Winkler & Gershberg 2000). This development has seen ‘local decision making and community participation becoming key policy areas’ (Naidoo 2005, p. 20). Decentralised decision making in education is claimed to produce effective management of schools by empowering and building the capacity of education leaders and democratising decision making (ibid). Increased school autonomy also is presumed to give school stakeholders greater input into decision making (Stinnette 1993).

Harris (2008) argues that many countries have decentralised implementation of education policy to the local level while maintaining centralised authority and supervision. However, for decentralisation to succeed, leaders at the lower level should be able to make decisions and implement ‘best practices’ (McGinn & Welsh 1999, p. 41). Therefore, governments should synchronise decentralisation to schools with training to build schools’ capacity to make autonomous decisions. In addition, Harris argues that decentralisation in schools requires leadership that is too complex to be dealt with by one person, such as a school principal. Harris (2005) notes that

\(^3\) Sheikhocracy is tribal leadership that is headed by the Sheikh, the Arabic title of the leader of the tribe.
in considering what forms of leadership best serve the more complex world of schooling, distributed leadership is centre stage’ (p. 6).

Decentralisation, capacity building and distribution of power have become popular ideals in Jordanian politics. On 26 January 2005, King Abdullah II called for all citizens to participate in Jordanian political life: ‘political development should start at the grassroots level, then move up to decision-making centres, and not vice-versa’ (Satloff 2005). In response, MoE sought ‘to find ways to increase civil society participation in decision making and decision implementation’ (MoEDCU 2008, p. VIII). In 2010, MoE introduced SDDP to delegate authority to schools.

1.6.1 Distributed leadership

Distributed leadership views leadership in schools as the sum of interactions between multiple leaders and their situation (Spillane 2006). The idea originated in the mid-1950s. However, distributed leadership did not gain prominence until the late 1990s (Leithwood et al. 2009). Distributed leadership in schools gives responsibility for leadership to other actors than formal leaders such as school principals (Elmore 2000; Harris 2009b; Spillane 2006). It emphasises democratic collective processes in strategic planning and resolving problems. Teachers, lead teachers and principals share leadership responsibilities, take on formal and informal leadership roles, receive acknowledgement for their work, and make and are held accountable for decisions. Skills and experience are given greater weight than job titles in distributing responsibility (Harris 2005; Harris & Spillane 2008; Starr 2014).

Distributed leadership does not involve simply delegating tasks to school practitioners. It is about creating an environment that enables school practitioners to
use their expertise to enhance school performance (Harris 2016). More important, distributed leadership does not remove the need for leadership from principals. Literature on school transformation and turnaround identifies practices of leaders as a main driver for change (Harris 2008; Leithwood et al. 2010; Spillane 2006). Education outcomes improve most when school leaders focus on building collective rather than individual capacity (Fullan 2012). To build capacity across their school, principals should facilitate learning for all school stakeholders and participate as an active learner (ibid). In addition, principals must put distributed leadership into practice by challenging their belief in their own power, relinquishing control and permitting other school stakeholders to distribute power (Hatcher 2005).

1.6.2 Sheikhocracy

Jordanian society is organised along tribal lines (Bin Mohammad 1999). Tribal societies vest power in the Sheikh, who is the leader, father, protector and caregiver of the tribe (Ali 1990; Hofstede et al. 2010). As such, the main leadership stance in tribal societies is sheikhocracy (Ali 1995). Values that embody sheikhocracy at the micro level in tribal societies lead actors in formal leadership positions in organisations to take on the role of the sheikh (ibid):

Managers so influenced behave as fathers, i.e., as protectors, caregivers, and those who shoulder all the responsibilities of business. While the above characteristics are not necessarily negative (for example, caring about the welfare of employees, and personalised subordinate relations), they do suggest an authoritarian management style (Ali 1990, p. 14).

Sheikhocracy in Jordanian culture poses challenges to the implementation of distributed leadership through SDDP.
1.6.3 Research contribution: Interrogating the paradox

A review of the relevant literature found no research that examined school leadership practices in Jordan from a sociological perspective. Therefore, this thesis makes an important contribution to the literature on culture and education leadership in Jordan. The significance of this study is not confined to raising concerns about contradictions and discontinuities between Jordanian cultural values and ERfKE, similar to what previous studies have done. This study also interrogates the paradox of sheikhocracy and distributed leadership in Jordanian public schools at the ‘deeper level [of reality] that may not be observable’ (Kempster & Parry 2011, p. 107).

This study employs Bourdieu’s (1977) theory of practice to examine the interplay between the underpinning cultural values of education practitioners and the practices that these values drive in schools during reform implementation. In this way, this research attempts to answer the question, ‘What must be true for this to be the case?’ (Oliver 2012, p. 379). The grounded theory that underpins this research will help practitioners in schools and other areas of the education sector to reflect on their values and the practices produced by these values. This research also will enable school principals to share their insights on leadership practices in Jordanian public schools. This highlights how MoE can support schools and principals to implement education reform programs.

In addition, this research will show education policymakers the limitations of Western education models in Non-Western countries. As such, this study has implications for future education reform programs. The author’s review of the existing literature shows that cultural factors that impede education reform are durable and are sustained by local values. By examining these factors, this study can
inform frameworks for future education reform programs that are culturally sensitive.

1.7 Methodology

This research draws on grounded theory for its methodology and critical realism for its ontological stance. Grounded theory also is known as constant comparative analysis of data. Grounded theory methodology allows researchers to reveal themes that are hidden in complex data (Corbin & Strauss 2015). It is an effective methodology to examine leadership practices in their environment (Edwards et al. 2014; Kan & Parry 2004; Kempster & Parry 2011; Parry 1998). Glaser and Strauss developed grounded theory in 1967 to generate theories from data rather than using data to test hypotheses (Charmaz 2006, 2014; Corbin & Strauss 1998, 2008, 2015; Glaser & Strauss 1967; Glaser 1978; Strauss 1987; Strauss & Corbin 1990). Since then, three main schools of thought have emerged in grounded theory: Glaserian, Straussian, and Charmazian. Core principles of grounded theory that were employed in this research are evident across the three schools of thought.

In addition, the author drew on critical realism in applying grounded theory methodology for this research. Critical realism suggests that reality exists independent of humans’ understanding of it. Even so, reality is multi layered. Critical realism uses retrodution (Bhaskar 1998) or abduction (Charmaz 2006) as primary tools for data analysis. Data analysis often is focused on identifying trends that emerge from observable practices in the data. Critical realism requires researchers to identify underlying forces and generating mechanisms that sanction these practices. Critical realism examines the relationship between agency and structure (Edwards et al. 2014; Kempster & Parry 2011; Oliver 2012). As such, the
author has integrated Bourdieu’s (1977) theory of practice into this research. This allows the author to examine the interplay between structures in the Jordanian education sector—including Jordanian society, MoE or local education directorates—and school practitioners’ agency.

The research data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews and focus group meetings with 24 participant principals from Amman and other governorates of varying geographical and socio-economic status. These principals had received training through ERfKE and contributed to the development of their schools’ SIP. The principals were nominated to participate in this research based on their effective implementation of ERfKE. Data were collected over two and half years to facilitate constant abductive analysis and validation. Principals initially were contacted by phone and invited to attend preliminary focus group meetings. These preliminary meetings helped build positions of trust. This enabled more in-depth discussion in subsequent meetings. Nine participants were interviewed in the first year of data collection. The remaining 15 principals were divided into five focus groups of three each.

Throughout the data analysis process, the author conducted 11 more interviews with principals who had made major contributions to the research findings. The author used the results of these interviews to assess the internal validity of the research findings and hypotheses generated by the data. Theoretical sampling based on concepts and hypotheses generated by the data guided the data collection process. Interview questions were based on the research questions in Section 1.2. Interviews were conducted, transcribed and analysed in Arabic. This is because language mediates meanings, values and culture. Hence, translation of interview
transcripts from Arabic to English prior to analysing the data might have distorted the interviewers’ original meaning. Translation was done by the author, who is bilingual.

Data analysis for this research began with coding. This took place after the first interview. Coding identifies and conceptualises indicators in the data to identify key themes. These themes are assembled through data integration later in the research process to form the basis for research analysis (Charmaz 2006). There are three stages of coding:

- **Open coding:** this stage of microanalysis (Corbin & Holt 2005; Corbin & Strauss 2008) combs the data line by line to define and label the data. Definitions and labels should leave room for theories that the data generates (Charmaz 2006; Corbin & Strauss 2008; Glaser 1978). Also used are in-vivo codes (Charmaz 2006; Corbin & Strauss 2008). These are based on words used in interviews by research participants. The researcher uses the initial codes to develop concepts that are ‘constructed from inductive data and checked and developed through abduction’ (Charmaz 2014, p. 324).

- **Axial coding:** this involves ‘crosscutting or relating concepts to each other’ (Corbin & Strauss 2008, p. 195). It begins when constant comparative data analysis reveals commonalities between codes and analytic concepts in the data (Charmaz 2014; Corbin & Holt 2005).

- **Selective coding:** this stage classifies categories in the data as ‘lower-level’ or ‘higher-level’ (Corbin & Strauss 2008, p. 53). The researcher identifies the
core or central category that will form the major theme of the grounded theory (ibid).

Data analysis is done alongside memoing. This is ‘a pivotal step between data collection and data analysis’ (Charmaz 2014, p. 343). Memoing allows researchers to examine their own ideas about concepts and categories generated by the data (ibid). This is essential for researchers’ reflexivity to respond as novel categories and concepts emerge in the data analysis process.

Comparative analysis and data collection continue until research reaches theoretical saturation. This occurs ‘when no new concepts or further properties or dimensions of existing concepts emerge from data’ (Corbin & Holt 2005, p. 51). The final stage of data analysis is to generate the grounded theory that tells the story of the research. This stage demands high theoretical sensitivity from the researcher, which emanates from the researcher’s background and insight during analysis (Strauss & Corbin 1990).

Positioning literature reviews in the research process is the ‘chicken and egg’ (Dunne, 2011 p. 113) debate of grounded theory schools. This research followed the Straussian school of grounded theory. Straussian grounded theory allows researchers to ‘come to the research situation with some background in the technical literature’ (Strauss & Corbin 1990, p. 50). The researcher conducted a preliminary review of literature about ERfKE and distributed leadership before collecting data. However, culture and leadership emerged as consistent themes in the data. This redirected the author’s focus in reviewing literature on the research topic.
1.8 Situating myself in the research process

My personal and professional background make me an insider in the Jordanian education sector. I am a Jordanian national. I grew up in Jordan and, in my childhood, attended Jordanian public schools. This experience shaped my biases and opinions about Jordan’s education system. However, the first incident to draw to my attention to the social status of the teaching profession in Jordan took place after I finished high school. My results in Jordan’s national exam for school leavers made me eligible to study dentistry. However, I enrolled to study English language and literature and become a teacher. My decision disappointed my family. This made me aware that many Jordanians held less respect for teachers than for other professionals.

I completed my teaching degree in 1995 and started teaching in 1996. I began my teaching career in Jordan’s private education system. Jordan does not mandate teachers to complete pre-service training before they start teaching. This meant that I began my teaching career with no practical teaching experience. In the first years of my career, I learned on the job through observing other teachers. My experience as an early career teacher in Jordan changed my perception of teaching. I began to compile the sentiments and ideas that, 20 years on, have informed this research.

Lack of professional development and career progression at the schools I taught in led me to search for new employment. In 2002, I joined one of Jordan’s leading international schools. I taught there until 2006, when I moved to one of the best language institutes in Jordan. I participated in regular training and professional learning at the institute until my departure in 2010. This training and learning showed me novel ways to think about effective teaching practices and built my
capacity as an educator and teacher trainer. In 2011, I began a master’s degree in education to qualify to work as a school principal. My master’s studies furthered my professional development and began my transition from educator to researcher.

I developed my interest in doctoral research in education leadership during my master’s studies. I felt troubled by inconsistencies between teaching practice in Jordanian schools and theories of effective teaching practices that could enhance pedagogy and learning if presented more widely to teachers and principals. My frustration led me to investigate education and administration practices in Jordanian public schools. I wanted to identify factors that prevent Jordanian schools from implementing internationally recognised education models. I intended this research to show whether teachers’ and principals’ practices in schools account for Jordanian students’ poor performance in national and international testing.

I came across the ERfKE program in my initial research on the Jordanian public education sector. ERfKE provided a design for effective leadership practice that I could compare to practices in schools. I hoped my research would lead effective practices to become more widespread in Jordanian public schools. For this reason, I worked with principals to seek their views on factors to support these changes. I interviewed principals also because they are the contact point between public schools and MoE. Their position in the education sector means principals can offer insights into what happens in Jordan’s public schools and MoE.

This research is influenced by my knowledge of, experiences in and biases about Jordan’s culture and education system. Charmaz (2006) argues that, ‘Just as the methods we choose influence what we see, what we bring to the study also influences what we can see’ (p. 15). My position as an insider/outsider in this
research comes from my personal and professional experiences in the Jordanian education system. As a Jordanian national and former student of Jordanian public schools, I am an insider in Jordan’s public education sector.

However, I have not taught in the Jordanian public education sector. In this way, I bring an outsider perspective to the research. Griffith (1998, p. 361) explains that:

The insider is ‘someone whose biography (gender, race, class, sexual orientation and so on) gives her [sic] a lived familiarity with the group being researched’ while the outsider is ‘a researcher who does not have any intimate knowledge of the group being researched, prior to entry into the group’ (Mercer 2007, p. 3).

Therefore, as a researcher, it is my responsibility to consider the influence of my assumptions and biases on the research process (Charmaz 2006; Corbin & Strauss 2015) and to challenge them (Charmaz 2014). To this end, I journaled and used memoing early in the research process. This made me more aware of the impact on my data interpretation of my own or research participants’ assumptions and biases (Corbin & Strauss 2008). I address this issue in Chapter Four in my discussion of the methodology for this research.

However, assumptions and biases that researchers take on from their culture and upbringing can provide insights for data analysis (ibid). In this sense, researchers’ assumptions and biases are not necessarily an obstacle to reliable and thorough research. Indeed, they can function as another source of data (ibid). Therefore, in the literature review I present some information that is based on my knowledge of power dynamics in Jordanian culture. Corbin and Strauss (2008) state:
We want to use our experiences to bring up other possibilities of meaning. Our experience may even offer a negative case, or something new to think about that will make us confront our assumptions about specific data (p. 80).

1.9 Outline of the thesis

There are 11 chapters in this thesis. This chapter has outlined the rationale, aims, questions and significance of the research. This chapter then briefly described education reform programs in Jordan since 1952. This chapter then explained distributed leadership and sheikhocracy positioned in decentralisation in education reform. The chapter then outlined the researchers’ methodology and position in the research as an insider/outsider. Last, this chapter describes the structure of this thesis.

Chapters Two and Three review the literature that underpins this research. Chapter Two begins by reviewing studies on culture and leadership in the Arab world and in Jordan in particular. This will be followed by background on Jordan’s education system and ERfKE. The last section of Chapter Two explains the notion of distributed leadership as it appears in the literature. Last, the chapter concludes with problematisation of distributed leadership in its context.

Chapter Three examines Arab and tribal cultural values that also are evident in Jordanian public schools as they seek to implement distributed leadership. Next, Chapter Three highlights structures of micro-politics and relational power that exist in Jordanian public schools. This is followed by discussion of the theoretical framework for this research and an explanation of Bourdieu’s (1977) theory of practice.
Chapter Four presents the philosophy and methodology that underpin this research. Identification of the researcher’s ontological and epistemological stance leads into discussion of critical realist grounded theory. The chapter explains the researcher’s method of collecting and analysing the data. Ethical considerations also are discussed. The chapter closes with an explanation of the process that the author used to generate the grounded theory for this research.

Chapters Five to Nine outline the data that underpin this research. These chapters organise the data around five themes that are based on the results of axial coding of the data. Chapter Five focuses on data on discourses around leadership. It examines principals’ perceptions of leadership notions that are relevant to this research: distributed leadership, eclectic leadership and hegemonic leadership. Chapter Six focuses on data on relationships between MoE, local education directorates, and schools. Chapter Seven focuses on data on implementation of ERfKE. Chapter Eight focuses on data on qualifications that are required of principals in Jordanian public schools. Chapter Nine focuses on data on the impact of Jordan’s tribal culture on principals’ practices and beliefs.

Chapters 10 and 11 discuss the grounded theory behind this research: the social reproduction (Bourdieu 1977) of Jordanian tribal culture in Jordan’s public schools. The author terms the leadership style that is evident in Jordanian tribal culture—and public schools—al faza’a leadership. Chapter 10 examines cultural values that generate al faza’a practices at the macro level in Jordanian society and al faza’a leadership at the micro level in Jordanian public schools. Chapter 10 then outlines limitations to the relevance and utility of distributed leadership in Jordanian public schools. Chapter 11 examines factors that sustain hegemonic leadership
stances in Jordanian public schools. The chapter concludes with discussion of the messages and limitations of this research.
Chapter Two: Literature review (Part A)

Chapter Two represents Part A of the literature review. The chapter is introduced by a review of the literature on culture and education leadership in Arab countries and in Jordan in particular. This section reveals the gap in the literature in this field. Next, an overview of the context of the research is provided. This introduces the structure of the pre-tertiary education system in Jordan. Next, ERfKE will be examined and formalised structures of distributed leadership in the program will be identified. The second part of the literature review introduces distributed leadership and empirical research about distributed leadership. Also discussed are patterns of leadership distribution and principals’ role facilitating implementation of distributed leadership in schools. Challenges to implementation of distributed leadership in schools will be identified along with the problematisation of distributed leadership.

Introduction: Culture and organisation

School reform has become a major concern for education systems across many countries as governments seek to cope with the demands of the 21st century (Sperandio et al. 2009). By improving their schools, education systems endeavour to compete with or match the success of their internationally-recognised counterparts (ibid). However, globalisation has created an elusive overarching conceptualisation that currently is marketed internationally as universal education. Globalisation and neoliberalism have commodified systems including education under the auspices of universalism (Nguyen et al. 2009). On the one hand, universalist sentiment compels unified definitions and perceptions of education issues around school improvement and leadership. Commodification of education, on the other hand, means that
schools’ best practices will be confined to services that can be marketed and sold globally (Nguyen et al. 2009; Romanowski 2017).

The urge to join the global market has influenced many countries with diverse cultures and prospects to embrace best practices to reform their school systems (Sperandio et al. 2009). In their search to fix education systems, many countries see Western education theories as exclusive and unquestionable means to transform schools (Nguyen et al. 2009; Rajasekar & Beh 2013; Sperandio et al. 2009). However, transfer of reform programs across cultures can present unexpected obstacles to school transformation (Sperandio et al. 2009). Nguyen et al. warn that countries under pressure to transform their education system might not notice the limitations of foreign reform programs.

As such, importation of Western education reform programs has attracted research interest from cross-cultural theorists. Recent studies have examined the influence of culture on implementation of Western reform programs into education systems in Non-Western countries. These studies have examined the effects of migrating reform programs and importing cultures on each other through the implementation process. There is growing concern that program transference that is not preceded by critical examination of reform agendas might lead to superficial changes. That is, educators might appear to have changed their practices to respond to reform programs while their practices still resonate with their entrenched values (Nguyen et al. 2009; Beh & Kennan 2013; Rajasekar & Beh 2013; Sperandio et al. 2009).

Sperandio et al. (2009) discuss case studies of two international schools, in Colombia and in Kuwait. These two schools imported development programs that
were originally designed in the United States. The study aimed to explain the phenomenon outlined above at the local level. Findings revealed that transference of reform programs should be preceded by careful and genuine assimilation of the ‘cultural realities’ of the contexts to which programs will be transferred (p. 719). Moreover, the study suggested that further research on migration of educational polices should address the true motivations for importing these programs. The study argues that at national and local levels, policies might be borrowed to gain recognition and boost systems’ credibility. Both schools in this study worked closely with North American education institutions to improve their status and gain US-based accreditation.

Nguyen et al. (2009) identified domination of Western education reform programs on Non-Western countries as a form of neo-colonisation. They argued that Non-Western countries that wish to compete globally are coerced to look to Western education models. Their paper introduced a case study of a Western education method applied in an Asian context. The study warned against ‘cross cultural cloning’ (p. 124). It also called for comparison of the cultures of the two contexts to understand how imported programs can be reconstructed from the perspective of host cultures. Danielewicz-Betz (2013) examined westernisation of Arab higher education systems and the utility of North American education and leadership models in the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Like Nguyen et al. (2009), Danielewicz-Betz warns that the allure and accessibility of Western reform programs may lead to false universalism and uncritical acceptance of Western education theories (p. 153).
There have been many studies on leadership across cultures (Alves et al. 2006; Dickson et al. 2003; House et al. 2004; Jogulu 2010; Phillips & Ochs 2003). However, similar studies in the Arab world have been mainly concerned with cross culture and leadership in business and management (Abdalla & Al-Homoud 2001; Ali 1989, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1996; Ali & Al-Kazemi 2007; Ali & Al-Shakis 1985; Ali et al. 1997; Al-Dabbagh & Assaad 2010; Al Suwaidi 2008; Al-Yahya 2008; Beh & Kennan 2013; Rajasekar et al. 2013; Schmidt, Moideenkutty & Al-Busaidi 2013). The influence of Arab cultural values on practices of school leaders has received less attention. Many of these studies examined the appropriateness of international reform programs to improve schools in Arab countries (see for example, Akkary 2014; Akkary & Rizk 2012, 2014; Lane-Kelso, Gunn & Al Washahi 2015; Romanowski 2014, 2017; Sperandio et al. 2009).

In two papers, Romanowski (2014, 2017) used critical discourse analysis to examine migration of Australian and North American education standards to Qatar and another GCC country. Romanowski concludes that interpretation of knowledge is culturally bound. He argues that the process of inviting accreditation and professional standards into different education systems should be preceded by critical examination of their applicability to other cultures. Further, he argues that de-contextualisation of these reform programs overlooks the influence of culture on their implementation.

The need to interrogate borrowed education reform packages was echoed in studies by Akkary (2014) and Akkary and Risk (2014). Both studies suggested that imported education reform packages have not met their objectives to improve social, political and economic conditions in Arab countries. Akkary (2014) examined
reform agendas in five Arab countries including Jordan. Akkary called for a paradigm shift to liberate Arab education systems from practices that conform to Western models. The study argued that genuine reform entails ‘culturally grounded understanding of the recommended Western practices on effective school improvement and implementation’ (p. 196). Akkary and Risk (2014) examined the literature on successful school reform programs to hold a comparable interrogative study of reform programs in the Arab world. Both studies asserted that reform programs should be planned in combination with capacity building among education stakeholders. In addition, the authors argued that more time should be allowed for school improvement to take place.

Litz and Scott (2016) used Hofstede’s (1980, 1993) cultural framework to examine Emirati principals’ and teachers’ perceptions of transformational leadership practices in schools in the United Arab Emirates and compare this to perceptions among their Western counterparts (p. 566). The study concluded by proposing a Middle Eastern or Islamic model of transformational leadership and calling for large scale longitudinal, qualitative, and grounded theory studies to compile more data. Such studies illustrate the consensus among researchers in this field on the need to employ a critical lens to reform programs that are developed in Western countries. These studies illustrate that reform programs are assumed to transform school performance in the Arab world, which holds different cultural values to the countries in which these policies originated.

In Jordan, some studies have examined practices of principals in Jordanian public schools (Abu-Tineh et al. 2009; Alshurfat 2003; Al-Omari 2013; Ashraah et al. 2015; Khasawneh et al. 2012; Salameh 2011; Sakarneh 2014). However, no study
has examined principals’ practices from a socio-cultural perspective. Moreover, few of these studies referred to the influence of tribal cultural values on the findings of leadership studies in Jordanian schools (Alshurfat 2003; Abu-Tineh et al. 2009; Sakarneh 2014).

For example, Ashraah et al. (2015) conducted a diagnostic study of the training needs of principals at public schools with kindergarten classes. The study showed the need to provide consistent training to principals of public schools with kindergarten classes. Ashraah et al. argued that this training should focus on skills and knowledge that principals themselves had identified. Khasawneh et al. (2012) examined the effect of transformational leadership practices on teachers’ engagement in and dedication to work in Jordanian vocational schools. The study showed that the two factors are linked. It called for more training programs in transformational leadership for school principals. Nevertheless, neither study referred to the effect of culture on principals’ practices.

Salameh (2011) carried out a leadership study in Jordanian public schools to examine the extent to which teachers believed principals’ practices reflected servant leadership practices. However, Salameh did not connect the study findings to cultural influences. Al Omari’s (2013) study classified school principals’ leadership frames as perceived by their teachers. Likewise, Al Omari did not discuss how culture can inform participants’ perceptions and responses.

In his PhD thesis, The Role of Primary School Teachers in Education Change in Jordan, Alshurfat (2003) evaluated primary school teachers’ views on JERP. In particular, Alshurfat examined the effect of JERP on teachers’ knowledge, beliefs
and practices. Similarly, Alshurfat did not address the role of culture in teachers’ perception and practices.

However, Abu-Tineh et al. (2009) examined the implementation of transformational leadership in Jordanian public schools. They pointed to the effect of Jordanian cultural values on educators’ understanding and implementation of Western knowledge and concepts as they try to maintain their Jordanian character. They concluded that implementation of transformational leadership practices in Jordanian public schools is limited, according to indications from teachers.

Sakarneh (2014) shared a similar concern in his examination of teachers’ and principals’ views on the applicability of reform programs. Sakarneh cautioned against importing education programs that rely on philosophies developed in different cultures. He recommended that program importation be preceded by close examination of whether the standards of the imported program and those of the host culture are compatible. In their study, although not directly about school leadership, Buckner and Hodges (2016) examined how national culture can change people’s interpretation of meanings that appear fixed. The authors compared the social meaning of cheating on high school exit exams in Jordan and Morocco.

In addition, many nation-wide studies and evaluation reports have assessed the success of ERFKE and obstacles to its implementation (Ababneh et al. 2014; Hua et al. 2014; NCHRD 2009; Shyne 2008; Tweissi et al. 2014; Sharif et al. 2008). These studies and reports were used as secondary data to triangulate some of the findings of this research. However, none of these studies or reports analysed their findings from a cultural perspective.
As mentioned earlier, culture and leadership have received increasing attention from researchers since 1996 and 1997 (Dickson et al. 2003). This literature shows the effect of leaders’ cultural values and practices on organisations’ performance (Alves et al. 2006; Hofstede 1980, 2001; Hofstede et al. 2010). Initially, I intended this study to examine principals’ position on implementation of ERfKE in Jordanian public schools. I aimed to show the factors that principals consider are obstacles to transforming schools’ practices. However, the findings of this study have revealed a strong connection between Jordanian culture and leadership practices at schools. Therefore, consistent with grounded research methodology, the findings of this study have redirected its focus.

This chapter started by reviewing previous studies on this topic to reveal a gap in the literature. As illustrated above, no study has examined the effect of Jordanian cultural values on the implementation of an imported education reform program. Therefore, by explaining leadership practices in Jordanian public schools during the implementation of ERfKE and exploring how migrating reform programs are mediated through host countries’ cultural values, this research contributes to the literature on cross cultural leadership in schools in Jordan and other countries with similar cultures.

2.1 Context of the research

The education system in Jordan

The education sector in Jordan is directed and supervised by MoE. The functions and structure of MoE are defined by The Education Act of 1994 and Regulation No. 1 of 1995. The Act sanctions all Jordanians’ equal right to education. It outlines the
tasks of MoE as:

…establishing public education institutions and administering them; supervising private education institutions; providing appropriate school buildings; encouraging students activities and providing them with counselling and health care; encouraging scientific research; strengthening educational links between Jordan and other countries; establishing adult education centres and reinforcing relationships with the community (IBE 2011, p. 4).

*Regulation No. 1* outlines units in MoE:

- ‘The central level, which is responsible for designing education policies and plans, their implementation and follow-up. It comprises the office of the Minister, the Secretary-General, general directors, and specialised directors.

- The General Directorates of Education in the twelve governorates (or provinces). They supervise education policy and plans as well as their implementation at the governorate level. A committee for co-ordination is formed in each general directorate headed by the general-director. There are six General Directorates.

- The District Directorates of Education in the governorates. They supervise education policy at the directorate level in the governorate or district and make efforts to improve education. Each District Directorate is headed by the director of education assisted by directors for technical and administrative affairs. There are twenty-six Directorates at the district level’ (ibid, p. 4).

MoE’s philosophy of education emanates from ‘the Jordanian Constitution, the
Islamic Arab civilisation, the principles of the Great Arab Revolt and the national experience of the country’. MoE aims at:

- ‘Building up citizens who believe in Allah, understand Islamic doctrine, and who are committed to Islamic and Arab supreme values, loyal to their country, principles and nation, fully aware of their rights, performing their duties in a way which creates a balanced personality in all aspects and leads to an aware openness on others while maintaining their identity.

- Preparing citizens who are well-equipped with skills and knowledge required for the knowledge-based economy (knowledge, communication and intercommunication, teamwork, scientific thinking, personal, technology, future career, and scientific research skills) to contribute in building up their community.

- Providing learning opportunities for all and achieving equality and equity in educational services on the qualitative and quantitative aspects, focusing on quality development of education in line with students’ learning levels.

- Developing efficient educational administration and focusing on activating the school administration.

- Promoting internal and external competence of Educational System in Jordan’ (MoE 2008, pp. 11-12).

2.1.1 Pre-tertiary education in Jordan

Pre-tertiary education in Jordan is divided into three stages: kindergarten, basic and secondary education. This is regulated under \textit{The Education Act}, which articulates
‘the philosophy and objectives of education, the education policy, the functions of the Ministry of Education, and the tasks of the Boards of Education’ (IBE 2011, p. 3). Figure 2-1 illustrates the stages of pre-tertiary education in Jordan. These are:

1. Kindergarten, for students aged four to five.

2. Basic education, for students aged six to 16. Basic education is compulsory and is offered free of charge in public schools.

3. Secondary education, for students aged 17 to 18. Secondary education is optional. Students choose academic or vocational studies. Students in the academic stream take the national exam for school leavers, the General Secondary Education Certificate Examination. Students’ results in this exam determine their eligibility for tertiary education. Students in the vocational stream join the workforce after they finish their education (MoE 2008).
2.1.2 Education reform

Jordan first attempted education reform in the early 1970s. Reforms continued with limited success until the mid-1980s, when Jordan began an extensive review of its education system (NCHRD 2009). In 1987, the late King Hussein launched the National Conference for Education Reform (Sakarneh 2014; Alshurfat 2003). This led to the Human Resources Development Sector Investment Loan Project launching Jordan’s first reform program to enhance student achievement (NCHRD 2009). Reforms under this program were to be implemented in three phases: 1989 to 1995, 1995 to 2000, and 2000 to 2005 (Alshurfat 2003).
Abdullah II prioritised education, social and economic reform in policymaking when he became King of Jordan in 1999 (MoE 2008). In 2002, Jordan held the Vision Forum for the Future of Education. The Forum prioritised four aspects of education:

- ‘Lifelong learning
- Response to economy development and meeting its requirements
- Access to new information and communications technology, and
- Qualitative education’ (ibid, p. 25).

The forum focused attention on the need for Jordan to respond to the changing global economy and reform its education system. This led Jordan to introduce ERfKE (ibid).

2.1.2.1 Education Reform for Knowledge Economy (ERfKE)

In 2003, MoE launched ERfKE to build the capacity of Jordanian citizens to compete in the global knowledge-based economy (DCU 2013; NCHRD 2009; Tweissi et al. 2014). ERfKE is ‘a 10 year, multi-donor education strategy that counts on financial and technical support from the World Bank, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and local communities’ (Tweissi et al. 2014, p. 12). NCHRD (2009) states that:

The new vision aimed at Jordan to become the ‘regional hub of IT’ and a ‘knowledge society’. ERfKE aimed at transforming the entire education system (K–12) in a way that it would produce graduates equipped with knowledge, skills, attitudes and competencies required for a globally competitive knowledge economy (p. 19).
ERfKE was implemented in two stages. ERfKE I ran from 2003 to 2009 and cost [US] $380 million. It included the four components that are illustrated in Figure 2-2.

**Figure 2-2: Education Reform for Knowledge Economy (MoE 2008, p. 26)**

ERfKE II ran from 2010 to 2014. ERfKE II extended the scope of ERfKE I. It consolidated achievements made in ERfKE I and targeted reforms at school improvement, teachers’ professional learning (ibid), and capacity building at central and field levels (DCU 2013). It had five components:

- Component One: Establishment of a National School-based Development System
- Component Two: Monitoring and Evaluation and Organisational Development
- Component Three: Development of Teaching and Learning
- Component Four: Development of Special Focus Program Development
- Component Five: Improvement of Physical Learning Environments (ibid, pp. 3–4).

2.1.2.2 School and Directorate Development Program (SDDP)

With assistance from MoE’s international implementing partner, CIDA, SDDP intended to move towards school decentralisation by building their capacity to follow centralised policies while functioning as autonomous units (Tweissi et al. 2014, p. 12). Implementation of SDDP took place in three phases:


ERfKE views schools as the centre of change in the education sector, with responsibility for providing quality education to prepare students for the knowledge-based economy. SDDP supports implementation of the first objective of ERfKE II (ibid). SDDP stipulates that schools, in cooperation with field directorates and MoE, are responsible for identifying and addressing their own needs.
To this end, schools stakeholders, including parents, students, teachers and principals, are expected to collaborate to identify schools’ needs. This self-review process culminates in school stakeholders outlining an SIP that identifies the schools’ priorities. School priorities are sent to local directorates, who plan and allocate funding for implementation. ‘This process follows a scientific methodology in developing education institutions’ performance depending on objective evaluation tools that are both reliable and valid’ (MoE 2008, p. 32). By assisting schools and education directorates to achieve this goal, SDDP will have established a system for school improvement. The school self-review follows a school performance development program that covers four domains: teaching and learning, student environment, school and community, and leadership and management. This is illustrated in Figure 2-3.

Each school’s principal is expected to work with a committee of teacher leaders to address the four domains for school improvement. In addition, teachers are invited to help implement the program at different stages (CIDA & MoE 2010). The school development process involves an assumed transformation of leadership practices in Jordanian public schools. According to a 2008 report by MoE:

In the past, the school principal was responsible for planning, distributing responsibilities and following up and assessing the staff performance. But since the Ministry adopted an ambitious project that aims at developing education towards a knowledge-based economy, there arose the need for a better planning that involves all people concerned in the schooling system including principals’ assistants, teachers, students and members of local community (p. 40).
The Process of School Development

**Stage One – Initiation**
- Supervisors contact principals and arranges for staff orientation
- Supervisor provides orientation and training with principal to school staff in SDP
- Principal establishes a School Development Team (of which/she is chair)
- The School Development Team creates a work plan for SDP process

**Stage Two – Self-review**
- Each principal, teacher, school staff complete their respective tools
- The students and parents complete their respective tools
- The school community meets in groups and shares their responses to the tools according to the four domains
- The Principal and the School Development team identify documents that can provide further evidence relative to school performance in each of the Domains
- Domains or Aspects for deeper exploration are selected

**Stage Three – Analysis and Planning**
- The results of these meetings are reviewed in relation to the views of teachers and principals by the School Development Team
- The School Development Team analyses the data
- The Domain Team analyses the data
- The Domain teams meet in groups to discuss and reach consensus about school performance level
- The School Development Team selects priorities and creates the SIP
- The SIP is reviewed and endorsed by the school staff
- The SIP is submitted to the Field Directorate and local community for information and support

**Stage Four – Improving the School**
- The School Development Team creates an Action Plan
- The school acts on the plan with the support of the Field Directorate and community
- The school reports the results of the plan to the Field Directorate and local community

Figure 2-3: The process of school development (CIDA & MoE 2010, pp. 3-4)
The development process shown in Figure 2-3 states that responsibility for leadership in schools is not confined to formally designated leaders. Principals must work with a team of lead teachers to analyse data, select priorities, and create an SIP. This is followed by an action plan that outlines implementation of the SIP and reporting of results to the directorate. In addition, the team is expected to liaise with the school community on implementation of the SIP. In sum, ERfKE’s leadership program and SDDP have introduced formalised structures of distributed leadership into the Jordanian education system. Defined patterns of distribution formally coordinate and regularise distribution of leadership. Such patterns include distribution by design (Spillane 2006), institutionalised arrangements (Gronn 2003), and planful alignment (Leithwood et al. 2009).

Distributed leadership has its own unique definition, attributes and values. These are expected to blend with the context in which it is implemented (that is, Jordanian public schools). However, values are culturally mediated (Nguyen et al., 2009; Rajasekar & Beh 2013; Sperandio et al. 2009). Jordanian public schools have their own established culture and values. These might or might not resonate with the values embedded in distributed leadership. For this reason, the next section will explain distributed leadership to examine its applicability to Jordanian culture.

2.2 Distributed leadership

The recent move in many countries towards decentralisation of schools (Naidoo 2005; Stinnette 1993; Winkler & Gershberg 2000) has made school leadership roles more complex. School leadership has become ‘greedy work’ (Gronn 2003, p. 285). This has thrust unfamiliar demands on schools. Principals’ leadership and managerial responsibilities exceed the scope of traditional education leadership to
involve technical business management on top of instructional leadership. As managers and business leaders, school principals are expected to identify schools’ needs and to prepare budgets to address funding issues. These include purchases of instructional supplies, management of canteens, support for school activities, maintenance of school facilities, provision of transport and attention to standard health and safety measures. As instructional leaders, on the other hand, principals are expected to oversee curriculum development amid moves toward pedagogical and assessment practices that make the learner the focal point.

In addition, principals are expected to possess leadership soft skills—well developed interpersonal skills and dispositions that enable them to engage with a wide range of stakeholders (Calderin 2005; Leithwood et al. 2009; Moore 2009). Principals also are expected to ensure ongoing professional learning and developmental support for staff. Beyond the focus on professional learning to inform teachers’ instruction, principals are expected to understand and participate in learning to support widespread education reform. Beyond leading and managing their schools’ internal affairs, principals are expected to network with the school community, including parents and other education institutions and authorities.

The introduction of standards-based education reform also has brought concern over accountability for students’ learning outcomes to the fore. Elmore (2000) asserts that ‘the fundamental unit of accountability should be the school because that is the organisational unit where teaching and learning actually occurs’ (p. 4). These emerging pressures have pushed principalship in a new direction, with the focus on the ‘conceptual framework’ of leadership practices (Spillane et al. 2004, p. 4) rather than leaders’ practices to improve schools’ performance (Macbeath
2009; Spillane 2005, 2006; Spillane et al. 2007; Starr 2014). Research has shown that the complex demands of school leadership cannot be addressed by one person. Few individuals could possess the managerial and leadership traits needed for school improvement. In this sense, leadership practices are not the same as leaders’ practices (Elmore 2000; Gronn 2002; Harris 2005; Macbeath 2009; Spillane 2005, 2006; Spillane et al. 2004; Starr 2014).

These recent challenges in the education sector have exposed myths about superior leaders. They disprove the common perception of leadership as the actions of formal school leaders. This suggests the need for functional school structures that can enhance instruction (Gronn 2002; Harris & Spillane 2008; Spillane 2005). For this reason, literature on school leadership has introduced distributed leadership as a leadership model that shares duties and responsibilities among school stakeholders.

2.2.1 What is distributed leadership?

Distributed leadership is ‘the leadership idea of the moment’ (Harris 2009b, p. 11). It is the centre of focus for researchers and leadership practitioners (Dinham 2009; Harris 2009b; Mascall et al. 2009). Distributed leadership is not new—it dates back to the 1950s (Dinham 2009; Gronn 2009b) or perhaps earlier to the mid-1920s (Leithwood et al. 2009). However, it has gained prominence only in the last two decades or so (ibid). As its name implies, distributed leadership is perceived as a joint effort that engages many people in leadership responsibilities (Harris 2005; Spillane 2005). Distributed leadership in schools is a democratic-collective process of strategic planning and resolving problems.
Teachers, teacher leaders and principals are entrusted, based on their skills and experience, to share leadership responsibilities. They lead in formal and informal roles and receive acknowledgement for their work regardless of their position title. They make decisions and are held accountable for them (Harris 2005; Harris & Spillane 2008; Starr 2014). Distributed leadership implies that collaborative efforts that draw on diverse expertise are more appropriate leadership models in modern schools (Harris & Spillane 2008; Hartley 2010a; Starr 2014). Distributed leadership also implies that the task of leading and managing schools cannot be exclusive to educators with ‘charismatic’, ‘heroic’, or superhuman attributes (Day et al. 2004; Leithwood et al. 2009; Macbeath 2009; Pearce & Sims Jr. 2002; Spillane 2005; Spillane & Diamond 2007; Starr 2014).

Harris (2005) explains that distributed leadership locates and reaches out to internal and external, ‘formal and informal leadership expertise’ who can collaborate to coproduce leadership (p.8). For Spillane (2006), distributed leadership is ‘constructed in the interactions between leaders, followers and their situation’ (p. 26). Therefore, it is the outcome of leadership rather than leaders’ practice (ibid). Distributed leadership examines and approaches leadership with a different lens. This broadens our scope from the traditional one leader to the ‘leader plus’ (Spillane 2005, p. 144; Spillane et al. 2007, p. 108). This model invites and welcomes the actions and interactions of multiple leaders, whose interactions may vary in different contexts and situations (Spillane 2006).

However, despite its increasing prominence, distributed leadership is still not clearly defined (Bennett et al. 2003; Dinham 2009; Harris 2007, 2008, 2009b; Leithwood et al. 2009). Harris (2008, 2009b) warns against misunderstanding
distributed leadership as synonymous with random and unstructured patterns of shared leadership that ignore participants’ competencies and might drive leaders’ and participants’ practices in the wrong direction. She argues that:

The chameleon like quality of distributed leadership invites both misinterpretation and misunderstanding. One common misunderstanding is that distributed leadership is a convenient ‘catch all’ descriptor for any form of shared, collaborative or extended leadership practice. This view is certainly quite prevalent, blurring further the meaning of the term (Harris 2009b, p. 5).

Spillane (2006) claims that distributed leadership can be similar but is not the same as these leadership models (for example, shared leadership or collaborative leadership). Bennett et al. (2003) identified three attributes that distinguish distributed leadership from other comparable models:

Firstly, distributed leadership highlights leadership as an emergent property of a group or network of interacting individuals. Secondly, distributed leadership suggests openness of the boundaries of leadership.

This means that it is predisposed to widen the conventional net of leaders. Thirdly, distributed leadership entails the view that varieties of expertise are distributed across the many, not the few (p. 7).

There is consensus in the literature that these features distinguish distributed leadership from delegation (for example, Bennett et al. 2003; Hargreaves & Fink 2006; Harris 2005, 2007; Spillane 2006; Timperley 2005).

Delegation involves division of tasks among practitioners with defined roles. Distributed leadership ‘comprises dynamic interactions between multiple leaders and followers’ (Timperley 2005, p. 396; Timperley 2009, p. 197). Therefore, distributed leadership is not confined to concrete structures with set duties that various people are expected to perform. Instead, it is the outcome of individuals’
interdependent efforts to deal with their particular situation in the role they occupy in the school (Gronn 2000, 2002; Harris 2005; Spillane 2004, 2005, 2006). Distributed leadership should be practiced in an environment that is conducive to open self-expression, exchange of expertise, questioning of assumptions and validating successful practices (Harris 2005).

Another source of confusion is whether advocating theorists’ position on distributed leadership is descriptive or normative (Harris 2007). Descriptive research describes paradigms of distribution (for example, Spillane 2006; Gronn 2003). Normative research focuses on enhancing our understanding of distributed leadership (Harris 2007) (for example, Harris 2007, 2008). Mascall et al. (2009) maintain that much research on distributed leadership is descriptive rather than normative. This is despite increasing attention to distributed leadership in the literature.

2.2.3 Patterns of distribution

The descriptive literature on distributed leadership has offered several conceptual frameworks of leadership distribution (Gronn 2002, 2003; Spillane 2006; Leithwood et al. 2007, 2009, Mascall et al. 2009). Gronn (2002, 2003) created the earliest distributed leadership taxonomy. This laid the foundation for the work of other prominent distributed leadership theorists. Gronn (2002) originally identified two actions of leadership: ‘additive’ and ‘holistic’ (p. 429).

Additive or numerical patterns are prevalent in organisations that have one leader. Work is divided among some or all members. Leadership practices remain uncoordinated and disorganised (Mascall, et al. 2009). In holistic patterns of
leadership, work is purposefully organised, coordinated and interrelated (ibid). Gronn (2002) maintains that holistic action is ‘concertive rather than aggregated’ (p. 429). Gronn outlines three concertive forms of distributed leadership: ‘collaborative modes of engagement which arise spontaneously in the workplace’; ‘intuitive understanding that develops as part of close working relations among colleagues’; ‘institutionalised arrangements which constitute attempts to regularise distributed action’ (p. 429).

Spillane (2005) developed the idea of holistic leadership by introducing the concept of the ‘leader plus’ (p. 144). The notion of the ‘leader plus’ denotes that the leadership practice produced by two or more leaders surpasses the sum of those leaders’ individual practice (Spillane, Halverson and Diamond 2004, p.16).

Spillane (2006) identifies three arrangements of distribution at schools:

- ‘Distribution of leadership by design: this can happen in two ways. First, creating formally designated leadership positions or reframing existing positions can shape the distribution among formal leaders and teachers. Second, creating structures and routine that can enable the distribution of responsibility for leadership and develop leaders as teachers’ (p. 42).

- ‘Distribution of leadership by default: [staff acting alone or collectively when they] identify an area in which leadership is lacking and step in to fill the vacuum’ (p. 45).

- ‘Distribution of leadership through crisis [which is similar to] Gronn’s spontaneous collaboration’ (pp. 46–47).
Leithwood et al. model of distributed leadership (for example, 2007, 2009; Mascall et al. 2009) build on Gronn’s taxonomy of holistic leadership (Mascall et al. 2009, p.84). They develop four patterns of distributed leadership:

- ‘Planful alignment: In this pattern, the tasks or functions of those providing leadership have been given prior, planful thought by organisational members, which is comparable to what Gronn (2003) labels “institutionalised practice”.
- Spontaneous alignment: In this pattern, leadership tasks and functions are distributed with little or no planning. Leadership functions appear to be aligned across leadership sources by chance, habit or for some other reason which is comparable to Gronn (2003) labels “spontaneous collaboration”.
- Spontaneous misalignment: This pattern is similar to spontaneous alignment in the lack of planning for leadership distribution but chance, habit, and so on, in this case, result in misalignment and largely negative consequences for the organisation. Under supportive conditions, it seems possible to shift the people associated with this form of leadership distribution to more planful forms.
- Anarchic misalignment: this pattern features substantial planning and alignment in a sub-unit (such as a department) but an oppositional or competitive disposition in relation to the organisation as a whole’ (Mascall et al. 2009, pp. 84–85).

What is common to these frameworks is the formalised structure of distributed leadership—whether distribution by design, institutionalised arrangements, and planful alignment—that appear in ERfKE.
As outlined above, Gronn’s taxonomy has inspired the work of other theorists. However, Gronn (2009a) departed from his original enthusiasm towards distributed leadership to advocate ‘hybrid’ leadership ‘or mixed forms of leadership at schools’ (p. 39). Gronn also cautioned against the growing enthusiasm for distributed leadership (ibid). Gronn argued that the need to shift attention from heroic patterns of leadership ‘has accorded it [distributed leadership] a kind of counter hegemonic status’ that has led to its recent prominence in the literature (p. 19).

The literature on distributed leadership has presented different models for leadership in schools. Even so, successful distributed leadership patterns share a focus on coordination and shared accountability between members holding both formal and informal designated leadership positions. Leadership practices within these successful patterns of distribution can be enhanced through developing collective staff efficacy, productivity and competence (ibid). To sum up, Harris (2009a) notes that high performing schools warrant the transference of effective leadership practices within permeable horizontal and vertical distributed leadership structures alike:

Leadership structures in the most effective schools were becoming ‘fatter’ rather than ‘flatter’ and the relationship between vertical and horizontal leadership was becoming more porous and inter-changeable (p. 256).

2.2.4 Role of the principal

Distributed leadership does not make redundant formal leadership roles and responsibilities. Principals’ role in enhancing participants’ leadership abilities is at the core of distributed leadership (Spillane 2006; Harris 2008). Harris (2008) maintains:
Distributed leadership theory would recognise that many people will have the potential to exercise leadership in any organisation but the key to success will be the way that leadership is facilitated, orchestrated and supported (p. 173). Distributed leadership does not devalue the role of the principal. Principals’ responsibilities are not abolished or eliminated. Instead, they are renovated (Elmore 2000; Gronn 2002; Harris 2005).

Distributed leadership requires coordinated and planned efforts to build the capacity of new leaders. Formal and informal leadership activities are most effective when they are recognised, coordinated and planned (ibid). Effectiveness at work depends on trust, motivation and collective productivity with strong, mature relationships and professionalism among employees (Angelle et al. 2011). Elmore (2000) asserts that:

Distributed leadership does not mean that no one is responsible for the overall performance of the organisation.

It means, rather, that the job of administrative leaders is primarily about enhancing the skills and knowledge of people in the organisation, creating a common culture of expectations around the use of those skills and knowledge, holding the various pieces of the organisation together in a productive relationship with each other, and holding individuals accountable for their contributions to the collective result (p. 15).

Therefore, leaders’ emotional intelligence is essential to facilitate new leadership structures in schools by enhancing unified structures and outlining appropriate actions (Calderin 2005; Leithwood et al., 2009; Moore 2009). In other words, distributed leadership requires formal leaders to assess their ability to foster collegiality and trust among leaders to lead them (Harris 2005). Principals must motivate and support their staff. They must allocate time for collaboration and engagement in professional development to enhance their capacity as teachers and leaders (Fullan 2011, 2012; Harris 2005).
2.2.2 Empirical evidence

In *Distributed Leadership: According to Evidence*, Harris (2008) argues that literature on leadership features numerous theories about leadership best practice that originated from business and were introduced to schools without empirical support for their effectiveness. Harris asserts that the usefulness of distributed leadership and other leadership models in schools must be theoretically and empirically proven. Without empirical research to investigate its implementation and effect on learning, distributed leadership is at risk of becoming a dispensable theory (Harris & Spillane 2008).

Distributed leadership, however, is ‘a new leadership kid on the block’ (Gronn 2009a, p. 18). Despite its increasing popularity, there is insufficient empirical data to support its relevance to school improvement (Gunter 2013, 2016; Hallinger & Heck 2009; Harris 2005, 2007, 2009). Nevertheless, Harris claims that in the most growing organisations, leadership structures are distributed (Harris 2016). Early empirical evidence around the implementation of distributed leadership also tends to be ‘encouraging if not definitive’ (Harris 2009, p. 255).

The literature on distributed leadership gradually is being supported by studies that provide evidence about its positive impact on school performance and student learning (Harris 2008; Harris & Spillane 2008). Harris (2008, 2009b) presents recent empirical studies to show that distributed leadership can create conditions that are conducive to teachers’ work in professional learning communities (Little 1990; Louis & Marks 1998; Rosenholtz 1989; Stoll & Louis 2007). These empirical studies perceive distributed leadership as one means to enhance organisational performance (for example, Bell et al. 2006; Glickman et al. 2001; Gold et al. 2002; Harris &
Chapman 2002; Little 1990; Morrisey 2000; Rosenholtz 1989) and organisational change (Blase & Blasé 1999; Camburn & Won Han 2009; Graetz 2000; Hallinger & Heck 2009; Harris 2008; Leithwood et al. 2009a, 2009b; Mayrowetz et al. 2009; Portin 1998; Spillane & Camburn 2006;). This suggests that distributed leadership can improve the quality of teaching and learning (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond 2001).

Harris (2008, 2009b) also refers to large scale longitudinal studies to show that teachers’ engagement in decision making can improve instruction and lead to better learning outcomes (for example, Copland 2003; Harris & Muijs 2004; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Leithwood et al. 2006; Silins & Mulford 2002; Spillane et al. 2001, 2004). In sum, Harris (2008, 2009b) has shown that distributed leadership is gradually being supported by empirical research. This has provided some evidence that distributed leadership can enhance organisational performance and improve learners’ outcomes. However, further empirical research is needed (Timperley 2009; Mascall et al. 2009). Despite growing empirical evidence, Harris maintains that ‘distributed leadership is theoretically rich and empirically poor’ (Harris 2009a, p. 255).

2.2.5 Problematising distributed leadership

This research aimed to examine factors that contribute to implementation of distributed leadership in Jordanian public schools. The previous sections have identified descriptive and normative positions of leading theorists towards distributed leadership. However, distributed leadership spans several positions in the educational leadership field other than the descriptive and normative. These
positions or knowledge domains are aptly categorised by Gunter, Hall & Bragg (2013) as:

- Functional approaches: ‘Functional approaches focus on removing dysfunctions from the system, particularly in a globalising economy where governments have adopted modernising accountability processes’ (p.259). These include functionally descriptive and functionally normative positions examined in the earlier sections.

- Critical approaches: ‘This part of the field raises serious questions about the rush to acclaim, and make claims for and about distributed leadership’ (p. 265). This position is concerned with the notions of power relations, agency and risk on the one hand and examining the context where distributed leadership takes place on the other hand.

- Socially critical approaches: Socially critical approaches have ‘two main purposes: first, to reveal and evidence a critique of the field’s depoliticisation of leadership [with an underpinning assumption that distributed leadership is political], and second, to describe and advocate more socially just forms of leadership’ (p. 568). A socially critical position is therefore not only concerned with identifying and deconstructing power structures. It also explores the chances to move from power deconstruction to emancipation to provide more rights and opportunities for school practitioners assuming both informal and formal designated leadership positions.

The following section expands the scope of discussion beyond the functional normative and descriptive. It assumes a ‘critical and socially critical positions’ (ibid) towards the notion of leadership distribution in schools. The following section problematises distributed leadership by illustrating contradictions in its assumptions about risk and power. These contradictions could hold significant implications for implementation of distributed leadership in schools.

Calkins et al. (2007) caution that ‘We are at risk of making the mistake of trying to do the scale up [of turnaround] before we know what the work looks like’ (Peck & Reitzug 2014, pp. 30-31). Despite its growing appeal, distributed leadership
holds the potential to be everything or to turn into nothing (Spillane & Diamond 2007). Spillane and Diamond question whether distributed leadership is a new way to approach leadership in schools, or if ‘is it simply another case of the emperor having no (new) clothes?’ (p. 2). In this sense, the shift towards distributed leadership may pose risks for schools.

In *Interrogating conceptions of leadership*, Starr (2014) argues that policies and notions about leadership in systematic practice highlight a contradiction between prevalent traditional ideas of the heroic leader and distributed leadership. The contradiction is perpetuated by education leadership itself. Starr (2014) found very conservative conceptions of leadership in education policy; for example, in job descriptions and appraisal documents, and among education leaders themselves. She highlights the contradiction:

School leaders’ predominantly traditional or conventional views about leadership are reinforced, and perhaps influenced, by those operating systemically, at the same time as the notion of ‘distributed’ leadership is gaining high prominence in research and educational leadership rhetoric (p. 230).

On the system scale, education structures and policy remain more hierarchal than flat. This makes it difficult for schools to share their feedback with senior policy makers (ibid).

This enduring hierarchal relationship between principals and policy makers mimics hierarchal structures in school administration. School principals, themselves positioned as ‘perfunctory middle managers’ (ibid p. 231) in the hierarchy of education policy making, are asked to break down hierarchies by distributing leadership in schools. Starr asserts that:
In reality, a centre or core–periphery power model operates. It is hierarchical and one-way, and assumes power differentials between leaders and followers with decision-making authority at the top.

Both experienced and newly appointed principals commented on a lack of opportunities for cooperative engagement with officers at regional and central levels who control policy, educational narrative, systemic practice and resource allocation (p. 231).

Consequently, the split in theory and practice for implementation of distributed leadership goes beyond school principals’ practices. Therefore, leadership distribution should be instilled more widely in the education sector. Schools are only part of the education system. If the education system does not practice distributed leadership, school leadership must face the dilemma of embracing distributed leadership that adheres to policy but is at odds with traditional hegemonic leadership.

Harris (2005) points to traditional hierarchies as one of three barriers to distributed leadership in schools: ‘distance, culture and structure’ (p. 22). Harris argues that distributed leadership can be implemented only once these structures are removed. Hartley (2010b) criticises education policies that introduce distributed leadership only in schools:

Distributed leadership is very much set in what Bauman calls ‘solid modernity’. It represents a slight loosening of bureaucracy, and is confined mainly to one bounded organisation, the school, which itself remains relatively isolated (p. 354).

Robin Alexander (2004) warns that distributed leadership might be a strategy for MoE to retain control over practices in schools while seeming to offer schools more autonomy (Hatcher 2005).
Fitzgerald and Gunter (2008) raise similar concerns about distributing leadership at the micro level. They wonder if distributed leadership can be implemented while policy sanctions centralised top-down leadership practices in schools. They argue that, ‘by the codification of practices and standards’, education reform places greater control on teachers and impedes distribution of leadership (p. 335). They suggest that this threatens teachers’ autonomy in schools (see Fitzgerald & Gunter 2008, p. 335, citing Codd 2005).

These arguments pose questions about the ‘situation’ that is ‘the defining element of leadership practice’ (Spillane 2006, p. 4). Distributed leadership theorists assert that leadership practice responds and adapts to its context (Mascall et al. 2009; Spillane 2006). Distributed leadership cannot be separated from the effect of school structure on its routine and tools (Harris 2009b; Spillane 2006). Moreover, there remains a lack of evidence to support the effectiveness of distributed leadership (Hallinger & Heck 2009; Leithwood et al. 2009; Timperley 2009). Hartley (2010b) argues that empirical research has shown little evidence on that distributed leadership improves student achievement:

In England, the government has set great store by distributed leadership, notwithstanding well researched notes of caution that there is no direct causal relationship between distributed leadership and pupils’ achievement (see Hartley 2010, p. 354, citing Leithwood et al. 2009).

This lack of evidence is worsened by distributed leadership’s conceptual malleability. This can lead to the term being misunderstood in empirical research and may distort research findings (Harris 2009b). For example, distributed leadership is often misinterpreted as the antipode of hierarchal leadership (ibid). Harris argues that:
While distributed leadership is certainly an alternative way of construing leadership practice and can be situated in relation to “top down” models of leadership, it is not the opposite. Distributed leadership, essentially involves both the vertical and lateral dimensions of leadership practice (ibid, p.6).

Hartley (2007, 2010a) warns against assuming that distributed leadership is democratic, arguing that this is not necessarily how it is practiced in schools. For example, schools seldom choose their formal leaders. This, Hartley (2007) asserts, is the first failure of distributed leadership to embrace democratic principles. It shows that parents, students and teachers are not trusted or encouraged to decide who should act as their formal leader (ibid). Moreover, there is the question of power and control versus accord and understanding (ibid). Hartley (2007, 2010a) again warns against ignoring the micro-politics of leadership. Hartley claims research has yet to explore distributed leadership in relation to use and abuse of power.

Hatcher (2005) also finds this discrepancy between teachers’ empowerment and capacity building as leaders on the one hand, and persistent top-down administrative structures on the other. Hatcher therefore calls to create flat structures for teachers’ collaboration that are parallel to and independent from school hierarchies. Otherwise, internal distribution of responsibility can mean that decisions and actions by teachers in informal leadership roles are not received with respect and acceptance (Timperley 2005). Timperley raises the concern that:

Although formally appointed leaders do not automatically command respect and authority, teacher leaders may be particularly vulnerable to being openly disrespected and disregarded because they do not carry formal authority (p. 412).
In addition, Peck and Reitzug (2014) argue that the idea of distributed leadership as the sum of interactions between multiple leaders is one of the ‘vexing paradoxes that characterise the recent fervour for school turnaround’ (p. 8). They argue that:

The literature on turnaround schooling places a heavy emphasis on distributed leadership, yet the federal government’s turnaround policy places the principal in an almost iconic position as the individual fundamentally responsible for school success or failure (p. 26).

School principals are appointed, appraised, and held accountable on the basis of their individualist performance, rather than their schools’ (Peck & Reitzug 2014; Starr 2014; Wallace 2001). This practice continues despite calls for distributed leadership in education. This increases the risk that principals must carry (Wallace 2001). Wallace argues that:

Heads alone are charged with legal responsibility for running the school in the oversight of the governing body. The accountability measures have increased the likelihood that headteachers will be publicly vilified if evidence is revealed of failure to implement central government reforms or to reach stipulated targets for educational standards (p. 156).

Principals might be inclined to limit leadership distribution because of concerns that it could lead to ineffective and faulty practices (ibid) or to ‘the greater distribution of incompetence’ (Timperley 2005, p. 417), for which they are held accountable.

Distributed leadership also holds some risk for teachers. Teachers may find leadership roles and titles ‘highly seductive’ (Fitzgerald & Gunter 2008, p. 334). However, increased leadership burdens and responsibilities do not always accompany an equal distribution of power (Fitzgerald & Gunter 2008; Ritchie & Woods 2007, cited in Leithwood et al. 2009). Fitzgerald and Gunter argue that:
Of concern is that this is simply a modernised way to seduce teachers to take on additional tasks and responsibilities without the commensurate increase in their salary or time allowance. This point is rarely debated in the leadership literature, possibly because to say this is deeply heretical (p. 334).

Leadership practices cannot be isolated from their culture and history (Bennett et al. 2003; Spillane et al. 2004). Spillane (2006) warns against segmented representations and understandings of leadership. The relationship between teachers and formal leaders in distributed leadership poses risks to both parties.

On the one hand, distributed leadership can place teachers at risk. Leithwood et al. (2009) argue that authority figures in an organisation can use distributed leadership to impose standards and principles on staff. On the other hand, Hatcher argues that teachers might use entitlement they receive through distributed leadership to resist school administrators and the status quo (Hatcher 2005). To minimise this risk, school principals implement distributed leadership under their authority. He explains that:

The strategy most commonly adopted by head teachers, principals, to minimise the risks of distributed leadership is to restrict its operation to a minority of senior staff, the Senior Management Team (SMT) who are perceived to be ‘more amenable to authority’ (ibid).

In this sense, the choice of informal leaders might not be based on merit (Harris, 2008; Timperley, 2005). This can cause discontent among teachers and fragment structures in schools. In short, distributed leadership can be implemented under the authority of school principals (ibid).
In summary

This chapter examined research on culture and education leadership in the Arab world and Jordan to show a gap in the literature on this topic. The second section of this chapter outlined the education system and structure of pre-tertiary education in Jordan. It also introduced ERfKE and SDDP and identified formalised patterns of distributed leadership in the school development process. The last section of this chapter examined distributed leadership and problematised distributed leadership.

The next chapter introduces tribal values in Arab and Jordanian culture. These values exist in Jordanian public schools where distributed leadership is implemented. Traditional relational structures of power in Jordanian public schools also will be explained. The chapter ends with discussion of the theoretical framework for this research. This section describes Bourdieu’s (1977) theory of practice. This includes concepts that are relevant to analysis and interpretation of leadership practices in Jordanian schools and the Jordanian education sector.
Chapter Three: Literature review (Part B)

Chapter Three represents Part B of the literature review. This chapter examines two topics. The first section focuses on Arab and tribal values that underpin and generate peoples’ practices in the workplace. It then describes hegemonic hierarchies in schools in Jordan that may hinder implementation of education reform programs, including distributed leadership. The second section of this chapter introduces Bourdieu’s theory of practice as the theoretical lens that will be used to examine findings from the data analysis.

3.1 Cultural context of the research

ERfKE introduced distributed leadership to the education sector in Jordan with the objective to transform Jordan’s education system and improve school performance. This research has qualified a descriptive stance towards distributed leadership, defining it as the sum of leaders’ formal and informal interactions within their context (Spillane 2006). As such, a descriptive stance delineates context as an essential component for the implementation of distributed leadership in schools. Chapter Two outlined the pre-tertiary education system in Jordanian schools.

However, the findings of this research have suggested an influence by Jordanian cultural values on practices in Jordanian workplaces. Therefore, consistent with grounded theory, the following section will examine Arab tribal culture in Jordan as the broader context of this research. This will illustrate Arab tribal values that underpin practices in Jordan’s education sector.
3.1.1 Arabs Values: Hofstede’s cultural dimensions

Jordanian society shares many of the same cultural values as the other 22 countries of the Arab world. Arab countries form one cultural cluster that share similar cultural dimensions and attributes (Dickson et al. 2012; Kabasakal et al. 2012; Najm 2015; Ronen & Shenkar 1985; Stankov 2011). One widely accepted definition is that:

Arabs are people who speak the Arabic language or descend from Arab tribes. Most of the Arabs live in the Middle East which extends from Mauritania, on the Atlantic Ocean, to Oman on the Indian Ocean.

Some of the earliest civilisations that existed in the world were in the Middle East, which is mostly dominated by Arabs at the present time. About 95% of the Arabs are Muslims (Britannica 2007, cited in Al Suwaidi 2008, p. 13).

Arab cultures are substantially shaped by ‘Islamic traditions’ and ‘Bedouin values’ (Rice 2003; Sabri 2012). However, tribal values such as nepotism and pride can pervade Arab societies and obscure Islamic teachings (Ali 1995; Bin Mohammad 1999; Rice 2003). Almaney (1981) accepts that:

Bedouin traits exert influences on the behaviour of all Arabs irrespective of education level, economic status, political philosophy, or religion. Loyalty to the family, then the clan, the tribe, and the nation is paramount (Rice 2003, p. 466).

An examination of broader cultural values that sanctions practices helps explain dispositions and tendencies that regulate Arab social practices (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005; Hofstede et al. 2010).

Values form the core of cultures (ibid). They are the discursive mind-set that determine preferences and inclinations in favour of certain situations and in opposition to others (ibid). From 1967 to 1973, Hofstede studied more than 70
countries to examine the impact of cultural values on performance of organisations. Hofstede identified four distinctive cultural dimensions: individualism vs collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, and masculinity vs femininity. Long term vs short term orientation and indulgence vs restraints were later added as fifth and sixth dimensions of his model (Hofstede et al. 2010).

In their model, Hofstede et al. identified Arab countries as one cluster with homogeneous cultural values (Hofstede et al. 2010). The table below, Figure 3-1: Arab values, illustrates three cultural dimensions in relation to Arab countries: power distance, individualism vs collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance. Hofstede et al.’s model explores the development of these Arab values from childhood and how they are reflected in individuals’ practices in the workplace. These three cultural dimensions are relevant to the examination of the Jordanian tribal values in the next section.

<p>| Cultural dimension (1) Power distance: the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations in a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally (p. 61). Arab countries have a large power distance (p. 57). |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the family</th>
<th>At school</th>
<th>In the workplace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obedient children</td>
<td>Respect and fear</td>
<td>Superiors and subordinates existentially unequal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent-child inequality</td>
<td>Education is teacher-centred</td>
<td>Centralised power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warm and caring parents</td>
<td>Teacher-student inequality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The young not expected to experiment for themselves</td>
<td>Corporal punishment more accepted than not (pp. 69–70)</td>
<td>Large number of supervisory personnel, structured in tall hierarchies that report to each other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Dependence on seniors  
  (p. 67)  
  - Ideal leader is benevolent autocrat  
  - Relations are emotional  
  (p. 73)

**Cultural dimension (2) Individualism vs collectivism: the strength of ties between individuals.** Arab societies are collectivist (p. 96), whereby ‘people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people’s lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty’ (p. 92).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the family</th>
<th>At school</th>
<th>In the workplace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Extended family structure</td>
<td>- In-group-out-group distinction</td>
<td>- More likely to follow the occupation of the father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Child is seldom alone</td>
<td>- Subgroups in class</td>
<td>- Preference given to hiring relatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Direct confrontation is avoided</td>
<td>- Preferential treatment based on family background (nepotism)</td>
<td>- Relation between the employer and employee resembles family relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Immoral not to treat one’s group better than others</td>
<td>- Mutual obligations (protection in exchange for loyalty)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Personal opinions do not exist</td>
<td>- Confrontations are avoided</td>
<td>- Relationship of trust should be established before any business can be done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Opinions predetermined by the group</td>
<td>- Maintaining face is essential</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Financial and ritual family obligations</td>
<td>- Stress on adaptation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Rules infringement leads to shame</td>
<td>- A diploma is an honour to the holder</td>
<td>- Personal relationship prevails over the task (pp. 121–123)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Losing face is humiliation (p. 106–110)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A diploma is more important than mastering a subject (pp. 118–119)

**Cultural dimension (3) Uncertainty avoidance:** the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations (p. 191). Arab societies rank in the middle of Hofstede’s model (p. 194).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the family</th>
<th>At school</th>
<th>In the workplace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Children feel sinful and guilty</td>
<td>-Students expect their teachers to be experts with all the answers (p. 205)</td>
<td>-More formal laws and informal rules controlling the rights and duties of employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Children are protected from experiencing the unknown</td>
<td></td>
<td>-Emotional need for laws and regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-What is different is dangerous</td>
<td></td>
<td>-People have been programmed since early childhood to feel comfortable in structured environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Societies are more stressful</td>
<td></td>
<td>-Strong belief in expertise on the work floor (pp. 209–211)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Feelings are more intense (pp. 210–202)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3-1: Arab values (Hofstede et al. 2010)**

### 3.1.2 Tribal cultural values and sheikhocracy

Jordanian society is organised along tribal lines. In *Tribes of Jordan*, Bin Mohammad defines Arab tribes:

> All Jordanians of East Bank origin (and many of Palestinian origin) who are ethnically Arab and either Muslim or Orthodox Christian belong to a tribe, be it traditionally Settled (that is, urban dwellers and/or farmers and peasants),
Semi-Nomadic (that is, who move only twice a year and in a limited area, and rear sheep and goats) or Bedouin (that is, ‘fully nomadic’, i.e. who move thousands of miles into the inner deserts of Arabia and rear camels...

This includes even the Royal Family which is descended from the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) who himself came from the Hashemite clan of the tribe of the Quraysh (hence the name ‘The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan’) (Bin Mohammad 1999, p. 9).

Jordanian society is divided into extended families. For their future security, individuals must succumb to the law of their tribe and fit into whatever position their grandparents have safeguarded for them over the years (Sabri 2012).

Therefore, tribal descent defines the nobility of Bedouin tribe members (Barakat 1993). Antoun (2000) explains that ‘urbanites as well as the great majority of villagers take pride in their patrilineal descent and can recite long genealogies’ (p. 446). This is crucial in dividing tribe members’ social roles and status based on whether one is descended from an affluent or common family. In other words, social roles and status are based on distribution of power (AHDR 2003; Bin Mohammad 1999; Sabri 2012). In collective societies, values such as conformity, submissiveness and commitment regulate members’ socialisation (Ali et al. 1997). Social actors develop an outlook that involves unquestionable loyalty to the leader of the tribe (Sheikh Al Asheirah)4 at the macro level and to the head of the family at the micro level (Ali 1990, 1993; AHDR 2003; Scott-Jackson 2008).

Tribe members also are raised with a heightened sense of pride (Barakat 1993). This creates tension in tribal societies as it contributes to values of dualism and ambivalence (Ali 1990; Al Suwaidi 2008; Barakat 1993) between

4 Sheikh is the Arabic word for the leader of the tribe. Al Asheirah is the Arabic word for the tribe.
submissiveness and desire to gain power. Tribal culture sets the tone in workplaces (Ali 1990; Hofstede et al. 2010) by instilling values of sheikhocracy into the practices of managers (Ali 1995). Al Kubaisy defined sheikhocracy as ‘a product of the interaction of bureaucratic and sheiko orientations and behaviours’ (see Ali 1995, p. 15, citing AI-Kubaisy 1985). Al Kubaisy maintains that sheikhocracy emerged in modern Arab workplaces to address new organisational demands while retaining traditional values (ibid).

In *Cultural Discontinuity and Arab Management Thought*, Ali (1995) depicts the characteristics of sheikhocratic leadership:

…hierarchical authority, rules and regulations contingent on the personality and power of the individuals who make them, subordination of efficiency to human relations and personal connections, indecisiveness, informality among lower-level managers, and a generally patriarchal approach (p. 16).

Tribal values also are evident in the government sector in Arab societies, which often are based on favouritism and nepotism (Al Suwaidi 2008; Ali 1989, 1990, 1993, 1995; Miller & Sharda 2000; Scott-Jackson 2008).

For many years, employment in the public sector in Arab countries has meant financial security and secure employment. It is widely accepted that aspiring public servants in Arab countries should direct their efforts at building tribal family connections. These are understood to be more important than individuals’ knowledge, experience or skills (Al Suwaidi 2008). Kinship connections, favouritism, and nepotism also help determine the implicit order of command at the organisational level. Abdalla and Hamoud (2001) explain that:

It is frequently observed that newly appointed managers remove, distance or freeze the in-group of their predecessors and appoint their own people. Thus
it is not uncommon to find in a specific ministry a considerable number of people who carry the same surname or tribe name as that of the senior manager/administrator (p. 511).

Across public sectors in Arab countries, these accepted behaviours and practices signify that positions may not be held or filled based on merit (see Miller & Sharda 2000). However, further examination of tribal values helps make sense of these practices in workplaces (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005; Hofstede et al. 2010). The following discussion highlights established tribal values that are relevant to this research and its findings. These are: solidarity and trust, *wasta*\(^5\), face meanings, consultation and decision-making, and dualism and ambivalence.

### 3.1.2.1 Solidarity and trust

Arab societies are collectivist (Hofstede et al. 2010). Social actors exhibit a strong sense of solidarity that gives primacy to relationships based on kinship (Barakat 1993; Bin Mohammad 1999; Rice 2003). For tribe members, solidarity offers self-defence against calamitous life events (Bin Mohammad 1999). Bin Mohammad explains Bedouin perceptions of the world:

> A person thus naturally views the world in concentric circles with himself (or herself) at the centre, then his immediate family, his extended family or clan; his tribe; (and then, in the modern ‘Islamised’ form of tribalism) his country; the Arab nation as a whole; his (perhaps nominal) co-religionists (i.e. Muslims); and then, finally, humankind (pp. 21–22).

\(^5\) *Wasta* is the Arabic word for mediation.
The primacy of kinship values in Arab societies drives nepotistic practices in Arab workplaces. Westerners might consider preferential treatment of family and kin malicious or unfair.

However, from the standpoint of many Bedouins, it is a natural behaviour to reduce risk (Hofstede et al. 2010). Nepotism is an indication of the devotion and allegiance of many Arabs to their close tribal circle (Alwerthan et al. 2017). Nepotism in Arab workplaces also builds bonds of trust (Rice 2003). Similar ethos are evident outside the family circle. Hofstede et al. (2010) explains:

As the distinction of ‘our group’ and ‘other group’ is at the very root of people’s consciousness, treating one’s friends better than others is natural and ethical…

In a collectivistic society, a relationship of trust should be established with another person [and] through this relationship the other is adopted into one’s in-group and is from that moment onward entitled to preferential treatment (p. 123).

3.1.2.2 Wasta

Wasta is considered a principal cause of venality in the Arab world (Alwerthan et al. 2017). Wasta is the Arabic word for mediation to gain preferential treatment for family members, friends and tribal connections. It is widespread in Arab countries. Wasta meets the expectations of collectivistic Arab societies where individuals are trusted to offer help to family and friends. Wasta is essential in Arab countries to strengthen social ties and build ‘social capital’ (ibid, p. 2).

For this reason, wasta in the workplace can critically influence and alter decisions. It is common in Arab countries to use social connections to gain favours and benefits that might be difficult to obtain on the basis of merit—for example,
getting a job, getting promoted, and gaining acceptance to college (Al Suwaidi 2008). In this sense, family relationships are prioritised over qualifications and suitability when it comes to work, pay and promotion (Abdallah et al. 1998; Aldossari & Robertson 2016; Al Suwaidi 2008; Alwerthan et al. 2017; Ali 1989, 1993; Hofstede et al. 2010).

3.1.2.3 Face and shame

The human face symbolises grace and self-esteem in Arab societies (Al Suwaidi 2008). Face-saving is important in tribal societies. This influences decision-making processes, as face-saving affects many Arabs’ ego and pride (Abdalla & Al-Hamoud 2001). This can mean that Arabs in formal leadership positions find it difficult to say no, to relinquish power or admit mistakes. This is because doing so would signify weakness and loss of face (Abdalla & Al-Hamoud 2001; Al Suwaidi 2008).

3.1.2.4 Consultation in decision making

Consultation is important to decision-making processes in many cultures. Western definitions of consultation usually imply some form of collective decision making. However, consultation has different a meaning in tribal cultures (Ali 1989; Ali et al. 1997). In the Arab world, inviting subordinates’ participation is a form of pseudo-consultation. This is meant to prepare subordinates for the decision that is to be made, elevate the leaders’ image (ibid) and ‘satisfy the egos of the parties involved’ (Abdalla & Al-Hamoud 2001, p. 512). Abdalla and Al Hamoud explain that from a tribal perspective, consultation in the true sense of the word is avoided lest it disempower the leader:
It is worth noting that while the concept of consultation is very much valued, the position of a consultant/advisor has some negative connotation to it. This is because the position of an advisor is often used for freezing the activities of unfavourable high-ranking employees. Such a practice may shed light on how serious are Arabs with their consultation activities (p. 512).

3.1.2.5 Dualism and ambivalence

The Arab world nowadays assumes an identity that shifts between modernity and traditionalism. This leads to ambivalence over Arab values and practices. In general, Arab cultures exhibit contradictory values, such as compliance and resistance, humility and boastfulness, benevolence and authoritarianism, and passivity and free decision (Abdalla & Al-Hamoud 2001; Al Suwaidi 2008; Barakat 1993).

This duality in norms is perceived as sound and well-adjusted by many Arabs. However, it may confuse non-Arabs (Ali 1990, 1995). At the organisational level, many Arabs can exhibit different patterns of behaviour depending on how democratic their context is (ibid). Transformation of workplace practices may be hindered by workplace cultures that prioritise maintaining good relations over improving organisational performance (Abdalla & Al-Hamoud 2001).

EI-Tayeb (1986) describes examples of this duality in norms in Arab societies:

(1) ‘Establishing a huge number of administrative laws and regulations while no attempt is made to implement them—they are just signs of modernity’.

(2) ‘Designing systems for selecting and promotion according to qualification and merit, but hiring and rewarding according to social ties and personal relations’.
(3) ‘Setting up organisational structures and designs that remain as decoration, while abiding by them only on an exceptional basis’ (Ali 1990, p. 21).

However, Bin Mohammad (1999) argues that the harsh life of the desert cultivated in the Bedouin the ‘noblest and purest elements’ (p. 58) of self-realisation. Barakat (1993) maintains that some negative attributes of Bedouin culture sit alongside nobility, pride, bravery, chivalry and phenomenal generosity. Many non-Arab—and even some Arab—scholars misunderstand these distinct and at times ambivalent values. This accounts for some pejorative accounts of Bedouin culture in the relevant literature (ibid).

3.1.3 Tribal culture and education: Hegemonic leadership and power relations in Jordanian schools

The previous discussion examined cultural values that are important in Jordanian society and that influence individuals’ practices in the workplace (Abdalla & Al-Hamoud 2001; Ali 1995; Hofstede et al. 2010). For this reason, introducing new models of leadership in Jordanian schools should be preceded by close examination of the role of cultural values in shaping practices and defining hierarchal structures in Jordanian schools and MoE. Plans to instil distributed leadership in Jordanian education will not succeed without understanding the influence of tribalism and sheikhocracy on leadership practices and power relations among school practitioners.

Schools have become sophisticated systems that exhibit relentless competition between groups to gain power and advantages (Terhart 2013). In
Jordanian tribal society, social practices are marked by in-group and family collectivism that is augmented by members’ extreme pride and loyalty to their tribe, and by large power distances (Alwerthan et al. 2017; Bin Mohammad 1999; Hofstede et al. 2010; Sabri 2012). At the organisational level, this means subordinates will accept and welcome top-down power structures in return for their leader’s protection, support and benevolence (Abdalla & Al-Hamoud 2001; Hofstede et al. 2010; Sabri 2012).

Traditional systems in Jordanian public schools are based on hierarchies that are defined by family names and formally designated positions. This defines stakeholders’ position in the education sector by affording them more privileges and advantages or inhibiting their access to these advantages and hence confining their power. At its most basic, the structure involves the principal-teacher top down relationship, with power vested in principals and their coteries. However, some teachers from powerful families exert power over principals and other teachers. In addition, the traditional stratification of power can be jeopardised by acts of violence and assault by parents and students (Abu Alya (JTS) 2015). This can place principals and teachers at risk of losing their place in the school hierarchy.

Therefore, power-domination patterns in relationships can be articulated through representations that manipulate the power of the principal to move him or her up and down hierarchies in the education system. This is subject to power connections—that is, social capital—of teachers and parents at the school. These relations work in both directions and maintain unequal power relations. Unequal distribution of power means teachers with less social capital are subordinated.
Based on my review of the literature, no previous studies have addressed relationships or organic power dynamics in Jordanian schools from a cultural perspective. This research fills a theoretical gap by framing the problem in this context. As stated in Chapter One, I hold an insider position in this research. Hence, my background knowledge on this topic constitutes another source of data (Corbin & Strauss 2008). Therefore, I based the following analysis of the relationship between school stakeholders on my understanding of tribal power dynamics in Jordanian schools. These power relations are shown in Figure 3-2: Principals’ authority and in Figure 3-3: Capsized power.

3.1.3.1 Principals’ authority

![Figure 3-2: Principals’ authority](image)
Figure 3-2 represents a traditional top-down structure of power. The principal is at the top with his or her coterie of teachers and staff, who usually are selected for their connections or based on other personal considerations. The coterie is the principal’s trusted clan in the workplace. They receive advantages other teachers do not in return for consolidating the principal’s power. Teachers at the bottom of Figure 3-2 have less social and cultural capital. This confines their power and decision making to the walls of their classrooms. Parents and students occupy different positions in the hierarchy based on their symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1996). Parents can position themselves based on their social capital to move up the hierarchy through wasṭa, nepotism, or favouritism.

All forms of power are relational (Costa 2006; Navarro 2006). This is represented in Figure 3-2 by different forms of arrows. Rounded arrows on the outside of Figure 3-2 indicate relationships that are fluid. Parents’ power can be interpreted in two ways. One is that different groups of parents occupy different positions in power relations. This means groups of parents are more or less powerful at different times and in different contexts. However, power relations in schools are dynamic. Less powerful parents might at any time assume more power as teachers and principals at the school or officials at directorates or the Ministry change. As for overall relationships between school stakeholders, straight arrows in Figure 3-2 indicate that power relations between any two parties at any moment are reciprocal but unequal. That is why they are demonstrated by two-way arrows. Thicker arrows represent more power. Darker coloured shapes signify more capital and consequently more symbolic power.
In this pattern, school leadership is vested in the formal position of the principal. The principal represents the father, the sheikh and the protector. The principal in this pattern either is a benevolent autocrat (that is, the good father) or malevolent autocrat (that is, the bad father) (Hofstede et al. 2010). The principal is responsible for creating the school’s public image to convince the community and school directorates that teachers are providing effective and professional tuition. Elmore (2000) names this ‘buffering’:

Buffering consists of creating structures and procedures around the technical core of teaching that, at the same time, (1) protect teachers from outside intrusions in their highly uncertain and murky work, and (2) create the appearance of rational management of the technical core, so as to allay the uncertainties of the public about the actual quality or legitimacy of what is happening in the technical core.

This buffering creates what institutional theorists call a ‘logic of confidence’ between public schools and their constituents (p. 6).

Power differentiation in schools is defined by stakeholders’ social and cultural capital (Costa 2006; Hurtado 2009; Navarro 2006) and sanctioned by government agendas (Hartley 2010b). Alwerthan et al. (2017) explain that forms of nepotism, favouritism and cronyism distinguish three parties: the person providing the favour, the person receiving the favour (the beneficiary), and the individual/s being denied that opportunity (non-beneficiaries) (p. 2).

In schools, these parties are the principal, the principal’s coterie, and disadvantaged teachers. As such, distributed leadership in Jordanian schools ‘may simply be used as a subtle strategy for inculcating among staff the values and goals of more powerful members of the organisation’ (Leithwood et al. 2009, p. 4). This
indicates that tribal values might see teachers at the bottom of Figure 3-2 continue to be denied capital even with introduction of distributed leadership.

Moreover, in tribal societies teachers must show gratitude for protection they receive from principals and accept principals’ orders with unquestionable loyalty (Bin Mohammad 1999; Hofstede et al. 2010; Rice 2003). Harris (2003) terms this practice ‘social exchange theory’, in which ‘leaders provide services to a group in exchange for the group’s approval or compliance with the leader’s demands’ (p. 314). Harris says this situation prevents teachers from assuming roles as potential co-leaders. Nevertheless, Abdalla and Al Hamoud (2001) argue that in the tribal societies, subordinates must demonstrate more than loyalty and submissiveness:

Not all those who are willing to submit to the orders of the leaders are given the opportunity to benefit from the paternal relationship. In general those who are allowed to establish stronger relationships with the boss are chosen according the boss’s whims rather than for their willingness to cooperate, their competence or relevance to the work task (p. 512).
Positions in the hierarchy and control of resources in workplaces are fundamentally relational (Costa 2006, p. 875). One group of teachers can take the lead in Jordanian schools because of their social capital, their family name and their connections. In this case, dynamics of control can be reversed to place power in the hands of teachers instead of principals. This is illustrated in Figure 3-3.

Alwerthan et al. (2017) argue that *wasta* leads to ‘corruption and discrimination when examined in the workplace as it promotes unfair treatment and practices’ (p. 2). Other teachers might perceive this as unfair treatment and become demotivated in their work (ibid). Teachers at the bottom of this power structure are the most docile. These teachers must contend with one or more of the three power
structures at their school: the principal-teacher hierarchy, teacher-teacher hierarchy or teacher-principal-teacher hierarchy.

In sum, in societies that classify members in chains of command, introduction of distributed leadership can be interpreted as an attempt to disrupt established values and defy the status quo. In turn, this often leads to defence mechanisms to challenge and resist changes that may be seen as attempts to expropriate dominant members of their power.

3.2 Theoretical framework

This section outlines the theoretical framework that was used to examine the relationship between Jordanian tribal culture and practitioners’ practices in the research context. It draws on the work of one of the most prominent critical theorists of the twentieth century: Pierre Bourdieu and his theory of practice (1977).

3.2.1 Theory of practice

‘Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002) is perhaps the most innovative and influential social scientist in the history of French social science’ (Navarro 2006, p. 3). His theories deconstruct what seems obvious and critically question social orders (ibid). In the mid-1950s, Bourdieu travelled to Algeria to complete national military service.

There, he ‘saw [Algerian] traditional society in opposition to the modern world and the consequences it had for the individuals involved’ (Grenfell 2008, p. 17). Bourdieu’s experiences living among Algeria’s Kabyle people influenced his thinking on social practice. This led Bourdieu to transition from philosophy to sociology in spite of sociology’s lesser academic status at that time (ibid).
Bourdieu’s objective in his sociological research was to end the dichotomy between subjectivism and objectivism (that is, between agency and structure) (Bourdieu 1977; Grenfell 2008). For Bourdieu, this could be resolved with the concept of habitus (the dispositions, practices and habits) of social agents. This is captured in Bourdieu’s formula:

\[ [(\text{Habitus}) \times (\text{Capital})] + \text{Field} = \text{Practices} \]

(Bourdieu 1984, p. 101).

Hurtado (2009) argues that researchers should engage with Bourdieu’s formula not as ‘a theory to be validated’, but as a ‘meta theory’ to empirically examine ‘a variety of social phenomena’ (p. 206).

Through his theory of practice, Bourdieu introduced important concepts such as field, capital, doxa, illusio and habitus. These provided a framework to understand social practices and the relationship between society and the individual. These concepts will be further examined in the next section.

3.2.1.1 Habitus

Habitus denotes an exploration of the origins of social practice, and in particular, whether it is driven by unconsciously inculcated social rules or rational personal choice. Bourdieu wanted to construct a theory to transcend ‘the sterile opposition of the old debates’ (Nash, 1990 p. 434). Bourdieu says, ‘all of my thinking started from this point: how can behaviour be regulated without being the product of obedience to rules?’ (Bourdieu 1990a, p. 65).

For Bourdieu, the answer to this question could be resolved with the concept of habitus, the ‘socialised subjectivity’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 126). Bourdieu defines habitus as:
…systems of durable transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively ‘regulated’ and ‘regular’ without in any way being the product of obedience to rules (Bourdieu 1977, p. 72).

The definition of habitus illustrates that it is persistent and can function in diverse social spaces. The objective structural conditions of society infuse habitus practices, and ‘since it is embodied, the habitus gains a history’ (Nash, 1990, p. 433).

In this sense, habitus turns into a dynamic living history of ‘an internalised mechanism’. It can generate present and future practices independent of the original conditions that engineered it (ibid, p. 435). Bourdieu argued that practices produced by habitus can structure culture. This is because practices tend to reproduce the conditions that regulated their production (Bourdieu 1977). Just as important, however, ‘habitus can be seen as much as an agent of continuity and tradition as it can be regarded as a force of change’ (Costa & Murphy 2015, p. 4).

3.2.1.2 Capital

In Bourdieu’s theory of practice, habitus alone does not explain how practices are generated. The second condition in Bourdieu’s formula is capital, or resources (Bourdieu 1984). Social agents begin the social game with defined positions based on the amount and significance of capital they bring (Thomson 2008).

Capital can take one of four forms:

- ‘Economic capital (that is, money and assets).
- Cultural capital (knowledge, taste, aesthetic and cultural preferences, language, narrative and voice).
• Social capital (affiliation and networks, family, religious and cultural heritage). [This includes inherited capital, which is of particular importance in Arab cultures.]

• Symbolic capital (things that signify possession of other forms of capital and can be ‘exchanged’ in other fields, such as credentials (ibid, p. 69).

Bourdieu distinguishes between inherited capital (for example, an esteemed or well educated family or valuable networks) and obtained qualifications (Bourdieu 1990b).

Habitus, meaning dispositions, practices and habits that are widespread in the field, is informed by social actors’ capital they bring to the space and the capital they build. Bourdieu argues that social actors’ inherited capital ‘contributes to defining the possibilities and the impossibilities which the field assigns them’ (Bourdieu 1996, p. 10). Bourdieu shows that symbolic capital is ‘credit, but in the broadest sense, a kind of advance, a credence, that only the group’s belief can grant’ (ibid, p. 120). All other forms of capital, which are forms of credit, can become symbolic once they gain legitimacy (Everett 2002; Navarro 2006). Navarro argues that for Bourdieu:

Resources function as capital when they are ‘a social relation of power’ because this is precisely what determines value upon resources after interest is manifested (and/or disputed) by people (p. 16).

In this sense, social and symbolic capital are of particular relevance to individuals’ practices in collectivist societies. This will be explained in the discussion chapters of this thesis.
Relationships in the field between social agents are antagonistic. Players compete constantly against each other and employ strategies to advance in the field and monopolise capital (Bourdieu 1990b). Bourdieu (1996) argues that ‘capital in its diverse forms—economic, cultural, social—constitutes the trumps which will dictate both the manner of playing and success in the game’ (p. 10). Players who commence the game with more capital have an advantage (Costa 2006; Navarro 2006). The same logic of practice is applied in all fields (Costa 2006). According to Bourdieu, this is ‘an economic logic even when neither the capital nor the interests at stake are economic’ (ibid, p. 876).

3.2.1.3 Field

The field is ‘a system of positions and relationships among positions’ (Costa 2006, p. 875). Habitus is a social concept. It exists in a social space and does not function independently. This social space is the field, the third condition in Bourdieu’s theory that he defines as:

…a structured social space, a field of forces, a force field. It contains people who dominate and people who are dominated. Constant, permanent relationships of inequality operate inside this space, which at the same time becomes a space in which various actors struggle for the transformation or preservation of the field. (Bourdieu 1998, pp. 40–41, cited in Thomson 2008, p. 74).

Therefore, relationships are hierarchal and dynamic. The social field is an arena that has ‘objectively defined positions’ (Navarro 2006).

In this sense, practices are ‘position takings’ (Costa 2006, p. 876) by social players in their struggle for legitimacy and power (English 2012; Navarro 2006). Players can occupy more than one field. All fields belong to an encompassing social
field that Bourdieu terms the field of power. This is a ‘meta-field’ that organises
differentiation and struggles through all fields and… also represents the dominant
class’ (Navarro 2006, p. 18). The field of power and other fields exhibit reciprocal
influence on one another, with ‘ongoing co-constructing’ (Thomson 2008).

This relation to the field of power, however, does not negate the autonomous
power of social fields. For Bourdieu, each field has ‘mechanisms of internal
structuring that generate the fields and contribute to their autonomy and functioning’
(Swartz 1997, p. 292). These determine internal ‘power relation and hierarchy’
(ibid).

3.2.1.4 Doxa

‘Doxa is the cornerstone of any field’ (Deer 2008, p. 121). Bourdieu used the term
doxa initially to describe obedience to the taken-for-granted ‘natural world’
(Bourdieu 1977). Bourdieu (2000a, p. 16) describes doxa as ‘a set of fundamental
beliefs which does not even need to be asserted in the form of an explicit self-
conscious dogma’ (Deer 2008, p. 120).

Doxa is an orthodoxy of assumptions in a certain period of time in the life of
a society (ibid). It is the unquestioned and misrecognised silent tradition ‘which goes
without saying as it comes without saying’ (Bourdieu 1977, p. 167). Doxa assumes
the role of symbolic power to normalise practices by binding people to the ‘rules of
the game’ and mandating that ‘those subjected to it do not question its legitimacy
and the legitimacy of those who exert it’ (Deer 2008, pp. 121-122). Therefore, it is
in the interest of dominant social players to defend the ‘integrity’ of the doxa to
maintain their dominance (ibid).
Doxa arbitrates the value of capital to maintain ‘symbolic order’ in the field through misrecognition (Bourdieu 1977). Bourdieu argues that doxa is established by:

…schemes of thought and perception [which] can produce the objectivity that they do produce only by producing misrecognition of the limits of the cognition that they make possible (ibid, p. 164)

For Bourdieu, it is mainly through crises that the dominated ‘who have an interest in pushing back the limit of doxa’ (ibid, p. 169) might question the taken-for-grantedness of the doxa (Hurtado 2009). However, dominated social actors require access to ‘material and symbolic means’ to renounce the doxa (Bourdieu 1977).

3.2.1.5 Symbolic violence

Misrecognition legitimises the exercise of power by ‘denial of the economic and political interests present in a set of practices’ (Swartz 1997, p. 89). For Bourdieu, misrecognition is a form of symbolic violence (Moore 2008; Navarro 2006; Schubert 2008). Symbolic violence is ‘the gentle, invisible form of violence, which is never recognised as such (Bourdieu 1977, p. 192). Symbolic violence establishes unrecognised ‘euphemised’ relations of dependence that would anchor ‘disguised’ rules of domination (ibid). Symbolic violence is sanctioned by symbolic power. According to Bourdieu, this is:

…every power to exert symbolic violence, i.e. every power which manages to impose meanings and to impose them as legitimate by concealing the power relations which are the basis of its force (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977, p. 4, cited in Swartz 1997, p. 89).

Bourdieu argues that ‘symbolic systems are anchored in cultures’ (Navarro 2006, p. 14). Sound sociological theories of culture should be able to uncover and expose
concealed structures that maintain hierarchies and their domination and power (Navarro 2006; Schubert 2008).

3.2.1.6 Strategy and illusio

Wacquant (2005, p. 316) explains that the habitus ‘guide [the individuals] in their creative responses to the constraints and solicitations of their extant milieu’ (Navarro 2006, p. 16). Hence, strategic planning for action is neither realised by society nor by individuals, but instead by the habitus (Lamaison & Bourdieu 1986; Nash 1990). These actions materialise out of ‘unconscious calculation of profit… and a strategic position in a social space to maximise individual holdings with respect to their availability’ (Grenfell 2008, p. 44). In this sense, the habitus as a generator of strategies (ibid) is fundamental to decoding the data of this research to understand players’ habitus and the doxa (that is, ‘the generative causal powers’) that sustain them (Edwards et al. 2014, p. 88).

Illusio (from Ludus the game) is the social game (Bourdieu 1998). ‘The habitus as feel for the game is the social game embodied and turned into second nature’ (Bourdieu 1990b, p. 63). The habitus develops second- order strategies to camouflage first-order strategies by pretending to obey the rules while pursuing self-interest (Bourdieu 1977) to accumulate capital and advance one’s position in the field. Swartz (1997) explains that ‘actors are not rule followers or norm obeyers but strategic improvisers who respond dispositionally to the opportunities and constraints offered by various situations’ (p. 100). In addition, since strategies are skills, actors need time and practice to master the rules of the game to increase their gain (Maton 2008; Swartz 1997). Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) claim that players’
feel for the game is constantly evolving and is augmented by the ‘volume and structure’ (p. 99) of their capital.

Strategies that players use are ‘the product of practical sense as the feel for the game’ (Bourdieu 1990b, p. 62; Lamaison & Bourdieu 1986, p. 111). Illusio, Bourdieu argues, therefore entails creativity, ‘a paramount capacity for invention’ (Bourdieu 1990a, p. 63). It can also place capital at stake because ‘one’s feel for the game is not infallible (Bourdieu 1990a, p. 63; Lamaison & Bourdieu 1986, p. 112). It is unequally dispersed between players and sometimes non-existent (ibid). Strategy and illusio as the habitus second nature are fundamental concepts to generate the grounded theory of this research, which depicts illusio in the field of education. Bourdieu asserts that all practices in the social space, even solidarity, are ‘interest-driven’ and that ‘all symbolic systems are anchored in culture and thus determine our understanding of reality’ (Navarro 2006, p. 14).

Despite the significant contribution of Bourdieu’s theory in the field of sociology, it has been criticised for its determinism and lack of recognition of agents’ choice (Nash 1990). Nash explains that:

Bourdieu, in fact, even suggests that people are only rational when they step out of the automatic responses prompted by their habitus (the obscure, deep rooted choices of the habitus); the problem, however, is that nothing in the theory really enables them to do this (p. 434).

Moreover, our habitus constantly constructs the history that originally shaped its existence, ‘but not under conditions entirely of our own making (Maton 2008, p. 52). Our choices at any moment are context-bound and simultaneously defined by the choices that are made visible to us by our habitus. Yet the habitus is also pre-
conditioned by its own embodied history (ibid). It is in this sense that Bourdieu’s theory is perceived as determinist.

As such, despite the emphasis that Bourdieu’s theory places on reproduction of the objective conditions that reproduce the habitus (Hurtado 2009), the determinism in his theory remains contested. For example, the fact that Bourdieu introduced strategies that are distinguished from practice leaves the door open for ‘improvised creative maneuvers [and] in that way the habitus can be partly analogous to a grammar, in that it allows for multiple possibilities of expression’. (ibid, p. 207). The product of conscious mind work, strategies break from the objectivist position (Lamaison & Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu says: ‘They know how to take liberty with the official rule and thereby save the essential part of what the rule was meant to guarantee’ (ibid, p. 113)

In addition, the habitus is ‘durable and transposable but not immutable’ (Maton 2008, p. 53). Choices the habitus make constantly set new paths that might bring new possibilities and meaning to the habitus to reshape its perception of the world. This means it is constantly evolving (ibid). Habitus is only one condition in Bourdieu’s theory as it functions in social spaces (that is, fields) with unlimited numbers of habituses of social agents constantly joining and leaving the field. Hence, fields themselves eternally evolve to reshape objective conditions that set the rules for social agents (Hurtado 2009; Maton 2008).

Hurtado (2009) argues that the change of field can produce new conditions. These disrupt the habitus and render its practices ineffective as they cease to produce the objective conditions of the field. This disruption forces the habitus to transform from pre-reflexivity into reflexivity to modify its practices. Change can happen when
a gap exists between the habitus and the objective structures of the field (ibid). This causes ‘hysteresis’ that the habitus will be out of phase with field conditions (p. 207). In turn, this will lead to dissatisfaction with the status quo and hence to change (ibid). The concept of the habitus will remain a topic of much contestation. Even so, it is invaluable as it ‘offers a fruitful way of thinking’ (Maton 2008, p. 86):

If habitus is the social embodied, habitus can become the sociological embodied. Thinking of habitus becomes part of one’s habitus. When the concept is in one’s intellectual marrow in this way, it achieves that ‘metanoia’ Bourdieu hoped to enable (ibid).

**In summary**

Consistent with the approach of grounded theory methodology, the examination of the literature took place in an iterative process of data analysis and literature review. The findings of the data analysis have directed the research towards the themes of culture and education leadership. Therefore, chapters Two and Three have critically engaged with the literature on implementation of ERfKE in Jordanian public schools. Chapter Two began by reviewing the themes of culture and education leadership in the Arab world and in Jordan. This revealed the gap in the literature: no previous study has examined the impact of tribal culture on the practices of school stakeholders in Jordan. This shows the contribution this research makes to the literature in this field.

The chapter then outlined the pre-tertiary public education system in Jordan and ERfKE. ERfKE II launched the SDDP in 2010 for school decentralisation. SDDP advocates formalised patterns of distributed leadership in Jordanian public schools. Next, the literature around distributed leadership was examined and the notion of distributed leadership problematised. Chapter Three explored Arab and
tribal cultural values in Jordan. The chapter then examined hegemonic leadership and power relations among school stakeholders in the Jordanian public schools. Finally, the chapter introduced Bourdieu’s (1977) theory of practice. This will be employed to examine the relationship between Jordanian culture and practices in Jordanian schools.

Chapter Four will explain the research methodology. It will do this by outlining the researcher’s ontological and epistemological position and examining the application of grounded theory methodology in this research.
Chapter Four: Methodology

The previous chapters have outlined the rationale and context of this research and critically engaged with the literature about culture and leadership in Jordanian public schools. This chapter explains the research design and methodology that were employed to conduct this study and generate its grounded theory. Data collection, analysis, theoretical integration and ethical considerations also are discussed.

Restatement of purpose

This research examined school principals’ experience of the implementation of an ambitious multi-donor education reform program in Jordan. I chose to work with principals since they are a critical link between schools and upper management in education directorates and MoE. I wanted to uncover hidden assumptions and beliefs that underpin principals’ perceptions of features of ERfKE that are effective, are not effective and could be effective; of principals’ role in distributed leadership; of the role of other stakeholders, and of the role of MoE. I wanted also to examine principals’ perception of the role of culture and social structures in facilitating or impeding the program’s implementation.

4.1 Selecting a methodology

This research was guided by the following question:

*According to school principals, what are the factors that impede reform efforts in Jordanian public schools?*
I did not commence this research with an existing hypothesis to be validated. I wanted to develop a model constructed from the data to explain contextualised school leadership practices during implementation of ERfKE.

Qualitative research design seemed most applicable to the complex social aspects that interfere with and guide school leadership practices in Jordan. I selected grounded theory as this methodology has provided many researchers with rigorous means of investigation to uncover concealed themes in their data (Corbin & Strauss 2015). In addition, researchers do not use grounded theory to validate their assumptions or previous theories and hypothesis (Glaser & Strauss 1967).

Recently, grounded theory also has been recognised as an effective methodology to address the theme of leadership (Edwards et al. 2014; Kan & Parry 2004; Kempster & Parry 2011; Parry 1998). Recent research on leadership has identified process and context as core constituents of researchers’ understanding of ‘the manifestation of the leadership phenomenon [which is] reflected most strongly in the methodology of grounded theory’ (Kempster & Parry 2011, p. 106).

4.2 Defining philosophical position

The chosen research design also has to accommodate the philosophical position of the researcher on the construction of knowledge and meaning of reality (Crotty 1998). Crotty (1998) argues that: ‘Inevitably, we bring a number of assumptions to our chosen methodology. We need, as best as we can, to state what these assumptions are’ (p. 7). This research uses constructivist grounded theory that is positioned in critical realism. I argue that knowledge is socially constructed. Social agents’
perceptions are formed by their interactions and by the influence of objects, structure and society. Therefore, my epistemology is constructivist in character.

My ontological position is one of critical realism. This stance denotes that ‘reality exists but is not limited to human interpretation or construction’ (Redman-MacLaren & Mills 2015, p. 3). Critical realism distinguishes between reality and peoples’ knowledge of it and considers amalgamating the two an ‘epistemic fallacy’ (Bhaskar 1978, cited in Oliver 2012, p. 373). In this way, critical realism acknowledges that there is one reality. However, critical realism still resonates with constructivism as it posits that our knowledge about reality is socially contrived (Oliver 2012; Kempster & Parry 2011). This position is plausible because critical realism perceives that ‘changing knowledge of unchanging objects is possible’ (Bhaskar 1998, p. 12).

Critical realism argues that there is one reality that exists independent of our understanding of it (Bhaskar 1998). However, this reality is stratified or multi-layered. For critical realists, reality falls mainly into one of three spheres: the empirical, the actual and the real reality (Bhaskar 2008). The empirical is the exterior layer of reality that can be observed and examined directly by the researcher (Bhaskar 2008; Edwards et al. 2014; Oliver 2012). The actual is the second layer and refers to the events that actually took place. These do not necessarily match the empirical (ibid). Real reality can be observed as the core mechanisms, such as values or powers that generate the empirical and actual outer layers (ibid). These three spheres are illustrated in Figure 4-1:
These three stratified levels of reality guide the analysis of this research. The empirical analysis of principals’ narratives around implementation of ERfKE has revealed that practices in schools were not conforming to the standards of the reform program.

Instead, practices in schools were generated and driven by other mechanisms. Critical realism ontology directed my research to investigate further the hidden factors or mechanisms that informed and generated these practices in the field. In other words, positioning this research in ‘stratified ontology’ (Edwards et al. 2014, p. 12) allows the research to examine the effects imposed by complex and pre-existing conditions on social practices that operate in this context. For example, the empirical narratives of some principals indicated that they practiced distributed leadership at their schools. However, their actual practices were a form of top-down task delegation. Further investigation of their practices in the Jordanian cultural context revealed that these practices were informed and mediated through tribal values.
Critical realist grounded theory influenced the research design in terms of analysis and choice of the theoretical framework. Critical realism has set forth retroductive reasoning (Bhaskar 1998) or abductive reasoning (Charmaz 2006) as the primary data analysis methods of this research. The iterative process of comparative analysis of the data produced new themes throughout the research process. This is consistent with grounded theory methodology. However, critical realism deems it insufficient for the emerging theory to explain what is happening in a given context. Instead, the theory should ‘seek vertical explanations which link events and experiences to their underlying generative mechanisms rather than their antecedent events and experiences’ (Oliver 2012, p. 375).

Therefore, the other contribution of critical realism to this research was integration of Bourdieu’s (1977) theory of practice in the data analysis process. This theory was used to examine the interplay between the structure, in its various forms of society, MoE or education directorates on the one hand and principals’ and teachers’ agency on the other. Redman-MacLaren and Mills (2015) assert that: ‘Including a critical examination of social, cultural, and economic structures provides an opportunity for a more complete and transformational grounded theory’ (p. 4). Kempster and Parry (2011) endorse the above argument:

By clarifying the epistemological foundation of grounded theory, researchers can become much more confident and assured that they are ‘doing the right things’ (ontologically) and ‘doing things right’ (epistemologically) (p. 117).

4.3 What is grounded theory?

Grounded theory ‘refers to both the research product and the analytic method of producing it’ (Charmaz 2008, p. 397). In this sense, it is a process and an outcome
(Böhm 2004; Charmaz 2006, 2008). Grounded theory is an inductive research methodology. It employs constant comparisons of ‘incidents to incidents, incidents to codes, codes to codes, codes to categories and categories to categories’ (Birks & Mills 2015, p. 11) to locate similarities and differences. Constant comparative analysis enables concept abstraction and emergence of new categories. This leads to the emergence of a theory that is grounded in the data (Böhm 2004; Charmaz 2006, 2008; Corbin & Holt 2005; Glaser & Strauss 1967; Strauss & Corbin 1998; Thornberg & Charmaz 2012).

In this sense, researchers use grounded theory to generate a theory rather than validate a predefined hypothesis (Birks & Mills 2015; Charmaz 2006, Corbin & Strauss 2008; Glaser & Strauss 1967). Glaser and Strauss, the originators of this theory, explain that:

Testing theory is, of course, also a basic task confronting sociology. We would all agree that in social research generating theory goes hand in hand with verifying it; but many sociologists have been diverted from this truism in their zeal to test either existing theories or a theory that they have barely started to generate (Glaser & Strauss 1967, p. 2).

Grounded theory has evolved since its design in 1967. This gave rise to the first and second generations of grounded theorists. The first generation of grounded theorists split to emerge into ‘Straussian and Glaserian’ schools of thought (Birks & Mills 2011). The second generation was led by the Charmazian school. However, all approaches to grounded theory share the following core principles. These were adhered to in this research design:

- ‘Initial coding and categorising of data
- Concurrent data generation or collection and analysis
• Writing memos
• Theoretical sampling
• Constant comparative analysis
• Theoretical sensitivity
• Intermediate coding
• Identifying a core category
• Advance coding and theoretical integration
• Generating theory’ (Birks & Mills 2015, pp. 10–13).

This is not to say, however, that grounded theory is prescriptive (Böhm 2004; Corbin 2009). Corbin stresses that:

The analytic process is first and foremost a thinking process. It requires stepping into the shoes of the other and trying to see the world from their perspective. Analysis should be relaxed, flexible, and driven by insight gained through interaction with data rather than being structured and based on procedures (pp. 40–41).

Grounded theorists begin their journey of data analysis with coding. Coding is the tool that is used to explain meanings in the data. It is the fundamental process ‘in moving beyond concrete statements in the data to making analytic interpretations’ (Charmaz 2006, p. 43). Conceptual coding is the method of segmenting the data to capture meaning and then assembling the codes to generate a theory to account for ‘what is happening in the data’ (Glaser 1978, p. 55). Therefore, researchers must remain cautious against ‘forcing in favour of emergence’ (Gibson 2007, p. 439) by

Coding in grounded theory research involves systematic processes of data deconstruction and interpretation that constantly are interrupted by memoing (Glaser, 1978). This is used to capture the analyst’s thinking (Birks & Mills 2011) to increase the validity and reliability of the theory ‘as it arises from the data and not from other source’ (Crotty 1998, p. 78). Glaser and Strauss (1967) claim that:

Theory based on data can usually not be completely refuted by more data or replaced by another theory. Since it is too intimately linked to data, it is destined to last despite its inevitable modification and reformulation (p. 4).

A significant point in grounded theory process is reaching data saturation. Data saturation occurs in the grounded theory process when no new themes arise from the data to generate new categories or expand the properties of existing categories (Birks & Mills 2011; Corbin & Strauss 2008; Glaser & Strauss 1967). However, reaching saturation is not only defined by the researcher’s list of categories. In this sense, identifying the saturation point in the research can be complex (Corbin & Strauss 2008):

Only when a researcher has explored each category/theme in some depth, identifying its various properties and dimensions under different conditions, can the researcher say that the research has reached the level of saturation (p. 149).
In addition, reaching saturation should not be confused with reiterated narratives (Charmaz 2006). Saturation entails repeated processes of data collection, analysis, coding, and forming questions for further theoretical sampling that continues to affect data collection until concepts are fully developed (Birks & Mills 2011; Charmaz 2006; Corbin & Strauss 2008). Adherence to this process is essential to devise clear and sound concepts to enable construction of a valid grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss 2008, Glaser & Strauss 1967). Grounded theory is the ‘*kunstlehre* (art)’ (Böhm 2004, p. 270) of looking past empirical distractions to conceptualise underpinning patterns in the data and generate a theory (a story) to account for what is happening ‘in a theoretically sensitive way’ (Glaser 1978, p. 55). As Reichertz noted:

> [Grounded theory] helps scientists to fulfil two tasks: the intellectual task of coding (open, axial, selective), and the intellectual task of developing and redeveloping concepts and theories while repeatedly moving to and from between the collection of data, coding and memoing (logic of research) (p. 223).

### 4.4 What is critical realist grounded theory?

#### 4.4.1 Resolving tensions: From inductive to retroductive grounded theory

As stated earlier in this chapter, ontology and epistemology have significant influence on the research design process (Crotty 1998; Edwards et al. 2014; Oliver 2012). Therefore, adopting critical realist grounded theory approaches must be preceded by reconciliation of methods of reasoning used to arrive at the research findings (Edwards et al. 2014; Oliver 2012; Reichertz 2007). Namely, researchers must consider whether they have used an inductive or abductive approach. Critical
realist approaches to grounded theory place retroduction at the core of the constant comparative analysis process (Edwards et al. 2014; Oliver 2012). Retroduction is:

… a three-phase schema of development in which, in a continuing dialectic, science identifies a phenomenon (or range of phenomena), constructs explanations for it and empirically tests its explanations, leading to the identification of the generative mechanism at work, which now becomes the phenomenon to be explained, and so on (Bhaskar 1998, p. 13).

Oliver maintains that ‘retroduction is simply abduction’ (p. 280) that seeks explanation for what is happening (ibid). Consequently, retroductive grounded theory redefines its reasoning as fundamentally abductive in nature (Edwards et al. 2014; Oliver 2012; Reichertz 2007; Thornberg 2012). For a critical theorist, abduction transcends rather than oscillates the classical inductive and deductive mode of reasoning. Charmaz (2006) explains that:

Abduction ‘entails considering all possible theoretical explanations for the data, framing hypotheses for each possible explanation, checking them empirically by examining data and pursuing the most plausible explanation (p. 104).

Critical realist grounded theory criticises the inductive approach of data analysis for its lack of depth (Kemps ter & Parry 2011) and its rigidity. This ‘can lead to sterile or boring studies’ (Reichertz 2007, p. 223). Abduction, on the other hand, inspires the researcher to take innovate and scholarly approaches to the data (Reichertz 2007). This process makes the data ‘the source of scientific creativity’ (see Thornberg 2012, p. 247, citing Anderson 1987).

However, abductive grounded theory entails high reflexivity. This refers to researchers’ awareness of the potential for past experiences, knowledge, assumptions and positions to interfere with or contaminate reasoning by sanctioning
certain emerging concepts and ignoring others (Charmaz 2006; Gibson 2007). Reflexivity entails making hidden values explicit to allow the researcher and reader to assess the role of these values in shaping the grounded theory (ibid). Reflexivity enhances theoretical sensitivity. This is because it confines ‘forcing in favour of emergence’ (Gibson 2007, p. 439). This promotes ethical decisions while generating theories and sharing them publically.

Critical realist grounded theory also led to modification of the research approach to come up with a theory to identify mechanisms that generate social practices (Oliver 2012). Pertinent to this is the centrality of agency and structure relations to understanding social reality (ibid). This directed the research to Bourdieu’s (1977) theory of practice to examine the data and generate the grounded theory of this research. Edwards et al. (2014) state that:

Retroductive argumentation involves suggesting a theory that seeks to provide causal explanation of what has not necessarily been empirically deduced or induced, but has been synthesised and inferred from available empirical data and related concepts (p. 91).

4.4.2 Place of the literature

Glaserian and Straussian schools of grounded theory disagree on the timing of literature reviews in the research process. Glaser (1992) insisted that examination of the literature should not precede data collection lest this force meaning on the data. Glaser argued also that researchers can arrive at their research question only after they have started the data coding (ibid). Glaser perceived the literature review as wasted time that can also distract researchers from the study purpose (Glaser 2004).
On the other hand, Strauss and Corbin (1990) argue for researchers to commence research with some ‘technical’ background on the literature. However, Strauss and Corbin maintained that:

There is no need to review all the literature beforehand…because if we are effective in our analysis, then new categories would emerge that neither we, nor anyone else had thought about previously (p. 50).

I adopted an approach between the two schools of thought. I treated the literature as another source of data to be subjected to comparative analysis (Charmaz 2006; Birks & Mills 2011). The incorporation of literature in this study reflected an iterative process of going back and forth between the data and literature. I commenced this research with some ‘technical and nontechnical’ literature background (Strauss & Corbin 1990). Corbin and Strauss (2008) argue that ‘the only caveat is that the researcher be transparent about any starting position and consider it provisional, tentative and likely to be replaced as inquiry proceeds’ (Oliver 2012, p. 380).

I examined the literature on ERfKE and distributed leadership before I started the research. However, data analysis consistently revealed themes of culture and leadership. This redirected the literature focus toward these emerging concepts. Moreover, the retroductive critical realist grounded theory approach required an integration of critical theory to account for the generating mechanism of these practices. Therefore, the need for further reading into Bourdieu’s theory of practice stemmed from findings from the data. This process remained consistent with the grounded theory. Oliver (2012) states that:

This is no stretch for a methodology that already encourages researchers to ask ‘what are the larger structural issues here and how do these events play into or effect what I am seeing?’ (p. 380).
4.5 Methodology design

Methodology is ‘a way of thinking about studying social phenomenon’ (Corbin & Strauss 2008, p. 1). It defines the methods, techniques and procedures researchers choose and how they use them (Crotty 1998). As stated earlier in this chapter, I have used constructivist grounded theory for data analysis and theory building. Glaser and Strauss’s (1967) original theory marginalised the impact of researchers on the process of collecting, analysing, and presenting data.

Glaser and Strauss adopted an objectivist approach that assumed that researchers would remain neutral and passive and let data speak for themselves (Charmaz 2008). Constructivist grounded theory utilises the same systematic techniques as classical grounded theory to find categories in the data. This can generate the grounded theory for the research (Charmaz 2006; Corbin & Strauss 1998, 2008; Mills & Birks 2014). However, constructivist grounded theorists are active agents. They bring their own ‘histories and theories’ to their research (Mills & Birks 2014) to coauthor the interpretations of reality presented in the data (Charmaz 2006, 2008).

Therefore, the theories and hypotheses that arise from the data in this research are a joint intellectual enterprise based on principals’ interpretations as well as my own. My approach to the research and data is reflexive. This is because I understand the potential influence of the knowledge and viewpoints I bring to this research on my analysis. However, I cannot separate myself from my values and beliefs as an educator. Nor can I stand outside my knowledge and background as an Arab researcher with the same social values and context as participants in this research. For these reasons, I cannot claim neutrality. I chose Amman and other governorates
for my research to control geographic, social and economic factors that might affect the experience of the participants.

Three criteria for sample selection were used in this research. First, principals must have completed leadership training through ERfKE. They must have contributed to development of an SIP. Their school must be in an advanced stage of implementing the SIP. Second, schools must be from two governorates with distinct geographical and socio-economic status. Finally, principals were identified by MoE for their effective implementation of the program. This ensured research participants had sound understandings of ERfKE and its objectives. 10 male principals and 14 female principals took part in this research. Three participants were novice principals. The other 21 principals had experience ranging between 10 to 25 years. Seven of the principals had worked as trainers in the first phase of ERfKE. Three of the principals retired a year after the research study began.

4.6 Data collection

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews and focus group meetings. Intensive interviewing prioritises participants’ lived experience. For this reason, it provides rich data about peoples’ perceptions and interpretations of their situations and experiences (Charmaz 2006; Corbin & Strauss 2008; Edwards et al. 2014; Gubrium & Holstein 2003; Holstein & Gubrium 1995). The use of focus groups, which are an extension of standard interviews (Birks & Mills 2011, p. 76), provided additional data that helped develop categories in grounded theory (Birks & Mills 2011). Lambert and Loiselle (2008) argue that:

The assembly of people with like interests is effective in engendering conversation as each participant responds to and feeds off the others. Different
perspectives and a broad range of experiences are highlighted through the use of focus groups (Birks & Mills 2011, p. 76).

In interviews and focus group meetings, respondents and I assumed an active role to co-construct and interpret the data (Gubrium & Holstein 2003). This is consistent with critical realist and social constructionist approaches to grounded theory. In this approach, meanings are constructed about the phenomenon that is being examined (Charmaz 2006; Edwards et al. 2014; Gubrium & Holstein 2003; Oliver 2012). As an active interviewer, I committed to attending to participants’ accounts of their experiences (Edwards et al. 2014). This fed into the theory generated by the data (Birks & Mills 2011; Corbin & Strauss 2008; Gubrium & Holstein 2003). Holstein and Gubrium (1997, p. 123) argue that:

The active interviewer/social researcher brings the research agenda to bear in the interview in a light and non-directive fashion, as ‘the objective is not to dictate interpretation, but to provide an environment conducive to the production of the range and complexity of meanings that address relevant issues, and not be confined to predetermined agendas’ (Edwards et al. 2014, p. 114).

Data collection took place over two and half years to facilitate retroductive grounded theory with constant abductive analysis and validation. There were four main phases in the data collection process.

First, over two months I contacted 40 principals by phone to introduce myself and the topic I planned to investigate. These calls took around 15 to 20 minutes. I described the study as a shared venture to encourage respondents to perceive themselves as active participants. Many respondents wanted to learn more about the project. 28 principals confirmed that they would participate in the study. Principals who agreed to participate were called one more time to confirm their consent and
invite them to preliminary focus group meetings. These calls had ethical and methodological significance for this research. These calls helped participants understand the research in more detail. This provided an additional opportunity to obtain informed consent. As such, it enhanced the ethical merit of this study. The methodological advantage was in priming the participants for deeper discussions in interviews and group meetings (Birks & Mills 2011).

24 participants joined the first round of focus group meetings. In these meetings, I started an initial discussion to help participants understand the research and encourage them to consider the main research question. These meetings served two purposes. First, they helped build rapport with participants and develop trust based on my insider position as a Jordanian researcher and as a teacher in the Jordanian education system. I built this relationship based on my experience as a former student in the public education system in Jordan and as a high school teacher and lead teacher for 15 years in the private education system in Jordan. Principals and I had mutually engaging conversations that allowed for feelings of intimacy, trust and mutual interest. These conversations primed principals to engage actively in the research.

I was aware that the success of this project depended on my ability to win the participants’ trust. The participants needed to voluntarily and consciously engage in formal discussions. At times, this might involve expressing critical judgements of senior MoE officials. Douglas (1985, p. 25) noted that:

To achieve this, the interviewer must establish a climate for mutual disclosure. The interview should be an occasion that displays the interviewer’s willingness to share his or her own feelings and deepest thoughts.
This is done to assure respondents that they can, in turn, share their own thoughts and feelings. The interviewers’ deep disclosure both occasions and legitimises the respondent’s reciprocal revelations (Gubrium & Holstein 2003, p. 72).

Second, these preliminary meetings facilitated in-depth discussions with participants in subsequent meetings. They served as brainstorming sessions for the researcher and participants.

These generated initial concepts for further discussions (Birks & Mills 2015). In addition, these meetings influenced participants’ perception of their role in this research. They helped principals understand what taking part in this research would mean for them. These meetings also helped principals to understand the potential significance of the research and to believe they could effect change in the Jordanian education system through participating in the research. Initial informal phone calls and face to face meetings enhanced the participants’ confidence in and enthusiasm to take part in this research to provide feedback to MoE. As one principal explained to me in a focus group meeting:

Azzam to the researcher: …that is your part. No one is listening to us. I mentioned that to the director of the directorate when we were discussing education development.

I told him that they want us to produce better results and better students but I need more authority to be able to choose the right kind of high school teachers for my school. Good results need competent teachers.

Over the next 12 months, nine participants were interviewed and 15 participants engaged in focus group meetings in groups of three. These meetings generated the main body of the research data. I obtained consent from all interviewees to be contacted again later to follow up on and clarify emerging topics. In later stages of
data analysis and theory building, I conducted 11 interviews with respondents whose contributions in interviews and meetings had provided insights that proved significant to the research findings. I did this to assess the internal validity of the hypotheses that emerged in advanced stages of axial and selective coding. In this sense, the data collection process aligned with retroductive grounded theory by going back and forth between the data and sources to validate hypotheses (Birks & Mills 2011; Corbin & Strauss 2008; Charmaz 2006; Edwards et al. 2014; Reichertz 2007).

4.7 Theoretical sampling

In grounded theory, data collection is determined as concepts emerge from the data (Glaser & Strauss 1967). This drives theoretical sampling, which is:

…the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyses his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, to develop his theory as it emerges (p. 45).

Initial stages of data collection, however, are guided by ‘purposive sampling’ (Mills & Birks 2014, p. 113). This is based not on a ‘preconceived theoretical framework’ but on the researcher’s knowledge of the field of study (Glaser & Strauss 1967, p. 47). Theoretical sampling takes place when data analysis begins. It starts with open coding and memoing to protect the researcher from being ‘stuck in unfocused analysis’ (Charmaz 2006, p. 97). Theoretical sampling is consistent with the abductive approach this research takes. I engaged in an ongoing process of data collection and analysis to hypothesise and locate new samples to validate my hypothesis (Charmaz 2006; Edwards et al. 2014; Kempster & Parry 2011; Oliver 2012).
This mandated an extended process of data collection over two and a half years. This took place at the same time as data analysis (Glaser 1978) until categories reach saturation point. With theoretical sampling I had to ‘stay open’ to data with new emergent themes and concurrently remain mindful of the ‘current categories’ that emerged from the data, so that ‘collection [was] controlled and directed to relevance and workability’ (Glaser 1978, p. 47).

4.8 Interview questions

Interview questions were developed to stimulate open discussion and thinking about the research topic. Questions were phrased to be open-ended and nonjudgmental (Charmaz 2006) to facilitate unreserved disclosure of participants’ stories and concerns. I undertook to show participants respect (Charmaz 2006; Edwards et al. 2014) and remain nonjudgmental, even when I did not agree with their position (Glaser 1978). Inductive questions were framed from the research questions. My supervisor and I examined interview questions to rework and sometimes eliminate questions that were too prescriptive. Corbin and Strauss (2015) argue that:

A skilled interviewer lets the interviewee guide the course of the interview and allows him or her to reveal information at his or her pace while accepting pauses as part of the process (p. 40).

It is equally important that the interviewer actively listen to interviewees’ answers to questions and examine interviewees’ verbal and non-verbal expression (Corbin & Strauss 2008). Mishler (1986, p. 7) says:

Questioning and answering are ways of speaking that are grounded in and depend on culturally shared and often tacit assumptions about how to express and understand beliefs, experiences, feelings and intentions (Corbin & Strauss 2008, p. 28).
Therefore, to collect rich data, I remained flexible in when, what, and how I asked questions of each participant (Birks & Mills 2011). After initiation conversations, I practiced active listening (Charmaz 2006) to remain ‘more interested than interesting’ in interviews (Babbie 2002, p. 336).

4.9 Collecting the data in Arabic

Interviews were recorded and transcribed accurately. Questions were written in English and then translated to Arabic by me. I am bilingual, and Arabic is my first language. All interviews were conducted in Arabic. Language mediates meaning and is the means to express the culture and values that are the focus of this research. Imberti (2007) explains that:

When the foreign language predominates in conversations, the person no longer communicates in the language that provides the comfort of a familiar frame of reference, and the relational context that sustains identification with the self in relation with the other becomes unnatural (p. 72).

I share the research participants’ social and cultural background. This allowed me to capture implicit meanings in participants’ verbal and non-verbal communication.

Data were examined, analysed, interpreted and explained in Arabic. Data then were translated into English. Conducting data analysis in Arabic safeguarded implicit messages in the data through the translation process. Milliken and Schreiber (2012) note that:

As grounded theorists, we strive to use language carefully, both in how we listen to participants and how we write, to be as clear as possible in translating the data to the reader and participants’ stories into theory (p. 4).
4.10 Data analysis

Grounded theory data analysis entailed approaching the data early in the collection process to identify concepts that captured significant events and verified salient meanings (Corbin & Holt 2005; Corbin & Strauss 2008). Many methodologies commence analysis after data collection. However, grounded theory uses simultaneous data collection and analysis that drives continuous theoretical sampling (Birks & Mills 2011; Charmaz 2006; Corbin & Strauss 2008; Glaser & Strauss 1967). Corbin and Strauss (2008) state:

Being immersed in data analysis during data collection provides a sense of direction, promotes greater sensitivity to data and enables the researcher to redirect and revise interview question or observation as he or she proceeds (p. 58).

In this research, initial inductive analysis facilitated an abductive process of hypotheses formation and validation. This continued until the grounded theory of this research emerged (Charmaz 2006; Edwards et al. 2014; Oliver 2012; Reichertz 2007; Thornberg 2012). Comparative data analysis and memoing captured my interpretations of the data. In this way, they constituted another source of data (Charmaz 2006; Corbin & Strauss 1998, 2008, 2015; Birks & Mills 2011).

4.10.1 Coding

Coding began at the outset of data collection. Glaser (1978) explains: ‘Coding gets the analyst off the empirical level by fracturing the data, then conceptually grouping it into codes that then become the theory which explains what is happening in the data’ (p. 55). Coding in this research went beyond descriptive labels.
It began an analytical journey in which major ideas were extracted to gradually assemble the grounded theory of this research (Glaser 1978). As Charmaz (2006) points out, ‘grounded theory coding generates the bones of your analysis. Theoretical integration will assemble these bones into a working skeleton. Thus, coding is more than a beginning; it shapes an analytic frame from which you build the analysis’ (p. 45).

4.10.1.1 Initial/open coding

In the first stage of data analysis (Charmaz 2006) or open coding (Corbin & Strauss 2008; Glaser 1978) I remained open to all ‘theoretical possibilities’ and emerging ideas to allow early detection of the need for additional data (Charmaz 2006, p. 47). Four questions guided the initial coding:

- ‘What is this data a study of? (Glaser 1978, p. 57; Glaser & Strauss 1967)
- What does the data suggest? Pronounce?
- From whose point of view?
- What theoretical category does this datum indicate?’ (Glaser 1978)’ (ibid, p. 47).

Transcripts of principals’ interviews were examined line by line during initial coding (Charmaz 2006; Glaser 1978). This is often referred to as ‘microanalysis’ (Corbin & Holt 2005; Corbin & Strauss 2008). Microanalysis is ‘like using a high-powered microscope to examine each piece of data up close’ (Corbin & Strauss 2008, p. 59). This allowed focused analysis of data to capture explicit and implicit ideas and assumptions. These might otherwise have been overlooked and lost in data analysis (Charmaz 2006).
Glaser (1978) warns that ‘the ‘overview view approach’ tends to yield thin theory’ (p. 58). Such an approach does not preclude meaningful understanding of the research topic, however. Corbin and Strauss (2008) argue that ‘microanalysis complements and supplements a more general analysis’ (p. 60). In-vivo codes (Charmaz 2006; Corbin & Strauss 2008) were used often in open coding. In-vivo codes are ‘concepts using the actual words of research participants rather than being named by the analyst’ (Corbin & Strauss 2008, p. 65). Participants in this research were competent and experienced principals. In-vivo codes allowed me to capture their interpretations of their experiences in their own words.

Initial coding required me to ask questions about the data to remain critical of participants’ viewpoints. Participants’ choice of words in casual discussions revealed assumptions they held about their practices. For example, one principal described his school leadership style as distributed and democratic. In the same discussion, he referred to the school as his family and to himself as the father of this family as its principal and leader. Earlier in the interview, this principal explained how fathers have authority over their family in tribal societies like Jordan. He explained how the father is the only family member entitled to input on decisions.

In this way, the principals’ choice of words ‘father’ and ‘family’ revealed contradictory perspectives on his leadership. These stood at odds with his own assumptions about his leadership practices. I expected data analysis to uncover hidden mechanisms that drive leadership practices in Jordanian public schools and education. Charmaz (2006) explains:

Coding forces you to think about the material in new ways that may differ from your research participants’ interpretations. Your analytic eye and disciplinary background lead you to look at their statements and actions in
ways that may not have occurred to them. By studying the data, you may make fundamental processes explicit, render hidden assumptions visible, and give participants new insights (p. 55).

4.10.1.2 Memoing and reflexivity

Another important methodological practice was the writing of memos. These are ‘written records of an analyst’s thoughts, interpretations and directions to self’ (Corbin & Holt 2005, p. 51). Memoing started in the early stages of this research. It took place alongside and informed analysis of the interviews. To this end, I carried a recording device throughout the research process to record ideas or reflect on casual conversations. These written and digital memos enhanced the quality of this research. First, memos were important for theoretical sampling. Birks and Mills (2011) assert that memoing ‘allows the researcher to map out possible sources to sample theoretically, while at the same time creating an important audit trail of the decision-making process for later use’ (p. 11). Second, memoing facilitated understanding of underpinning mechanisms that were driving practices in the Jordanian public schools. This helped me generate the grounded theory of this research. Last, writing memos enabled me to remain reflexive and unbiased.

Birks and Mills (2011) define reflexivity as researchers ‘systematically’ and ‘critically analysing their reflective writing’ (p. 52). Memoing in this research process formed reflections on and interpretations of data that proved to be important, in particular at the later stage of theoretical integration.

4.10.1.3 Axial coding

The constant comparison process highlighted commonalities and connections between codes and concepts (Corbin & Holt 2005). This process is known as axial
coding. It is ‘the crosscutting or relating concepts to each other’ (Corbin & Strauss 2008, p. 195) in which the researcher decides on main and sub categories and identifies their relationship to each other. Strauss (1987) views axial coding as building ‘a dense texture of relationships around the “axis” of the category being focused upon’ (p. 64). This process leads to uncovering core categories, ‘an integrative concept but detailed in the sense that it is explained through all of the information contained under the individual categories and their properties and dimensions’ (Corbin & Holt 2005, p. 51).

4.10.1.4 Selective and theoretical coding

At this stage, I examined codes that were identified through axial coding to decide which of these concepts should become research categories. I also identified the core category that ‘encapsulates and explains the grounded theory as a whole’ (Birks & Mills 2011, p. 12). Substantiating the core category called for additional theoretical sampling and selective coding (Birks & Mills 2011) with further comparative analysis until data reached saturation point (Corbin & Holt 2005, p. 51). Next, I began theoretical coding. Glaser (1978) explains that:

Theoretical codes conceptualise how the substantive codes may relate to each other as hypotheses to be integrated into a theory... they weave the fractured story back together again (p. 72).

Generating grounded theory is complex (Charmaz 2006; Corbin & Strauss 2008; Birks & Mills 2011). It requires engagement with the data until the story ‘feels right’—that is, until the findings ‘represent one logical interpretation of the data, as seen through the eyes of this particular analyst’ (Corbin & Strauss 2008, p. 47).
4.10.1.5 Theoretical sensitivity

Theoretical sensitivity is an integral part of grounded theory. It is the researcher’s ability to generate theories that have ‘fit’, ‘relevance’ and ‘workability’ (Glaser, 1978). This calls for ‘analytic temperament and competence’ (Holton 2007, p. 275). According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), two important sources of theoretical sensitivity are the researcher’s background and the research process. They identify the literature and the researcher’s personal and professional experience as factors that influence the researcher’s background. Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest three techniques for researchers to enhance their theoretical sensitivity:

- ‘Periodically step back and ask: what is going on here? Does what I think I see fit the reality of the data?’ (p. 44)

- ‘Maintain an attitude of scepticism: [literature and experience] need to be checked out against the actual data, and never accepted as facts’ (p. 45).

- ‘Follow the research procedures’ (p. 45)

Researchers develop theoretical sensitivity ‘over time through close association and work with people and data’ (Corbin & Strauss 2008, p. 32). In addition to the sources identified by Strauss and Corbin (1990), my supervisors helped me engage in deeper and more nuanced readings of the data to enhance my theoretical sensitivity. Reflexivity contributed to my theoretical sensitivity also. It grew my awareness of the influence of my history, knowledge and subjectivity on my understanding of the data (ibid).
4.11 Ethics

I originally intended this research to allow principals to provide feedback to senior MoE officials on leadership practices in the field. This required participants’ trust in the ethical practice and confidentiality of this research. I built rapport and trust with participants before I sought their signed consent to participate in the research. This illustrates my respect for the participants and enhances the integrity of my research. Participants were asked to sign consent forms that outlined the purpose and nature of this research. Participants also were emailed two other forms that granted them the right to complain or withdraw from the research at any time, for any reason, and with no negative consequences.

I am not affiliated with the Jordanian government or with Jordanian government organisations. I disclosed this to the participants in emails inviting them to participate in this research. This reduced risk to participants from sharing their thoughts and feelings unreservedly. Participants said they felt safe to speak freely and this was reflected in their narratives. The findings of this research were co-constructed by the participants and me. This gives the research a horizontal power structure that enhances the reliability of my research. I share the same social and cultural background as the participants. This meant the discussions in interviews and focus groups were culturally sensitive. This enhanced rapport between the participants and me.

I received research approval from the Deakin Research Ethics Committee (project reference number: HAE-15-170) on 18 January 2016. Participants understood that this research adhered to Deakin University procedures in terms of confidentiality and protection of their identity. This is non-identifying research.
Therefore, pseudonyms were used throughout the findings and discussion chapters. All recordings and transcripts are kept in a locked cupboard in the researcher’s office, according to Deakin University Standards. All electronic files are stored on the researcher’s personal computer and are password protected. Only my supervisors had access to these files. All written transcripts will be stored for five years. At the end of this period the transcripts will be destroyed.

The research involved principals in Jordanian public schools. For this reason, I had to abide by MoE guidelines for the conduct of this research. MoE expressed support for this research. I received written consent for MoE to undertake this research. I circulated this letter to all schools in the two governorates where the research was to take place.

4.12 Theoretical integration

Theoretical integration is the final stage of theorising, although, ‘in reality, your construction of the theory begins with the first piece of data’ (Birks & Mills 2011, p. 114). Birks and Mills identify three factors necessary to integrate grounded theory: ‘An identified core category’, ‘theoretical saturation of major categories’ and ‘an accumulated bank of analytical memos’ (p. 115). Not all grounded theory research generates theories. Even so, Corbin and Strauss (2008) encourage the researchers to ‘consider developing a theory’ and not to be intimidated by ‘antitheoretical trends’ (p. 55). At the initial stages of this research, my objectives were confined to providing some ‘explanations of the lived experience or narrative stories’ (ibid, p.

6 See Appendix 3 for more information.
55). However, immersion in constant abductive comparative analysis enhanced my ability to hypothesise, validate and theorise. This process also enhanced my understanding of the value of theory to explain novel leadership stances. The following section explains how the findings of this research were theorised in the data and discussion chapters to generate the grounded of this research.

4.12.1 Lower vs higher level concepts

Constant comparative analysis of the data has generated ‘lower-level’ and ‘higher-level’ concepts (Corbin & Strauss 2008, p. 53). Both of these were used to introduce the findings of this research. Initially, relationships between the categories were determined using mainly the ‘six Cs’ of the 18 coding families (Glaser 1978). These are: causes, contexts, contingencies, consequences, co-variances, and conditions (p. 74). However, other coding families also were employed during construction of the data chapters. Of primary relevance were the following families: interactive, identity-self, cutting-point, cultural, mainline and the unit family. The following diagrams illustrate how the data chapters were arranged around higher level concepts using axial coding.

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7 See Appendix 5
Chapter Five: Leadership discourses

Leadership discourses

- Understanding leadership
- Eclectic leadership
- Distributed leadership
- Traditional leadership
Chapter Six: Perceptions, tensions and discontinuities

- Principals' role
  - Principals' perceptions
  - Lack of communication
  - Marginalisation
  - Meeting with the Minister

- The Ministry's and directorates' role
  - No coordination
  - Smoke and mirrors
  - Hierarchy
  - Power and connection

- Impact on school performance
  - Bureaucracy
  - Accountability measures
  - Lack of trust
Chapter Seven: Implementing illusion

- Influence of reforms on school improvement
  - Infrastructure
  - Financial support
  - Teachers' overload
  - Training logistics
  - Inconsistent practices

- Implementing illusion (in-vivo code)
- Forged SIP (in-vivo code)

- Game playing and practice mastery
Chapter Eight: Qualification dilemma

- Teachers' qualifications
  - Bachelor's degree
  - Teachers' warranty (in-vivo code) and the learning leader
  - From teachers to principals

- Principals' qualifications
  - Gender gap
  - Absence of PLCs
  - Principals' preservice training
  - Financial incentives

- Silver lining
  - Principals' agency
  - Brave leaders
  - Appreciation and respect
  - Passion for one's career
4.12.2 Retroductive analysis

The higher-level concepts in these chapters could serve as middle range pillars for the approximal core categories and core category. Further relations (for example, power and agency) were identified in the data but were ‘noticeably absent in Glaser’s list’ (Charmaz 2006, p. 66). Besides, I felt it timely to integrate Bourdieu’s critical
theory to move from ‘the iterative to the retroductive dynamic in the analysis of the themes’. This moved theorising from the ‘empirical domain’ to the ‘deep domain’ (Edwards et al. 2014, p. 101). The following diagram illustrates the final stage in theoretical integration:

![Diagram](image)

**In summary**

Chapter Four introduced the methodological framework of this research. The chapter commenced with an explanation of the researcher’s critical realist ontology. The chapter then explained grounded theory methodology. It defined abduction as
the main method of reasoning used to arrive at the findings of this research. Next, it explained the use of basic core principles of grounded theory in this research to collect and analyse the data. The last section illustrated the axial coding diagrams to identify links between the themes and subthemes of the data chapters. The last diagram represented the theoretical integration phase that generated the grounded theory of this research.

The subsequent chapters examine the research findings and the grounded theory of this research.
Data chapters

Data chapters followed selective coding (Charmaz 2006), the second phase of the data analysis. Recurrent initial codes were advanced into concepts and categories that represent main and sub themes in the data chapters. Constant comparative analysis identified commonalities between codes and data, lower and higher level concepts (Corbin & Strauss 2008) and concepts and categories (Corbin & Holt 2005). The data findings are divided into five chapters of interrelated themes. These articulate principals’ perception of the implementation of ERfKE in the public education sector in Jordan.

These chapters represent participant principals’ perceptions and stories. As such, they are interconnected and do not demarcate themes in the data. Chapter Five is structured around discourses on leadership. Chapter Six explores relations between MoE, education directorates and schools. Chapter Seven examines implementation of ERfKE. Chapter Eight focuses on principals’ qualifications. Chapter Nine examines the impact of tribal culture on principals’ practices and beliefs. The data chapters are structured as series of quotes and vignettes that capture the themes in each chapter. The figures at the beginning of each chapter represent the axial coding of higher-level concepts that emerged from data analysis. These figures illustrate how themes and subthemes are connected in each chapter.

8 See Appendix 4 for a summary of the gender of participants
Chapter Five: Leadership discourses

Chapter Five examines themes in principals’ views on leadership that emerged from the data. At the beginning of each interview, principals were asked to share their thoughts on the meaning of leadership and of distributed leadership under ERfKE. Principals then were asked their views on traditional leadership practices among principals at Jordanian public schools. The main themes in this chapter are definitions of leadership, eclectic leadership, distributed leadership and traditional leadership in Jordanian schools.
5.1 What is leadership?

The first interview question aimed to disclose participants’ thoughts on leadership. The data showed different levels of understanding of leadership among the principals. Fahed said:

Leadership means the future, innovation, thinking and achieving the organisation’s goals effectively through achieving the goals of the employees. Then when the goals of both the organisation and the employees are achieved, I can consider myself a successful leader.

Some participants described leadership as vested in the figure of the leader—in this case, the principal. For example, Khadijah said:

Leadership is my ability to influence others, which entails that I have the disposition, qualifications, tools and procedures to facilitate my leadership mission and make me more capable of influencing others to serve teaching and learning.

Azzam said: ‘The principal is the top of the pyramid at school. He should have exceptional skills to deal with his students, especially if they are teenagers.’ Fatimah, however, perceived the principal as ‘a member of a team’. She explained:

The leader should not be the commander since leadership should not be perceived as a hierarchy where the leader is at the top. The leaders should be part of a team if they want to be successful. Planning, implementation and administration should be based on team work to yield better results for the organisation.

Salma also defined leadership in terms that were less hierarchical. She called for ‘cancelling the title principal and replacing it with an education leader’. Salma maintained that the title ‘principal’ represented a ‘centralised approach to school leadership, whereas the Ministry is calling for decentralisation of schools and in
schools’. Dhahab, on the other hand, felt directorates and the Ministry should call her an ‘education leader’ because that title conveyed prestige and authority commensurate to her role:

I wouldn’t accept less than this title, ‘an education leader’. My success at my school is clear evidence that I deserve the title. And nowadays if you don’t advocate yourself as an outstanding leader, no one would acknowledge that. I have to fight for this title. Some people do support us, but many others don’t. I believe their intellectual approach to education is still lacking.

Other principals distinguished between school leaders and school managers. For example, Aqeel, Ameen and Fahed thought leaders should not spend time on ‘administrative and clerical work’ that diverted their attention from their role as ‘instructional leaders’. They described their role as leaders as ‘impeded by the bureaucratic rules and regulations’ of senior directorate and Ministry officials. Ameen highlighted this view in his definition of leadership:

It is how I can influence others so that eventually we can achieve the goals of our Ministry’s and our schools represented by administrative and teaching staff. So, I can call myself a leader if I manage to build my team at school and delegate tasks to them and empower them to accomplish these tasks.

However, if I limit my work to the administrative and clerical work then I am not a true leader. The big dilemma, however, is with the rules and regulations that restrict my role as a leader.

Most principals agreed that implementation of distributed leadership entailed creating a ‘shared vision’. Khadija explained that:

Leadership is having a shared vision out of which stems a shared mission. This in turn creates a sense of shared commitment to transform it into goals and an action plan to achieve these goals.
Majid defined leadership as the ability to influence others to collaborate to achieve shared goals:

The successful leader is a supervisor. He doesn’t do the work. He distributes it professionally and follows up on the staff performance. The success of this distribution depends on how shared and clear the vision and mission are.

If you assume that your role is a manger, you will suffer and everyone else will suffer as well. In our school, the school’s vision is printed on the teachers’ preparation folders and notebooks so that everyone is constantly reminded of the school’s vision.

Malak argued that leaders needed to guide school stakeholders to collaborate to develop a shared vision for their school:

Leadership is a reciprocal process of influencing others and being influenced by them. The aim of school leadership is to build the capacity of students’ leadership to prepare them as future leaders. For this to happen, there has to be a shared vision which is written by the teachers and the principal along with the students, represented by their parliament, in order for everyone to buy into it.

Dergham argued that ‘shared leadership’ entailed ‘shared recognition and accountability’. He said: ‘Leadership has to be a team effort. I believe in distributing the spirit of leadership by empowering everyone to do the work that was delegated to them.’ Kamal made conflicting comments on distribution of leadership among students and the local community:

Leadership is a process that is shared between the administration and teachers to achieve the academic goals the school is aspiring and serve the needs of this generation. It should not be restricted to teachers and administration.

It should also include the students and the local community although it can be difficult to include students in the school’s leadership as they do not know what leadership entails.
Hadya thought distributed leadership needed to remain goal-oriented:

Leadership is a shared process which aims at achieving some outcomes that were planned earlier. It has to be results-oriented management. This process requires the leader to synchronise the efforts of the human resources and utilise the financial resources of the organisation so that eventually they all achieve these results.

This should be followed by constant evaluation to generate proper feedback about the weakness and strength of their work and how they can build on that.

The idea of the leader as role model emerged from interviews. Principals argued that leaders should behave as exemplars for other school stakeholders. Aqeel maintained that:

A true leader has to be at the frontline, has to take the initiative and be brave, and has to be capable of decision making. The leader is a role model. When I ask the students to clean their school, I join them and do the cleaning with them to show them that this is not shameful or wrong.

Abdu al-Aziz thought leading by example could be more effective than making demands, because role models could change peoples’ attitudes:

I believe in role model leadership. I had a student who moved to my school recently and he refused to clean up his classroom or the playground. When he came to my office, I told him that we will both clean the playground. That student was really shocked and asked me, ‘You will clean the playground, sir?’ and I said, ‘Yes. This is my home.’ And from that moment, this student changed. I was a role model to him, not only giving orders.

Principals said they had been influenced by other principal’s leadership practices. For example, Abdu al-Aziz described the influence of one principal he worked with as an assistant and teacher. Abdu al-Aziz said that principal had been a ‘role model’ in the commitment he demonstrated to his work.
5.2 Eclectic leadership

Most principals said school leaders should utilise a combination of leadership approaches, or what they referred to as ‘eclectic’ or ‘situational’ leadership. Principals felt they adapted their leadership style to specific stakeholders and tasks. For example, Ameen and Fahed argued that no principal could maintain the same leadership style throughout the school year. Leaders needed to vary their practices to suit ‘the situation, the followers and the context’. Ameen said: ‘The principal might need to be an autocrat at times, but he cannot remain an autocrat 100 percent of the time.’ Fahed advocated ‘eclectic leadership’:

There are some aspects at school which entail administrative decisions that are critical and hence can’t be distributed. Even when principals authorise others to do administrative tasks, they are expected to keep an eye on them.

Many of the principals agreed that the need for eclectic leadership stemmed from Jordanian ‘social culture’. For example, Jamila explained:

There is a misconception by all stakeholders, including those at the directorates, that the capable and successful leader has to be a dictator with full control over his school. They believe that this is what makes the school more disciplined and successful.

Therefore, in the context of Jordanian schools, the principal has to be partly a dictator and partly a democrat. He or she has to implement different styles of leadership. It has to be eclectic based on what each situation entails.

Khadija agreed that Jordanian culture made it challenging for leaders to be firm without being ‘dictators’:

The concept of being firm is unfortunately often misconceived as being punitive and harsh. Therefore, firmness is associated with fear and threat. Self-
discipline is missing in people. Principals aspire to have a relationship that is based on trust not fear.

Rafiq said Jordanians might perceive distributed leadership and democracy as signs of weakness in principals:

There are limits to the teacher’s role in administration. Sometimes with democracy, teachers assume they can exceed these limits. Teachers would appreciate your democracy only when they realise how capable you are of punishment.

Siddiqa agreed. She argued that ‘her kindness and empathy were misinterpreted at times to be signs of weakness and uncertainty’. Most principals said MoE practices reinforced autocratic leadership practices among public school principals. Aqeel described Ministry officials’ perception of an ideal leader:

I still remember when I first became a principal, the director told me that he would give me a precious gift, which was a piece of advice. He warned me never to empathise with the staff nor share any decision at work because my work will lose its value, and no one would respect me as a leader.

[In a sarcastic voice]: He thought he was doing me a favour by giving me proper pre-service training.

5.3 Distributed leadership in schools

The second part of the discussion about leadership in Jordanian public schools focused on distributed leadership. It aimed to examine principals’ perception and implementation of distributed leadership under ERfKE. Many principals described distributed leadership to mean ‘delegation of tasks’. However, principals’ described delegation to mean different things. For example, Aysha described herself as a leader of leaders. She advocated limited delegation by principals:
Leader of leaders

I advocate the notion of a ‘leader of leaders’. Distributed leadership means that tasks at schools are delegated to school staff and teachers so that each become a leader in their specialty. Those small leaders should have a big leader who facilitates the delegation of tasks and each one of them should be accountable for their part.

Delegation

Distributed leadership is reflected in my leadership through delegation. All the tasks in the school are delegated to the subjects’ coordinators, administrative assistants, instructional leaders’ assistants and administrative follow up assistant. Each of these staff members knows exactly what they are required to do, and they are authorised to make decisions for which they are held accountable and responsible.

Trust and fairness

I supervise the work and sign the papers trusting that everyone did their work properly. I believe that when the tasks are delegated, full authority and trust should be granted. I believe in two important factors that impact work: fairness and equity.

All teachers in my school are equally acknowledged for their hard work which is also reflected in their annual appraisal. All new ideas and initiatives are welcomed, and I am against having a favoured group. All teachers should feel confident to share their ideas and they should be equally entitled to getting the principal’s support.

Confinements of delegation

However, teachers’ leadership role should be confined to pedagogy and learning, and it should not interfere with the administrative work. The administrative work they can take part in is usually confined to supervising students’ council. They can also discuss exams timetables with me.

Students also have a role in school leadership through the work of the students’ council. The parents are also gradually assuming a bigger role in
schools through the surveys they fill at the beginning of the year to build the schools plan.

They are also invited to give support to school through their donation or initiative to help at school. For example, parents volunteer to assist academically challenged students who cannot read and write. Parents visit the school and provide literacy one on one lessons.

Lip service

The Ministry’s leadership training program enabled principals to understand the notion of distributed leadership. However, distributed leadership can sometimes be only present through lip service. Although people at the directorate and the Ministry describe it in a way that makes look like it is present at all times, in fact it is not. Generally speaking, in the Jordanian schools, one feels that principals are dictators and impose their decisions on the rest of the staff whom they perceive as their followers.

These autocratic leaders usually pay lip service to make their practices sound democratic and participative. Therefore, I don’t usually base my judgment on people’s words but on their practices.

The same can be said about the directorate. At the moment, I consider herself lucky to have a director who can be described as a true leader. He is brave, and he can make risky decisions to support schools, but this remains contingent on the leaders’ disposition.

Affifa agreed that ERfKE leadership training had shaped principals’ views on leadership. She advocated ‘horizontal’ relationships between teachers and principals. She warned principals to do more than pay ‘lip service’ to distributed leadership:

Distributed leadership is delegation. With the leadership training program, our understanding of this notion of leadership matured…Sharing leadership should be horizontal not vertical. And this is what defines roles and relations in my school.
However, there is another type of distributed leadership which is in fact pseudo sharing, and that can be found at the directorates and many schools where people perceive and describe their practices as shared where in fact they are not.

In contrast, Azzam, Abd al-Aziz and Kamal said distributed leadership involved vertical delegation of tasks, but only to capable subordinates. For this reason, principals had to identify people competent to assist them in their work:

**Distributed leadership as delegation**

Azzam: I believe that a true leader is the one that would delegate tasks top-down to the teachers to perform in addition to the regular tasks they perform based on their job description.

For example, the Ministry decided to abolish the vice principal position, so I convinced one of my teachers to give him part of the administrative load in return for reducing his teaching load. In my school, I have 15 to 20 delegated tasks, so I have 15 to 20 principals. But of course, this doesn’t grant them the authority of the principal.

Kamal: I can delegate anything in my school except teachers’ leave because teachers abuse the system when the principal isn’t in control. I have distributed leadership and that is why I can be here because I told my assistant what to do and he is now in charge until I am back. I am in fact texting him right now to tell him what to do next.

Abd al-Aziz: We can leave our schools because we trust that our teachers and staff will do the right thing even when we are away.

Kamal: The culture of shared leadership at this school makes leaders. I trained one principal just before the leadership exam and explained to her what she should expect in the exam, so she passed and now she is a principal. I trained her.

Kamal: We cannot engage in difficult conversations in male principals’ schools because male teachers can’t distinguish between personal relationships and work. Female principals’ schools are more successful than...
male principals’ schools because male principals cannot draw the line between professional and personal relationships.

Female teachers are more responsible and committed to their jobs. They are more professional and the principal usually has smooth relationships with female teachers.

Rafiq, on the other hand, said principals should invest in the potential of all teachers at their school, and not distribute leadership only to one group:

A school cannot be run with the effort one leader. This leader needs other people who are equally qualified to assist him or her. Part of the leader’s mission is to build other people’s capacity and commitment as much as he can.

This applies to everyone, even teachers with low potential. The principal has to be patient and skilful to gradually enable these teachers. Everyone has to be a leader in their place. The principal can’t be a leader everywhere.

Fatimah, a principal and an ex-trainer, said she had practiced distributed leadership even before she completed ERfKE leadership training. However, leadership training had ‘matured’ her understanding of distributed leadership:

**Formalised distributed leadership**

Prior to the leadership program, we perceived our role as school managers. Principals shared work through delegation. Now, however, distributed leadership is more systematic, with very clear procedures that enable all the teachers to assume a role in school leadership.

The new school leadership program entails that the principal works with eight representative teachers who are nominated by all teachers and the school principal. These leader teachers constitute the leadership development team which falls in four domains: teaching and learning, student environment, school and community and leadership and management.

Each domain has two lead teachers and four other assistants, and they are fully responsible for their domain. In my school, I hold regular meetings with
the leaders to update me about the work of their teams. This is in addition to the regular meetings I have with all my staff.

Distributed leadership can be more efficient and conducive when work is systematic and when there is a clear plan and procedure to achieve. The absence of systematic distributed leadership will deplete resources and exhaust both the principal and the teachers as it will throw unjustifiably unequal burdens on them because the vision, goals and procedures are all blurred.

Distributed leadership impacts the students as well. With their new leadership roles, teachers feel more confident and empowered which should reflect on their teaching and students learning.

Teachers will want to enable students as leaders to take part in the decision-making process. This leadership stance opens the door to everyone to step in and take part in leadership.

Families as an example of distributed leadership emerged as a higher-level concept in the data. Principals referred frequently to their schools as their families. Fatimah, for example, said she would never ‘replicate the practices of autocratic principals’ since she considered teachers at her school ‘sisters’. Fahed explained:

What first came to my mind when I heard the term distributed leadership is a family with the father being the biggest leader in this family and all the other members are the small leaders, so that leadership is all about delegating tasks to these small leaders. At the school level, the teachers and administrative staff are the small leaders and the principal would be the biggest leader.

At the directorate level, the head of departments are the small leaders and the director is the biggest leader. In this sense, the Minister of Education would be the biggest leader of education in Jordan.

If we apply this understanding on the family, we will find that the father is in fact the biggest leader who would delegate tasks to his family in a sense that everyone has a share in the aspired goals and the attained outcomes. And work will be more meaningful.
Dergham perceived distributed leadership as an example of consultation:

Teachers are always consulted, and decisions are taken unanimously, especially when it relates to teaching and learning. In this case, teachers are more capable of making the right decisions because they are the front line in teaching.

This democratic leadership stance is turned into the school’s culture and impacts all relationships in the school, whether between the teachers and students, the teachers and the principal or the students and the principal.

Even students have a role in leadership to some extent. They can freely express their opinions and they have the right to object to decisions in some school committees.

Many principals argued that the Ministry and directorates continued to utilise centralised leadership practices. Principals felt this contradicted ERfKE’s call for decentralisation of power to schools. For example, Aqeel said:

I have been a principal for 11 years. There is a new leadership concept that everyone is talking about nowadays. However, in reality I feel that the Ministry does not implement what it preaches.

For example, I know that the leader is the one who leads and shows the way, not only the one who gives orders. He is the one who leads to achieve the organisation’s goals. Our Ministry is lacking in understanding leadership in this sense.

For example, to become qualified leaders, the principals have been trained on the leadership program which reflects the Ministry’s new policy. This also should entail that the decision-making procedure at the Ministry reflects this distributed leadership vision.

Unfortunately, decision making is still centralised when it comes to the relationship between the Ministry and the principals despite the call for decentralisation.
Jamila said relationships between schools and directorates were defined by fear, threat, and lack of trust. She saw this as an obstacle to implementing distributed leadership:

The new leadership program which represents the Ministry’s policies asks the principal to embrace the notion of distributed leadership. However, the principals do not feel safe to practice it.

All the formal correspondence with the directorate and the Ministry has one sentence at the end: ‘Subject to penalty and the principal is held entirely responsible.’

So even with distributed leadership, there isn’t distributed accountability. There is a constant threatening disrespectful tone when addressing the principal.

Dhahab agreed:

We all talk about decentralisation, we love decentralisation and we call for decentralisation, we teach decentralisation but we don’t implement decentralisation because centralisation is what actually represents the ideology of those at the top. The Ministry and the directorate’s practices don’t reflect a valid perception of the decentralisation they are calling for.

Distributed leadership is results-oriented leadership, not what we have now, which is result-oriented management because with the latter the SIP can be written by one person and the rest will be asked to sign the document. It won’t be team work. The implementation of distributed leadership depends on the leader’s conviction and qualification.

Hadya gave an extensive and explicit definition of distributed leadership. In addition, she described measures that she felt would assist implementation of distributed leadership in Jordanian public schools:
Hadya’s perception of distributed leadership

Distributed leadership means that there isn’t one leader. The work is done by a team of leaders. To me, it is similar to shared leadership. At my school, decisions have to be unanimously made unless it is an emergency or high-risk decision. Then I might have to decide without consulting others.

But mostly, leadership is distributed, especially when it concerns teaching and learning because the teachers are more capable of making decisions concerning their classrooms and students. They are always encouraged to carry out research to identify their needs.

When everyone knows what is expected of him or her, the principal will only be there to follow up on implementation and provide guidance. The true leader is the one who can enable others as leaders and the one with high emotional intelligence which enables him or her to empathise with others.

High emotional intelligence privileges the leader as he or she will be capable of influencing others. They have the necessary social and communication skills to reach out to resisting and negative staff and transform their resistance to a positive attitude.

Due to God’s grace, any decision that I make at this school has to be shared with the administrative staff as well as lead teachers that are assigned this role because of their qualification and disposition.

Teachers feel entitled to discuss new decisions with me and object to them and I have an open-door policy. I find this procedure a successful one in dealing with teachers’ resistance. Teachers also trust that they can share their ideas and suggestions.

When any teachers propose some new ideas to be implemented, they are asked to share it with others first and get their feedback and approval. And then I make sure to get the teachers’ feedback on this new idea before I approve of it. The same applies to my students.

They believe that I am a good listener and our relationship is built on mutual respect and trust. Even when they face an issue with their teachers, they know they have a strong voice and the principal would listen to them.
This mutual understanding between the teachers and the principal is due to having a shared vision and regular monthly meetings to reflect on school performance and share feedback.

At the beginning, they were resistant to these meetings. However, they started to appreciate the value of these meetings because of the feedback they get and how they are involved in the whole process. They feel empowered and that their voice counts.

This leadership stance is exhausting because you are trying to overcome resistance and transform a school culture. It takes time. It requires skills, energy, patience and knowledge. However, it is also gratifying and rewarding when you start to witness the change you’ve worked for.

I don’t believe in punishment. I believe in open channels of communication which can lead to change. All praise be to God, I haven’t used any punitive measures in my school for the past three years because I didn’t feel it was necessary.

People do respond to words if you approach them properly. Due to God’s grace, none of my students or teachers ask to leave this school.

5.4 Traditional leadership in the Jordanian schools

Principals described Jordan unanimously as a tribal society. However, they felt the influence of tribal values on peoples’ practices differed from one region to the other. For example, Burhan, Fatimah, Ameen, Khadijah, Aqeel and Fahed thought tribal values had less influence on communities closer to cities. Fahed explained Jordanian tribal values:

In the parts where the tribal values dominate, leadership is hereditary, and the Sheikh designates himself as the leader of the tribe. This leader defines his own leadership style, which could be autocratic, democratic or a mix of both based on his convictions.
Inside the family, the father is solely entitled to make decisions and no one can argue or disagree. Similarly, the father’s power, authority and practices can vary from one family to the other.

Fahed argued that ‘the relationship between the principal and the teachers in the school resembles the relationship between the father and his family’. For Fahed, consulting teachers signified distribution of leadership. However, when asked if he thought practices in most Jordanian families were democratic and distributed, Fahed said most of the time they were not. Fatimah expressed concerns about traditional leadership practices in most Jordanian public schools:

Unfortunately, in schools with traditional leadership stances, teachers and students’ expertise are not utilised nor invited. Students’ participation will be contingent upon the teachers’ convictions and practices, which usually mirror the practices of the leader in their schools.

Aysha explained that distributed leadership rarely was found in Jordanian public schools. She said it was easy to identify the few schools that implemented distributed leadership. These schools, she said, were identified by their principals and even named after them.

However, despite acknowledging the prevalence of autocratic leadership practices in Jordanian public schools, Aysha felt autocratic principals commanded less respect, trust and loyalty from their employees. Fatimah confirmed that principals traditionally were the ‘one and only decision maker’ in Jordanian public schools:

There is no consultation of administrative staff nor the teachers. The Ministry’s accountability measures support these hegemonic autocratic leadership practices as it considers the principal the only one accountable for the school’s academic and administrative performance.
Therefore, autocratic principals grant themselves this authority over their followers. Even recognition and credit for work is attributed to the principal most of the time and it is up to the principal to recognise the teacher’s efforts internally at school and include their contribution in the annual appraisal records. This hierarchy is initially reflected at the Ministry’s and directorate’s level.

Fatimah thought principals paid lip service to distributed leadership to disguise autocratic leadership practices. She said many principals ‘pretended’ to have worked with their development team to implement an SIP. However, she pointed to one sign of superficial implementation of distributed leadership in schools—‘chaos prevails when the principal leaves his or her school because teachers are not trained nor entrusted as leaders’.

Burhan said the practices of most principals did not reflect ERfKE leadership training. He complained of principals copying other schools’ SIPS or writing random plans without identifying their schools’ priorities. Principals then discarded their rushed SIP. To Burhan, these principals demonstrated what he referred to as an ‘al faza’a leadership style’. Al faza’a leadership emerged as a high-level concept in the data. Burhan described al faza’a leadership as ‘responsive to emergencies’, such as a visit from the Ministry or inspection by the directorate:

Traditional principals only give orders which are not followed most of the time because these orders have no valid grounds. Therefore, these principals are not convincing as leaders which will consequently instigate resistance on the part of the teachers and administrative staff.

These resisting staff procrastinate in following orders or doing what they have been asked to because these decisions are imposed on them. The relationship

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9 Al faza’a is an Arabic term that indicates acting in response to emergencies.
between these autocratic leaders and the followers is grounded on favouritism and nepotism. Principals have their favoured group chosen based on their connections or the principals’ whim.

The rest of the teachers are marginalised for no reason and sadly this favoured group forms the link between the principal and the other teachers, a point that was confirmed by the majority of the participant principals.

However, based on his experience as an ERfKE leadership trainer, Burhan thought training provided by the Ministry could transform leadership in Jordanian schools:

These teachers and principals who have been used to the traditional style of leadership will be gradually transformed through orientation and then introducing them to the training. Leadership is hopefully improving now since the criteria for appointing new principals have changed. Now there is an exam and an interview.

Hadya disagreed with Burhan. She argued that selection criteria for principals were inadequate:

Part of the leadership capacity is innate. Leaders are born with certain traits that enable them to be leaders. The interviewers have to check if the new principals have these leadership attributes. Until recently, many unqualified principals are still appointed. The interviews have to be conducted by qualified leaders who are well informed about the needs of the field.

I consider myself lucky to have been interviewed by some true leaders who did not base their choice on the number of years I had, but on my qualifications as a leader. I was appointed as a secondary school principal although I am the youngest in the school (owing this of course to God’s grace).

Hadya described ‘huge gaps’ between male and female principals’ schools:

In general, principals in traditional schools perceive themselves as managers, not leaders. The principal would spend the whole day filing papers and documenting with no attention what so ever to his role as an instructional leader.
This is particularly evident in male principals’ schools. Distributed leadership is alien to them. They have no notion what we are talking about. One can see this reflected in their schools, where these is no discipline at all. Qualified male leaders are so rare that can be counted on the fingers.

In summary

This chapter has examined principals’ thoughts on leadership in Jordanian public schools since implementation of ERfKE. Most principals described distributed leadership to mean delegation of tasks. Some created their own definition that merged autocratic and distributed leadership practices. Principals agreed on eclectic leadership as the style most appropriate in Jordanian schools. In addition, principals agreed autocratic leadership practices were widespread in Jordanian public schools in general, and in male principals’ schools in particular. They explained that principals in these schools utilised ‘al faza’a leadership’ practices. The next chapter will examine the relationship between schools, directorates and the Ministry to examine practices that influence implementation of ERfKE.
Chapter Six: Perceptions, tensions and discontinuities

Figure 6-1: Perceptions, tensions and discontinuities
This chapter explores principals’ perceptions of MoE and education directorates’ policies and practices in implementing ERfKE. It examines tensions around the reform agenda and principals’ practices and their influence on implementation of the program. The data show disconnections between practices of government officials and teachers and principals with respect to implementation of ERfKE.

6.1 Principals’ role

This part of the interviews examined principals’ perception of their role in reform processes and decision making at their school. Principals agreed that neither schools nor directorates contributed to policymaking. Rather, MoE monopolised decision making power. Aysha explained that: ‘Principals are field employees and therefore, they are implementers of policies and orders. Even the directorate has no say in policies making. The Ministry has their own council.’ Fatimah said:

Principals merely execute orders which are imposed on them because the Ministry believes in the change capacity of international programs and believes that these programs can transform schools. Many of these mandated practices instigate resistance on the part of the principals as training programs are perceived as a burden not an asset.

Aqeel expressed frustration with MoE practices in dealing with principals. Aqeel complained that principals do not have authority to make decisions in schools:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lack of communication and collaboration</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Principals receive decisions in parachutes with no preceding clear communication of the Ministry’s vision to schools. Therefore, policies are assimilated at a superficial level due to the absence of alignment of visions and values.</strong></td>
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When the principals receive new training, they should be able to envisage and understand the Ministry’s policies. The Ministry has a clear plan that should be articulated to the principals and schools prior to the training they are invited to.

I believe that principals not only have to be informed about the Ministry’s new vision, but also to be part of its development. They have to be aware of where the Ministry is heading and conceive the role their schools serve in achieving this goal.

The current Ministry’s practices, however, do not reflect a deep level of communication and collaboration to the extent that the Ministry’s vision can sometimes conflict with that of the schools’.

Bureaucracy

We try to distribute leadership, but the bureaucracy sometimes stifles creative ideas. We have to wait for a long time for an answer. We should be authorised at schools to make decisions if we are perceived as leaders. However, there is no trust.

The directorates and the Ministry do not believe in us and won’t give us the authority to make any decision in our schools. Creative ideas are squashed by bureaucracy.

However, Aysha, Affifa, Azzam, Abdu al-Aziz and Kamal maintained that principals’ scope to act ‘autonomously’ varies between directorates based on directorate heads’ disposition and views. Some directors were supportive and empowered principals to make decisions in their school. However, such practices remained ‘personal and not institutionalised’. When decisions are institutional, they follow the rules and regulations of the MoE. However, participants explained that decisions in the directorates and schools are usually personal. Following rules and regulations is determined by the personal convictions and power of the individuals who make these decisions. Abdu al-Aziz explained:
It all depends on the director’s disposition and perception of his role as a leader. Right now, we are lucky to have a director that is supportive and has an open-door policy and he applies the spirit of the rules and regulations.

We feel more empowered and capable of making decisions at our schools because we are not threatened, and he trusts us. But this is not always the case because it is not institutional.

Participants indicated gaps between practices of the School and Directorate Improvement Program (SDIP) and MoE in terms of engagement with principals in implementation. For example, Rafiq said:

Principals are not consulted. When the Canadian agency was supervising the project, they used to ask me about the tiniest needs of my school, the chairs, the doors, the windows/ the curtains, and even the cooler’s brand. They knew where to direct their efforts and who to ask. They did not ask the people at the directorate. This is not how the directorate approaches principals.

There is a new section in my school that has eight rooms and the directorate is considering how to utilise this new facility. No one asked me about how this new building should be utilised. They are consulting with the directorate’s heads of departments. Your only way to reach your voice is to build strong relationships with them. This is not professional.

Dergham said MoE and directorates did not follow up on feedback from principals:

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<th>Lack of trust</th>
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<tr>
<td>Let’s be transparent and honest. We have to admit that work at the Ministry of education is not institutional.</td>
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It is institutional and bureaucratic in implementing the law, rules and regulations, but it is not institutional in its relationship and communication with the various levels of leadership in the Ministry, which means there are not any deep dialogues between the Ministry, directorate and schools to arrive at decisions.
There is no feedback from the field, or at least our feedback is called for on very rare occasions and it is not consistent. For example, how many school principals were invited to the Dead Sea conference, which can be considered one of the biggest and most important conferences, and was meant to come up with a decision concerning the national high school examination? Very few principals were present.

They were not chosen based on their competence but rather on their connections and their presence in the conference was merely a matter of prestige to them. School principals are at the frontline.

They are in direct contact with the parents and the students and they can inform such a decision. But principals are not treated with respect and there is no trust.

Hadya explained that, although ERfKE mandated distributed leadership, ‘distribution remains non-existent between the Ministry and school or even between the Ministry and the directorate’. Decisions were made at the upper echelons of MoE, as would occur in ‘centralised leadership’ models. If the Ministry envisioned moving towards decentralisation, Hadya maintained, decisions had to ‘move from down up’. Instead, Hadya explained, oftentimes principals received decisions that they were ‘not convinced of, but they have to execute’. She said:

**Lack of trust**

They are all floundering. When planning moves in the right direction, our education system will move in the right direction. To achieve certain goals, strategic planning should consider all variables and aspects pertaining to this goal.

Obstacles that might hinder work have to be anticipated and procedures should be devised to overcome these obstacles. Therefore, people in the field, the implementers, have to be involved in this process because they are more informed about what is happening at schools.
I honestly feel that people at the Ministry do not trust people in the field as if the people in the Ministry are the only ones capable of making decisions. It is true that some of them were in the field before, but how long ago was that? Each year there are new aspects at schools that they are not aware of.

Aqeel said:

If we aspire to get out of this narrow square, we have to activate the principals’ role as instructional leaders, to give this side a bigger role to follow up on teachers’ performance and training. But no one listens, and we are not consulted.

Fatimah confirmed ‘missing links’ between MoE and schools:

People at the top are not aware of what principals are doing at schools. In many schools, the implementation of the SIP is not examined the way it should be. The plans are superficially checked out and signed just to indicate that the work was done. There should be more involvement.

Affifa called for redefinition of roles in the education system. Affifa argued that this could be achieved only by upturning hierarchies in the Jordanian education system:

The directorate relation with the school is hierarchal. It resembles a triangle with the directorate at the top angle and the other stakeholders namely teachers, students, parents and principals at the base.

And this is how school decisions are being constructed. What we are calling for is to flip the triangle where the base is placed at the top and decisions are initiated there and passed down to the directorate’s angle.

6.1.1 Principals’ perception of their own qualifications

Principals’ narratives strongly indicated lack of trust in the competence and qualification of the training department. They suggested that many principals felt that their treatment by MoE was not merit based. Many principals said that they were
more qualified to provide training and to evaluate SIPs than directorate supervisors. For example, Fatimah, Hadya, Majid, Kamal, and Azzam said directorate supervisors did not understand MoE criteria for examining SIPs. Many principals agreed that training offered by the directorate was ‘a private business’ that monopolised financial and social capital. Hadya said:

We are enabled and empowered as principals, but then our expertise is not utilised in the training. We are either not trusted to have the capacity to train others or we are not invited to share this role with the supervisors at the directorate.

She added:

Training is monopolised. The expertise of distinguished principals and teachers, who are truly qualified not because of their number of years or their certificates, should be employed beyond the confines of the school walls. These experts who proved to lead successful schools should be utilised in training other principals and teachers who are joining the field.

Training should not be monopolised by the supervisors. We have so many people in the system who reached their position not based on their qualifications but on the job grades system that guarantees moving up the career ladder based on the number of years and certificates or based on their connections.

Other principals found the ‘quality of the training programs’ sometimes ‘not satisfactory’. Khadijah explains:

Up till this moment, I haven’t attended a training where I felt that the trainer was capable of influencing us as trainees. Even with the leadership training program, I felt that we were giving the training not the trainer. He kept telling us that this is the brainstorming phase, but we haven’t received any information beyond the brainstorming.
We can assess the trainers’ qualification. Some of them were not well informed about the training material. And this is a consequence of confining training to the supervisors at the directorate.

Very few principals were asked to train in the first phase and they proved to be capable and even more qualified than the directorate’s supervisors. Unfortunately, they were not allowed to continue training in the second phase.

6.1.2 Lack of communication between MoE and schools

Principals said that they could not provide feedback directly to the Minister for Education. They argued that decisions by directorates should be ‘based on the field’s feedback’. However, principals said directorates ‘ignored’ their feedback. Principals said they could share ideas and proposals with directorates through forms or surveys. However, principals did not trust directorate staff to attend to these forms or surveys. For example, Aysha said:

The Arabs don’t like to read. They like to listen. These papers are doomed. I feel that there is a gap between the Ministry and the field. They give orders or impose policies and then when we implement these policies we encounter a discrepancy between the policy and the needs of the field. When we try to inform the Ministry about this discrepancy, no one listens.

Dergham argued:

There is no doubt that when we receive some unsound decisions, we object to them and we do write our feedback and send it to the directorate. But this is not what matters. What really matters is what impact our feedback has, nothing a zero because the decision makers feel that they are more capable of making decisions than the school principals.

6.1.3 Marginalisation

Principals said they felt entirely marginalised. Lack of consultation sometimes led senior officials in the directorates and MoE to make decisions that could impair
pedagogy and learning in their school. Principals did not feel ‘respected nor appreciated’, in part due to not being invited to take part in work outside their schools. Many principals, including some who had been educators for more than 20 years, said they had no knowledge of their Ministry being nominated for King Abdullah’s Award for Excellence. Instead, they heard this news on television like other Jordanians outside the education sector.

However, one principal explained in a focus group meeting that education directorates have education development committees. Selected principals sit on these committees to inform policymaking. Nevertheless, not all participants were aware of this, as is illustrated in the following vignette.

Representative principals at education development committees

Jenan: Principals have no role in forming policies or decision making. All decisions are centralised. They only consult the teachers when they change the curriculum. They ask for their feedback and that’s all.

Affifa: There is an education development committee and each year the directorate nominates one male principal and one female principal who would be involved in the decision-making process.

These principals are usually influential, and their input makes a difference.

Majid: However, they used to ignore our input when they unanimously agreed on a certain decision. Sometimes, they try to distance us.

Affifa: It depends. Sometimes, they do. I have been a member for more than one year now.

Jenan: I don’t know anything about this committee.

Majid: No. It is existent, and one male and one female principal are elected every year to be members there.
Jenan: Were you able to influence decision making when you were there?

Affifa: Yes.

Researcher: How come one of the principals did not know about this committee?

Majid: It is all personal. It is all based on personal connections.

Affifa: They usually send us official memos to inform us about this committee.

Jenan: I have never received one.

Majid: We receive a memo to inform us that the development committee was formed with the names of members.

Jenan: What are the criteria for choice? I have never received any invitation to take part in it or nominated any one.

Majid: They do not send the criteria. They just send the names of the member principals. Personally, I felt a little puzzled when I knew I was chosen to be a member because I didn’t know who nominated me.

Affifa: This is an internal business. The director discusses this with the directorate’s heads of departments and they nominate a name.

Majid: It is all based on personal decisions and not on institutional work. It is mainly random.

Affifa: But in my directorate they choose the best leaders with outstanding performance and records.

Jenan: Are there any criteria to decide who these outstanding principals are?

Affifa: The directorate must have its own considerations. They have never chosen a mediocre principal.

Jenan: I am not saying that they are choosing bad performing principals. All I am saying is that we have the right to know these criteria.
Hadya, on the other hand, argued that:

Principals have no role in drawing policies. One male and one female principal are chosen by the directorate to attend the Ministry’s meeting. However, none of us, principals, are aware of the criteria for choice, what role these nominees have in these meetings, how often they meet or what issues are discussed in these meetings. There is no communication between those nominated representatives and the other principals. They do not represent us.

Hadya added:

We have innovative ideas that can reform education, but no one would listen or support us. When I try to propose something to the directorate or to the Ministry, they ask me to write it on paper and it gets lost in files or drawers.

No one bothers to attend to it. All is based on personal interest. If our suggestion serves a need they have, they attend to it and if not, it is overlooked. We are not even asked to give our feedback.

Abdu al-Aziz confirmed that principals are ‘marginalised’, analogising their role in education policymaking to ‘someone listening to the radio and reciting the news’.

6.1.4 Meeting with the Minister

All principals called for open channels of communication with MoE. They wanted an avenue to reach to the Minister directly. Aysha said:

If I was given the chance to ask for something, I would ask for the principals to be given the chance to meet with Minister in person and not through the directorate.

Why can’t the ministry arrange for a meeting with the principals of each district with the Minister of Education to listen to them and get live and true feedback about what is happening in the field and what problems or issue we are facing?
Don’t tell me to write things on paper and send it because no one would bother read it. The Arabs do not like written stuff, they attend more to the spoken words. There are some successful decisions and policies developed by the Ministry, but the field should meet with the Minister.

Principals cautioned against ‘pseudo-shared leadership that is documented on paper and presented to the Minister’. Fatimah said: ‘Of course, this is not made explicit to the Minister. They articulate it in a way that makes it sound right.’ Dhahab said:

There is no sustainability. We do not finish what we start. The Ministry calls for decentralisation of schools. Why don’t you open the channels between the Minister and schools of each district? We do not need more restricted meetings.

We want a meeting where we transparently share our thoughts and ideas. All our typical meetings are to consent with and acknowledge the new decisions. We spend the whole meeting nodding to show our approval.

Ameen said:

We try to come up with recommendations to solve current problems, but no one would listen if we don’t have a connection. So, there is no value to my role as a leader. I am not respected without a connection.

Principals do not feel empowered and there is no direct communication between the principals and the Ministry. We respect official hierarchal channels but as a leader, why don’t I have the chance to meet with the Minister to discuss pressing issues faced by the field in our district?

6.2 Directorates’ and MoE’s roles

6.2.1 No coordination

Many principals described an absence of coordination between MoE and directorates. Directorates did not understand practices in schools. They did not listen
to feedback from principals. Directorates expected schools to implement decisions, but did not understand schools’ need for support to implement these decisions.

Fatimah explained:

Training programs are imposed on the principals without prior notification. The principal might receive a formal letter about being enrolled in a professional development program without a prior notice.

I have taken this training before and now because a few words have changed in it, they want me to attend the same training one more time. They want me to leave my school from 12 till five, so at least inform me a week in advance so that I can plan my school work properly.

Khadijah shared her experience of being asked to attend training that did not relate to her school’s needs:

A few years ago, I was sent to training session about communication technology, but my school is so small and doesn’t have a computer lab. The whole program was about utilising computers in teaching.

I felt I did not belong and left the session with deep frustration because I could see what facilities other schools had and mine did not.

Ameen found ‘no coordination of efforts’ between MoE, directorates and schools. Ameen described each organisation working on its own, with no connections or communications with each other. Fatimah argued decisions remained ‘random at the directorate because principals are not consulted’. She said principals might receive consecutive memos with contradictory requests. Principals then felt ‘compelled to change their procedure and justify the change’. For example, she said:

One of the Ministry’s competition programs is the reading challenge and I was asked to encourage all students to participate. The students were informed
based on the directorate’s first announcement that all the participants will be awarded.

Yesterday, I was notified that only three of the students will participate and get an award. Now all my students feel frustrated and I don’t know what to do, and what about my credibility?

Majid said:

There is no coordination. For example, during the leadership training, there was another program by ‘Kader’ about leadership. That is terrible. We feel that the Ministry accepts the programs offered to us because we want to utilise the funding.

If this program is not necessary, why should we accept it? My name was included in both trainings. I had to attend one day in the first training and the second day in the other. There is no coordination.

6.2.2 The game of power and connection

Favouritism and nepotism in directorates and MoE emerged as another higher-level concept in the data. Principals felt they risked being marginalised and bypassed if they questioned or challenged directorates. For example, Fatimah explained that:

This act of favouritism means that not all principals will benefit from the training offered because not all of them are nominated to join the training. Sometimes, the training program does not relate to the nominated principals’ needs.

They are there because they were selected based on personal connections. The Minister is alienated from these practices because they are not made explicit to him. The directorate articulates practices in a way that makes it sound right.

Some principals capitalised on their connections to gain privileges over other principals. For example, some principals complained about not being invited to the
Dead Sea conference, one of Jordan’s biggest education conferences. The conference focused on the structure of Jordan’s national high school exam. Most principals that participated in this research did not attend the conference. Hadya said:

We were not invited to it and we couldn’t attend. Only very few principals who had strong connections could attend it and their presence was a big surprise even to the director of their directorate.

I wanted to be part of it as well and I tried to put my name on the list, but I was advised to find a connection in the conference to let me in. The way I see it, if my performance as leaders doesn’t qualify me to attend this conference, I don’t want to be present.

She added:

Later, when we were informed about the decisions of this conference, I objected and blamed them for not inviting the principals who were influential in the field to such a huge and crucial education development conference that was similar to the one we had in 1987 and was supposed to arrive at decisions that directly impact the field.

I was told again that the numbers were limited. I believe, the organisers could have facilitated the principals’ attendance because principals should have had an input in such a decision.

Dergham thought many principals at the conference ‘were not chosen based on their competence but rather on their connections’. Attending the conference conferred ‘prestige’, rather than learning opportunities, to these principals.

10 The participants refer to the second Educational Development Conference held by the Ministry of Education in the Dead Sea in August, 2015 in line with King Abdullah II’s directives to reform education. The first one was held in 1987. Academics from universities, local and international educational experts, school administrators, teachers, students and parents participated in that conference.
Principals described teachers’ connections and their influence on schools’ decision making as another example of favouritism. Siddiqa said:

Some teachers use their connections in the Ministry to put pressure on principals to change their decisions regarding which grades they should be teaching and their teaching loads. In such an event, the principal has to be brave and stand up to his or her decisions especially that these are shared decisions.

One teacher in my school contacted the directorate using a connection and I received a call to change her schedule. This schedule was written by the teachers and she was part of that decision, but she decided later that it is not serving her own interest.

My mistake was that I didn’t document it on paper and I didn’t ask all the teachers to sign a paper that they unanimously agreed on this schedule. I simply trusted them but unfortunately did not cover my back.

Jamila agreed with Siddiqa. Many principals encounter similar situations every day in their schools, she argued:

Principals are unable to perform their work with aplomb. They lack self-confidence because they feel threatened. They are aware of the consequences of disobeying orders. Principals feel that if they reject orders, people at the directorate would ambuscade them as they would lie in wait for them to make any mistake.

Principals feel vulnerable and threatened to make the right decisions that might irritate some teachers who have strong connections or irritate people in the directorate. The principal considers the consequences 100 times before making any decision. The way principals are addressed is imperative and the language is punitive. Therefore, many principals are shaky and cannot make decisions.

Parents’ connections were another source of pressure on teachers and principals. Principals complained of ‘pressure on them from the side of the directorates’. Directorate staff sometimes compelled principals to enrol students in their school,
even if the school could not accommodate more students. Some principals admitted that they eventually stopped resisting school stakeholders’ attempts at nepotism. For example, Abdu al-Aziz said:

We are obliged to enrol students in our schools even if their average does not give them the right to enrol in a certain stream. We receive a phone call from the directorate informing us that we have to enrol students and as a result we end up with 40 to 50 students in class whereas another nearby school would have 10 to 12 students in class.

Additionally, our schools are requested to enhance the quality of education and students’ results. How would that be possible with being obliged to accept very low performing students when this is beyond the capacity of our schools?

Kamal said:

Students are aware that they were admitted to our schools because of their connections and that will have a direct impact on their behaviour and discipline in school. What about my credibility with other students? At the beginning of the year, I explain to them that their low grades and low academic performance might lead to their expulsion from school.

This contradicts my practice when I admit a student who does not meet the criteria for his branch only because of his powerful connection. Students know everything, and these practices shake our image and our credibility. We cannot refuse the directories requests, which are indirect orders because we will be punished. They can harm us.

Majid explained:

All relations are personalised. So, your work is either facilitated or obstructed by the directorate depending on your relationship and your connections. Therefore, you will find that the practices of the people of the directorate are inconsistent because they are not institutional. The same person exhibits dual acts. It is difficult for the outsider to judge those people.
Some principals attributed schools’ failure to implement the ERfKE leadership program to directorates employing trainers based on their connections rather than their qualifications. Kamal said:

These training hours promoted them on the career ladder and provided the means to apply for a better job. This is in addition to the money they made. The leadership training paid well.

They made a lot of money and it was all about the money not the quality of work. Any new funding is a pie that has to be shared by the same group of people. That is why we believe this program was not successful.

### 6.2.3 A hierarchy

Most principals felt they lacked authority to make decisions that directly and seriously impact teaching and learning in their school. For example, Rafiq said:

All work is personalised. If I have a request to change something at my school which sometimes can be urgent and has to be attended to in 24 hours, I have to send a request by mail and it might take them 20 days to one month to answer back.

I have to take the risk and make decisions and sometimes their answer might contradict the decision I made, and I have to put up with the consequences of this bureaucracy. People at the directorate have no idea of what is happening in the field.

Data revealed principals’ sense that they were not respected by MoE and directorates. Many principals explained that they often learned of policy decisions by mail. These decisions directly affected schools’ performance, yet principals were not consulted. Jamila said:

We are not respected. Our annual appraisal for the teachers gets modified, and we are not consulted, because someone at the directorate does not trust our judgment. We know the teachers better because we work with them. I tell my
teachers their scores and discuss it with them. One teacher was shocked to find that her score was less on records.

When I enquired about it, I was told that she is a new teacher and should not get this high score because of the number of years she has served. But I have novice teachers who are performing much better than those who have been serving for 20 years and couldn’t care less about teaching and learning. What about my own credibility? How will the teachers trust me if they think I lied to them?

Abdu al-Aziz explained that leadership is distributed more in schools than between MoE, directorates and schools. He said:

**Leadership distribution between MoE, directorates and schools**

When one moves down the Ministry’s hierarchy, the circles of relations become closer and people with less power are more willing to relinquish part of their power to those who are under them in the hierarchy. The opposite is true as well.

Once you move up in the hierarchy, the gap between the various parties expands. It becomes very difficult for the powerful to give up their power and distribute leadership. Distribution of leadership will be more evident in smaller circles.

There is more distribution of leadership between the principals and teachers than between the schools and the directorate. At the schools’ level, the principals are closer to their teachers. They know who they are, and they can better identify teachers’ expertise and qualification and make more informed decisions on how to distribute leadership in school.

The directorate is distant and does not have a clear idea about the school performance and that is why it is difficult for them to distribute leadership with schools.

Distribution should also be based on trust and not threat. Principals who are true leaders are much closer to their teachers and teachers in general feel unthreatened to express their views and criticise things in their schools than with the directorates and the Ministry.
6.2.4 Smoke and mirrors

Most principals described implementation of SIPs as ‘superficial’. For example, Fahed, Ameen, Salma, Malak, Burhan and Hadya said schools ‘pretend to be doing the SIP plan’. Instead, many schools chose two to three issues of minor importance that could be addressed easily. This allowed schools to claim to have solved the problems that were identified in their SIP. In this way, schools appeared to have met this feature of their responsibilities under ERfKE. Jamila complained that only ‘excellent schools are brought to light’ by directorates and MoE. Jamila said this was done to please senior directorate and MoE officials. Visits, activities, inspections and pilot programs were offered to top performing schools, like hers. She warned that:

Of course, this will not reflect a true picture about the schools’ performance because the school involved in the directorate’s activities is not representative of all schools. Weak schools are neglected.

These low-performing schools are the ones that need assistance and support more than others. Influential visitors who can truly assist schools and donate money are directed to successful schools that have excellent leaders only to draw a façade.

Principal X argued that many directorate policies did not exist in practice. For example:

Students have music lessons, and this is documented in their schedules but in fact there is no music teacher at schools and sometimes there is no art teacher. Since their classes are part of the school schedule, they have to be covered by other teachers which will add to their workload.

It is not for the principal to decide. They just receive orders. Additionally, all students have to pass art, music and [physical education] PE and students are aware of that and consequently they feel careless and indifferent.
PE teachers cannot teach because there are no closed areas and the playground is open and exposed. These female teachers and female students can easily be filmed during class from the neighbourhood and uploaded on social media or YouTube which can be a big scandal in a conservative society.

The directorate is aware of these cases and facts and yet there is no work on providing facilities and infra-structure of the school which is required for the implementation of the new policies.

6.3 Influence of MoE and directorates’ practices on school performance

6.3.1 Bureaucracy

Participants described procedures at directorates and MoE as highly bureaucratic. They agreed that this stifled innovation. Hadya said:

I find pleasure in enhancing my school’s performance and assisting other schools to do the same. I want to spread a culture of excellence, but my ideas are impeded by the directorates’ rules and regulations. I designed a workshop to train teachers in a certain aspect and I have a PhD qualification.

I can provide this training. I wanted to invite the teachers in my district that teach the same subject and want to learn more about this aspect to provide the training, but the directorate refused.

We are not trusted nor allowed to give a training. It should be restricted to the directorates’ supervisors. I argued that I was qualified to give the training, so I was told that teachers’ schedules will be changed in order for them to leave and that I have to send an official letter and wait for approval.

Eventually, I gave the training to my teachers and the other school teachers did not have the chance to attend. We are marginalised because of the lack of trust and the bureaucratic procedures.

Kamal said:

The gap between schools and the directorate is because of the routine that hinders work. One of the members of the local community wanted to donate
10 heaters and because of the drawn-out process of communication between the school and the directorate, the donor changed his mind and left.

I have a financial committee in my school and I cannot receive any monetary or in-kind assistance without a receipt. I have received 10 fans and I have been waiting for a month now for the Ministry’s approval to use them.

Jamila said:

We are hoping that these bureaucratic measures concerning the community’s support might change. We heard that the Ministry formed a committee to discuss this matter and we are still waiting. All of these complications are because of lack of trust in the principal especially with financial issues.

We know that the Canadian leadership program is applied in Canadian schools where each school has its own budget. The Ministry tries to apply the same system or program in the Jordanian schools, but they won’t be able to do so because simply this program is based on trust in the leader which is missing in our Ministry’s perception of school principals.

Principal X highlighted problems with bureaucratic procedures in directorates:

Bureaucracy in directorates

There are two sides to education leadership: the technical side and the instructional one. An education leader presumably has to be qualified in both sides, the technical and instructional. However, the bureaucracy in the Ministry and the directorate hampers and restrains the performance of the principals. The principal has to attend to 14 separate departments at the Ministry.

This is an extra burden on the principal because for the last four or five years, the Ministry did not appoint any vice principals. The principals have to direct all his work and efforts to the administrative work and that impacts their role as instructional leaders. There is no link between what is being theorised and what is being implemented in the field.
We need more support from the local community because many schools are in very poor conditions and the community can help. Again, the rules and regulation have restricted the role of the community.

We are not allowed to accept any monetary, non-monetary or in-kind assistance without getting the approval of the Ministry which can be a lengthy and frustrating process that can extend to months. People usually refrain from donating because they are put off by the bureaucratic procedures of the Ministry to wait for the approval.

**The cooler’s journey**

Schools are not allowed to accept any donation worth of more than JD 50 without official consent from the Prime Ministry. The local community decided to donate a cooler to our school.

As a result, the directorate formed a committee headed by the director, finance department, an authorised representative of the Ministry of Finance, an authorised representative of the Supplies Department, and an authorised representative of the Control and Inspection department.

This committee visited our school and examined the cooler. They found out that it was Samix Brand and noted down that it had two taps: one for cold water and one for hot water. Then I received an official memo informing me that I can include paperwork for this cooler in my school’s records. This was followed by 12 letters to and fro until we were allowed to use the cooler.

**6.3.2 Accountability measures**

At present, the ERfKE leadership program is managed entirely by MoE and directorate personnel. One obstacle to implementation is measures that hold principals solely accountable for school performance. This is despite MoE’s policy of leadership distribution. Fatimah argued:

The Ministry’s policies frustrate us. The new training calls for distributed leadership. The principal should have supportive development teams.
However, when the directorate accountability department follow up the implementation of the SIP, they question the principal not the team. The principal is held accountable for all school’s work.

How am I going to distribute leadership and authorise people, when accountability measures are hierarchal? Each member in the school should be recognised for their achievement and held accountable for their mistakes.

The directorate is still following the old traditional accountability measures because they are not trained to follow up performance based on the new program. The new quality assurance system is not clear for them. They are not aware of the criteria for measuring performance.

Aqeel explained that principals were resistant to MoE accountability measures in part because of their ‘lack of understanding of accountability procedures’ and assumption that accountability measures existed to incriminate them. Aqeel believed that principals must be educated about the Ministry’s vision and mission if they were to share it. He said:

When the SDIP was in charge, accountability teams used to visit schools, talk to the principal as well as the four coordinators who are leaders in their field. These leaders used to present their work and share it with the accountability team. Then this team would talk to the students’ parliament to measure their involvement in.

Now the work of the accountably unit falls into three stages: the first one is guidance, the second is counselling and the last one is applying accountability measures to assess schools’ performance. However, not all principals are aware of these procedures.

Data highlighted principals’ fear and mistrust of MoE and directorates. Many principals felt that international quality assurance teams were there to ‘support’ them. MoE teams, on the other hand, were there to ‘inspect and question’ their work. Principals perceived MoE decisions and practices as personal rather than institutional. This added to principals’ fear and mistrust. Many principals (for
example, Khadijah, Siddiqa, Kamal, Azzam) perceived themselves as ‘scapegoats’ for directorates. They felt insecure in their position. Some principals questioned the effectiveness of accountability measures and their benefit to school improvement. Hadya argued:

I pray to God that accountability units succeed in their mission. I want them to succeed. This is what is truly missing at schools, the follow up. However, there are a few questions here to consider. Will the accountability unit fulfil their role appropriately? Will there be proper feedback for schools to improve their performance?

Will there be proper follow up for this feedback and the implementation of the recommendations of the feedback? Will there be consequences for not implementing? I have big doubt. Until now none of this was evident in the Ministry’s accountability procedures.

6.3.3 Lack of trust

Principals described ‘mutual lack of trust’ between schools and directorates. They were convinced that directorates often structured training to serve their personal interests. Principals perceived new training with international funding as ‘a pie’ that would be monopolised by the same group of well-connected people. Training provided financial rather than academic benefits. Fahed said:

We felt repressed by the Ministry in various forms from the very beginning of the training program. Firstly, we were threatened to be officially penalised if we do not attend the training. Secondly, I can confirm that the timing of the training was decided to serve personal interest.

It was considered as 100 percent overtime for the trainers. Whereas if it were scheduled during the working hours from eight to two, it will be considered 50 percent overtime. Therefore, to serve the needs of one person, a hundred others get repressed.
Aqeel argued that effective work practices must be based on mutual trust between the leader and their team. There had to be a ‘positive work culture’. However, Aqeel found trust lacking in the Jordanian public education sector. This led to more bureaucracy. Lack of trust served to widen this gap between schools and MoE. Affifa argued that training practices were inconsistent:

The follow up of the training program varies from one directorate to the other. In our directorate, we had the ‘lion’s share’ in implementation because we all started as trainers. When the program expanded to other districts, performance varied.

It all depends on the directorate’s and principals’ convictions. Unfortunately, performance fluctuates because follow up procedures move back and forth, and the principals’ performance moves accordingly.

Directorate staff—supervisors in particular—tended to revert to pre-ERfKE practices when they were under pressure to complete work. Hadya explained:

**Lack of trust**

*What is really missing is trust because work is based on personal relationships not on performance. When I receive an inspection to check on my plan, they just sign it because they know who I am, and they trust the quality of my work, but this doesn’t please me.*

*I want them to truly see what I am doing in my school and give me an honest feedback about it. If the same is happening in the rest of the schools, what credibility do accountability measures hold in practice?*

*Additionally, trust can have more than one face. It can reflect trust in the person’s qualification and performance and it can also reflect trust in the relationships and connection that I have with someone. All work has to be instrumental and institutional including the SIP implementation and the follow up on this implantation.*
There is no follow up on the implementation of the SIP. We sent our plans and then nothing happened to ascertain that they were implanted. We received a form from the directorate asking us to write down all the SIP actions which were implemented. We have to keep this form in case we have a group of Ministry’s delegates visit our school.

I feel that we do not work because we truly believe in the value of what we are doing or because we aspire to develop education, but because we want to show others that the work was done regardless of its quality. Therefore, it all depends on the principals’ attitude and preparedness to change.

Some principals will take training because they have to, or they want to add it to their records, not because they are interested in improving the quality of their work at school. Therefore, these people will remain perfunctory administrators no matter what training they receive.

In summary

This chapter examined principals’ perceptions of their role and the role of MoE and directorates’ practices on implementation of ERfKE. The data shows tensions and contradictions between MoE policies and practices and practices of teachers and principals in schools. Some of these tensions and contradictions pose questions about the role of MoE in facilitating implementation of ERfKE. The data have shown that principals are not invited or trusted to take part in decision making or to inform MoE or directorate policymaking. Principals feel alienated and ‘marginalised’. This prevents them from implementing ERfKE.

Trust dilemma emerged as another salient theme in the data. Principals do not trust MoE and directorates to sustain ERfKE over the long term. Some principals question MoE and directorates’ motivation in introducing internationally-funded training programs to the education sector. Many assume that MoE and directorates’ motivation is financial, rather than due to programs’ potential to improve teaching
and learning. Principals do not feel as though directorates and MoE trust them. This lack of trust creates additional bureaucracy. In turn, this slows school improvement and reform implementation.

Principals see themselves as leaders in the reform implementation process. They see themselves as competent to contribute to education reform through their insights from the field. However, their efforts to provide feedback to MoE and directorates are inhibited by bureaucratic processes. Lastly, the data indicated that the persistent culture of favouritism and nepotism diverts attention from improving quality of work to building connections in directorates and MoE. The next chapter investigates participants’ perceptions of major factors that hamper implementation of ERfKE in Jordanian public schools. It outlines principals’ views on changes that must take place for future reform efforts to succeed.
This chapter examines principals’ views on leadership training and professional development provided by MoE. It examines whether principals consider that these programs have led to changes in teachers’ and principals’ practices and have
improved schools’ performance. In addition, it outlines factors that principals consider obstacles to reform in the Jordanian education system.

### 7.1 Influence of reform training programs on school improvement

#### 7.1.1 Discontinuities between theory and practice

Principals did not agree on the influence of training programs on school improvement. Some principals felt optimistic about the prospects for ERfKE to transform schools. For example, Aysha argued that:

> The way I see it, these training programs must have an impact on our agency and practices as principals. I have changed a lot. Probably it had less impact on other principals, but it had an impact in one way or another even on the traditional principals. We as Arabs always claim that we know everything, and we don’t need the training because we are knowledgeable enough.

> But in reality, we do learn new skills even from a single training and even if we do not admit it. The leadership training program we received was so useful. I have a PhD, but I felt that the leadership program was similar to doing another PhD. It was highly informative and useful. I have learned a lot.

Some principals pointed to inconsistencies between MoE leadership training and practices in the field. These principals perceived ‘a huge gap between theory and practice’. Ameen said:

> We are not underestimating the impact of the training program we had, and we feel we were introduced to great new experiences in leadership, but I insist that we suffer from being incapable of transforming theory into practice.

Khadijah said:

> I attended the training, and I have developed new strategies, and I believe in the quality of the training that was provided, but that doesn’t mean I can implement it, because there are tremendous challenges to implementation.
Some principals viewed MoE training programs as ineffective and not tailored to the needs of Jordanian public schools. For example, Fahed, Ameen, Khadijah, Jamila, Majid, Azzam and Siddiqa described MoE training programs as embodiments of Western education philosophies that had little utility in Jordanian schools. Most principals agreed that, despite initial improvements in education outcomes, ERfKE lacked one crucial element—‘the Jordanian identity’. Principals wanted MoE to infuse Western education reform programs with ‘national and local identity’. Jamila said:

Repli
cating a successful foreign enterprise does not guarantee success. On the contrary, it will most probably blunder because it will encounter an Arab Jordanian context and culture that is entirely different from its own native context.

Program providers have to be aware of the religious, sociocultural, historical and geographical aspects of the place where they intend to implement imported reform programs and professional development packages.

7.1.2 Infrastructure

Many participants argued that imported reform programs that had improved education outcomes in their countries of origin might not be able to overcome ‘unforeseeable conditions’ in Jordanian schools. Principals noted that poor infrastructure in many Jordanian public schools obstructed implementation of reform programs. Principals argued that MoE had not addressed inadequate infrastructure in schools because of financial considerations and MoE views on teaching and learning. Many principals argued that MoE held antiquated perceptions of education and schooling. For example, Fahed argued:

At my school I have 11 adjunct teachers who are not part of my academic team. Additionally, school facilities are not adequate. We perceive teaching
and learning as a blackboard and a piece of chalk. The only thing we care about in the classroom is the door, the window and the blackboard.

What about the extracurricular activities? What about the lab work? What about the library? What about the load that would facilitate having subject coordinators or head teachers who would assist me in distributing leadership roles.

Azzam said:

These programs are implemented in Western foreign schools that are different from ours. How can you implement such a program with no economic or education infrastructure? These are excellent ideas but the procedures for implementation varies from one country to the other based on the financial assets.

Oftentimes, principals said, teachers had no access to appropriate workspaces.

Khadijah said:

There is no way distributed leadership can be implemented with the absence of proper infrastructure where teachers can work in peace and quiet. Teachers share seats in the staff room. There is no private desk for each one and this is considered a model school. There are much worse conditions in other schools than this one.

Aqeel said lack of funding from MoE made it difficult to implement SIPs. He described a pressing need to redirect funding to address schools’ needs. The current situation, he maintained, would continue to hinder efforts to reform the Jordanian education system:

**School budgets**

Now some of the school budgets are JD 35 a year. It costs JD 40 to rent a car to bring the books to school. Principals pay the rest of the money. Now the leadership program was accompanied with financial support to school. When
it was handed over to the Ministry, this support stopped, and they expect the same kind of work to be done.

This money they are saving will be reflected on the students’ academic performance. There has to be proper infrastructure for schools. I am not only talking about the basic facilities.

In some of the schools I visited in Finland, they have big halls where teachers spend time with their students to do their work. Teachers have to be trained for two years before they commence their teaching career. In our country, they try to save money by increasing the teaching load.

Now if one of the teachers receives training, he doesn’t have the time to pass it on to his colleagues. How will I enable him as a leader if he doesn’t have the time to engage in any leadership activity?

The teacher is a robot, a machine that moves from one class to the other. It is like the tape recorder that plays the same song in the different classroom.

7.1.3 Financial support

Principals complained that MoE did not allow them to accept financial support or donations from local communities. Principals felt many schools lacked the infrastructure to teach the Jordanian curriculum. Principals attributed discrepancies between curriculum content and what students learned in class to lack of facilities. For example, Azzam explained that Jordan’s vocational curriculum included a class on electric hybrid cars. In one vocational school, however, students spent their practical lessons for this class examining a 1977 car model with no motor. Jamila argued that:

ERfKE is a Canadian project that reflects a Canadian education perspective and philosophy. It can’t be applied in our context for many reasons. To begin with, the Jordanian schools’ socio-economic background is different from the Canadian’s. The safe school environment is non-existent in our schools.
First, second, third and fourth year graders are packed with 50 students. Many students are extremely poor and need financial help and the schools do not have the budget to support them or to support teaching and learning.

Some students cannot afford shoes or jackets during the harsh winters. They do not have bags or notebooks. Other schools have merged classes. One can find grades one, two, three, four and five in the same class and the teachers have to attend to all of these in one lesson.

There are many challenges that stifle the leaders’ creativity. Much more support beyond the leadership program training is still needed if we aspire to implement this program.

Ameen felt lack of financial support from MoE reflected the Ministry’s lack of trust in principals:

According to the leadership training principals received, each school is supposed to identify its own needs and based on that direct the financial resources to address them.

However, after schools finished developing their plans, they were given the money and dictated on how to spend it which contradicts the essence of the training program, the aim behind building SIP and the whole notion of decentralisation.

7.1.4 Teachers’ overload

Aqeel said:

The Ministry’s decisions can sometimes assassinate creativity. Some of the teachers have to teach 26 to 27 lessons a week. When they teach more than 26 lessons, they are given JD 3.00 in overtime. How can distributed leadership be implemented in these conditions? I do not have any assistant. I try to delegate tasks to my teachers. Now I am doing some of their work because of their overload. For both of us, there is no time to focus on the instructional side.
Principals agreed that teachers’ heavy workloads hindered implementation of distributed leadership in schools.

Aqeel described MoE’s call for distributed leadership in schools as inconsistent with MoE decisions. Aqeel argued that, as a result of increases in teachers’ workloads, ‘now teachers cannot do anything beyond the confines of their classrooms’. Khadijah worried that MoE demands distracted teachers from attending to the ‘instructional core’ of classroom teaching. She insisted that teachers were not equipped to manage the extra workload involved in school leadership activities. Teachers struggled to find time to concentrate on teaching, lesson planning, marking and other paper work. Fatimah said decentralisation of schools could not be achieved in the Jordanian public education in its current state. Fatimah said:

The whole system has to be rebuilt. We have to choose the right curriculum and the right teachers. We should trust them not threaten them. I feel threatened in every step. I have to provide a document for every tiny decision I make to cover my back.

A teacher can be late in the morning and she would explain that to me and I don’t have to make a big deal of it. Nevertheless, if I have a visit by the supervisor, I will be questioned because I haven’t held an investigation. There is a gap between the training program and what is being implemented because implementation is based on the Ministry’s decisions.

For example, reducing the number of teachers at schools means that the teaching load will be divided among teachers and staff, hence teachers’ overload. Principals are faced with two concurrent contradictory decisions by the same entity mandating that teachers are integrated in school leadership board while simultaneously handling the new overload.

However, this year teachers won’t have time to be part of the development plan because they have to cover the syllabus. No one in the Ministry cares about creativity.
Rafiq described resistance among teachers to distributed leadership. Male teachers, in particular, had heavy workloads, felt they were underpaid, and had no intrinsic motivation to change their work practices. Rafiq argued that many principals assisted teachers with paper work so teachers would have more time to attend to pedagogy. He referred to the contradictions between MoE decisions and policies as ‘the implementation of illusion’:

**Illusion**

*There are not enough administrative staff. The principal is preoccupied with the administrative work and trying to do some of the teachers work because of the teachers’ overload. The Ministry lives in an illusion. Schools should have certain staff to do administrative work.*

*There is no secretary, no students’ counsellor and no stock keeper; these positions are not existent anymore. Teachers are overloaded. They teach 24 to 26 classes a week.*

*I do most of the work of the homeroom teachers because they have no time. I try to help. I upload their grades and print the tables. I edit grades and print all papers. They only have to sign.*

*We tried to implement distributed leadership based on the SIP. However, with the teachers’ overload, we are implementing illusion and to claim that we are doing it would be a big lie.*

*All the Ministry and directorates care about is to hear that everything is perfect, and these training programs can be implemented, so that we receive more funding. However, we want to truly benefit from these programs and solve our school problems.*
Principals argued that they were burdened with ‘clerical work’ due to resourcing and staff cutbacks. This gave them less time to assume their role as instructional leaders. Principals pointed to a skills shortage among teachers in Jordanian public schools. MoE had moved 6,000 teachers in administrative roles into teaching roles to ‘cut schools’ budgets’. MoE had sent these administrative staff into classrooms without refresher courses on pedagogy. For example, Aqeel explained:

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<th>Staff cutbacks</th>
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<td>The principal is overloaded with work especially in big schools that have more than 1000 students. Removing assistants from position and requesting other staff like the librarian and the lab technician to teach will kill the principals because there is no one to assist with administrative work.</td>
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<td>The situation is even worse when this principal has to leave school for a week to receive a training or have meetings at the directorate. As a principal, I do not have any administrative support because I don’t have a vice principal nor any assistant.</td>
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<td>I am entirely preoccupied with and absorbed in clerical administrative work and try to delegate part of it to the librarian, and the lab technician to find time to attend to my responsibilities as an instructional leader.</td>
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<th>Qualification crisis</th>
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<td>Moreover, some of the Ministry’s decisions cripple the principals. Now there is a new decision by the Ministry which requires the librarian and the lab technician to teach to cut on budgets. This is a disaster.</td>
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<tr>
<td>This administrative staff has been trained to do administrative and clerical work and have no experience in teaching. Part of the original salary of these administrative staff was teaching subsidies and it will be deducted if they do not teach.</td>
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| Some of these administrative staff have not taught a class for the past 15 years. How can they go back to class? Teachers are supposed to have a
diploma in teaching before they begin their career, so how will someone who graduated 15 or 17 years ago and never taught a class be asked to teach?

The Ministry make a decision that would impact everyone including your son and mine and then blame the teacher for the low performance. People do not feel job secure any more. Teachers should be supported to teach. All these decisions will directly impact learning and pedagogy.

Dergham commented on MoE’s decision to reduce staff:

The theories we read about are great, but the implementation is not sufficient. All decisions that concern the field are centralised. Neither the principals nor the directorates have a role in making these decisions or writing new policies. All decisions are imposed even if we believe that they do not serve the needs of the field.

Fahed referred to teachers as the ‘core or pivot’ of distributed leadership. However, teachers were underpaid and this affected their teaching:

If we manage to liberate teachers of these pressures, they will be liberated of all psychological pressure they are under. Why does the society look up to doctors, engineers or university teachers? Because their income is much higher, so their lives are much easier. If teachers had better income, they will be respected by the society. I am asking for a ‘chalk bonus’ for all the teachers.

7.1.5 Training logistics

Principals felt MoE should have implemented ERfKE in tandem with ongoing training for school principals and assistant principals. Principals complained of lack of follow through from MoE. Malak said:

When training is provided, the trainees are not given enough time to fully comprehend the material of the training and then carefully implement at schools. When new ideas are advocated, there should be room for the element of risk taking, experimenting and task amending.
However, with the international program introduced in Jordan, there is not enough space and time between being informed about the new policy and the implementation of this policy.

Aqeel said educators should be introduced gradually to new policies with ‘initiation programs’. Khadijah agreed:

**Hysteresis effect**

The training span was not convenient. Not enough time was given to the schools to assimilate the content of the training and implement it. We were asked to study it, comprehend it and implement it to come up with the SIP. It is like being asked to do three in one.

But I feel I still haven’t digested the information and I don’t know whom to choose as the school’s development team. Unfortunately, many principals provided unrealistic plans.

It is not realistic to ask principals to give surveys to parents when parents themselves are not ready yet to engage in school development plans. Parents still needed to go through education programs to increase their awareness of their role in school improvement.

Mothers have no clue what a vision, a plan or development mean and of course fathers won’t be bothered to communicate to a female school. They were not ready.

Out of 600 students, I had 10 parents who agreed to fill the forms. How representative do you think that was of the local community? We complained and ended up asking teachers to fill the parents’ forms since teachers were themselves parents. These policies cannot be implemented in our schools because they are not compatible with our society and culture.

Rafiq, however, said he worked hard to engage the local community in school activities:

I do care about the students’ environment. I care about communicating with parents. I am utilising all forms of social media—Facebook, Twitter or
WhatsApp—to reach out to parents and solve problems. I try to approach them in whatever way they like.

We managed to build strong relationships with the parents. Most of the parents have positive attitudes because they care about their kids, but this is not the thing that is hindering the leadership program.

Many principals objected to logistics around training programs. Aqeel argued:

A leader has to build the capacity of his team. Unfortunately, the timing of any training provided by the directorate defeats this purpose. All training programs are from one to six in the afternoon.

If I expect the teachers to do their work properly, this means they will be working hard from eight to one and then they are expected to join the training from one till six.

How are they expected to concentrate and benefit from the training? Additionally, female teachers have their housework load which exhausts them.

7.1.6 Inconsistent practices

Unsustainable reform efforts emerged as another theme in the data. Aqeel complained that:

Most of our training packages are theoretical and they vanish when there is no more funding. We abandon the whole program and move to a new one. I was in one of the School Development and Improvement Program’s meetings 10 days ago and they mentioned they were going to cancel a few things from the program.

Why is that? The program had an integrated approach which all trained schools have got used to. We worked hard for one year to train them and now it is changed.

Rafiq and Dergham felt that school cluster meetings could have been used to form professional learning communities for principals. Rafiq said:
Some of the supervisors are really highly qualified and know what they are doing. They have a true input in the school planning. They give informative feedback that brings about new innovative ideas. These ideas are shared in the clusters.

Unfortunately, this is not consistent. It was implemented when it was managed by the SDIP. That was until last December and it has been a whole semester now and nothing happened, no meetings, no follow up.

Dergham lamented that the role of meetings between groups of schools had changed when SDIP stopped supervising the meetings:

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<th>Inefficient group meetings</th>
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<td>At the early stages of the leadership program, instructional issues were brought to discussion, but then this was gradually wiped off the meeting’s agenda and all concern remained in the money we get.</td>
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<td>Later, during our cluster meetings all that got discussed are technical issues. One principal would complain about the school’s budget and not being able to do school maintenance. Another principal complained about the doors without locks or about board markers.</td>
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<td>Why are we leaders and is this the aim of the clusters meetings, to complain about board, locks and markers? As leaders you should have strategies to solve these issues through communicating with the local community and parents. Our clusters meetings have turned into a stage for complaints, with no place for the instructional core.</td>
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<td>We are in the second semester and until now there has been no meeting because everyone feels that the program has stopped. Our problem is that we have an established culture that we work for the funding.</td>
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<td>The days will prove to you that ERfKE and other projects will go unheeded and will not turn to policies because there is no genuine desire for change. Now this Minister believes in this program and works on it. Once there is a new Minister, he will bring a different project and start work on it and so on.</td>
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Hadya explained that the efficiency of cluster meetings depended on principals’ personal dispositions and views rather than MoE policies and procedures:

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<th>No more cluster meetings</th>
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**We do exchange visits.** There are some novice female principals who feel they want to learn more about schools’ leadership, so I invite them to my school. But this is our own initiative and remains limited to our own group that we created and is contingent upon our intrinsic motivation.

All the directorate did was to create clusters. However, these clusters are a big failure because nothing is achieved during the meetings. Besides, we haven’t had any meeting this semester which means that we’ve had one meeting this whole year. The initiative is dead.

Even with our last meeting, only technical generic issues were discussed and none of these issues was addressed. It was ineffective, mere ink on paper. There was no follow up. I called the head of the cluster to enquire about it and he mentioned that they are busy with the male principals’ schools.

The whole program died. It started so strong and it is plummeting so quickly as if all our concern was to take the funding of the Canadian agency and to show how it was spent.

Dhahab pointed to leadership training of school principals as another example of inconsistencies between MoE policies and practice:

Some principals were trained to become trainers in the first leadership training program. We were twelve and eight passed. Now there is an advanced leadership training and the Ministry decided to start with a new group of principals.

Why? We don’t want to monopolise training, but if you start something finish it. You will end up with eight highly qualified trainers and then each one can train a number of schools in and across the districts and more leaders can be created. If you start something, finish it.
Dergham argued that MoE training programs themselves were not flawed. Rather, the problem lay in lack of measures to sustain reforms after their introduction in schools:

There is no doubt that ERfKE is an excellent program. We cannot deny that but how long is this program, three to four years and then what? The impact is not strong, and this is evident in the principals’ accomplishment. To what extent was the training reflected in their practices? Very little. Schools reverted to the same old practices.

Dhahab agreed: ‘Many training programs die when there is no more funding and while it is dying, we start celebrating the new program.’

7.2 Forged SIPs

7.2.1 Game playing and practice mastery

SIPs were among the most controversial features of ERfKE in interviews with principals. Many principals said some schools had forged SIPs by presenting copies of other schools’ plans as their own. However, principals in one of the focus groups argued that schools could not forge SIPs because a supporting supervisor helped each school in the early stages of developing their SIP. For example, Majid explained that, in theory:

Principals cannot cheat with the school plan because in each school there is one supervisor involved with the initial process of identifying the school’s priorities and building school plans accordingly.

When we took the training, these supervisors worked with us and followed up the whole process of distributing the surveys to the parent, teachers, students and principals and how these surveys were answered and based on that the school plan was devised. The supervisor has a copy of this plan that he or she refers to when they visit the school. This was applied in most of the directorates.
However, Affifa said schools’ approaches and commitment to implementation of SIPs were inconsistent and varied between directorates:

The follow up procedures were not consistent in all directorates. Our directorate was the first to believe in this program and had the lion’s share in training and implementation. We were the core of the training program. We had intense follow up and schools were competing for excellent performance.

Now when this program was applied in other districts, implementation differed. We worked on it and believed in it and that is why we continued to implement it without the need for follow up from the directorate. This is the case in some other directorates as well like Zarqa and Rusaifa.

Unfortunately, in many other districts, when the follow up stopped for a while schools’ performance declined, but now we have learned that it is back to action. So, it all depends on the directorate’s support and on the Ministry’s follow up.

As the interview went on, participants shared details that accounted for inconsistencies in schools’ implementation of ERfKE. For example, Majid contradicted his initial comment that schools could not forge SIPs:

The supervisor’s main role is to follow up on schools. What some of them used to do was that they visited some schools for one or one and a half hours a day as a misleading act to claim falsely that they did their work.

They would spend the rest of the day in the vegetables market to sell fruit and vegetables to make money. In one of the schools I used to work for, I used to get regular visits by the supervisors because my school was close to the central market.

That is the case of the male supervisors of course. It is less evident with the female supervisors. In one of the conferences we had where we were discussing the impediments of change to come up with a list of recommendations, I said it bluntly, the supervision department is a burden on MoE.
Salma explained that principals’ practices in implementing ERfKE did not align with training for principals under the program. Principals mainly focused on demonstrating that they had devised their SIP for the next years:

Instead of working with random representative samples, many principals are asking specific people to fill the survey forms to manipulate results and direct the plan the way they want.

This is recurrent in many schools. Implementation is superficial and thus the plans are not reliable. Principals seek the funding to spend it on things other than the ones identified in the SIP. This is creating a big gap…

My own plan was copied. Probably when I was giving the training, they used to ask me for samples. I discovered that they copied my plan. The directorate is signing the plans and there is no action taken against those who are copying the plans.

The directorate is asking for new two-year plans to be handed in by mid-May, but what is the point if the implementation is not real?

Dhahab confirmed that pre-ERfKE practices remained widespread in Jordanian schools:

Work is still disorganised and random. Each school is still working alone and there is no coordination. This contradicts the mission of the new leadership program. All the Ministry’s institutions have the tendency to revert to old practices.

There is no work mechanism to sustain new practices. Schools do not meet, and plans are not checked the way they should. Supervisors don’t bother open them and read them. They are only signed with no feedback what so ever.

Most principals expressed dissatisfaction with procedures to recruit trainers under ERfKE. They pointed to lack of qualifications among trainers in the leadership program. Some trainers had failed the leadership exam that they were entrusted to teach to other principals. On the other hand, some principals passed the leadership
exam but were not given the opportunity to train other principals because they had no connections in MoE. Principal X said:

It was based on favouritism. Supervisors’ connection with the directorates are much stronger than the principals’ and that’s why many qualified principals were not given the chance to train because it was handed over to supervisors. The supervision department is another world of its own which has its own survival codes.

They perceive any new training as a pie that has to be shared exclusively by the supervisors. They try to distance the principals claiming that principals should attend to their schools and not be distracted by training.

When we passed the leadership exam, they went mad and fought against it. We were asked to train once or twice and then excluded.

Principal X noted that some trainers were qualified and worked hard to transform leadership in Jordanian schools. These trainers needed more support:

Some of the directorates’ personnel are really qualified and they are keen on building principals’ capacity and supporting them. However, if a building is ramshackle, there is no point of fixing the windows. You need to start with the infrastructure of the building.

Malak explained that some directorate supervisors were committed to implementing education reform in Jordan. However, they were ‘unable to balance the various roles that are thrown on them’. They felt ‘overwhelmed’ and needed more help and training to do their work. Dhahab attributed some supervisors’ incompetence to lack of qualifications. She argued that other supervisors simply were incompetent teachers. Teachers could be promoted to supervisor roles in directorates after attaining their master’s degree. It made no sense that directorates sent ineffective teachers in administration roles to schools to appraise the performance of other teachers. Dhahab said ‘people in the field know each other’. Teachers knew some
supervisors were not competent and refused to welcome them into their classes. Kamal highlighted another example of game playing, explaining that supervisors tried to avoid difficult schools and to finish their work early:

Supervisors’ random visits to schools

Supervisors are not performing their role appropriately. When they visit schools, they choose the nearest to their directorate and they avoid the ones that have trouble.

Additionally, the supervision department is distracted from fulfilling the role they were trained for, which is providing instructional support to the teachers in class. If the director ‘hems’, they have to be at his side. If the finance department ‘hems’, they have to be at their side. Supervision department can be everywhere except where they have to be, the classroom.

They might attend classes once a year in some schools. Of course, for our schools, they attend regularly because we are lenient with them and our schools are disciplined. When they come to our schools, they find teachers and students [This is in contrast to many other male schools where teachers are usually late or absent and students do not attend schools unless they are informed of an inspection by the Ministry].

They are reluctant to attend difficult schools and they say they cannot fix the world. They go there only if there is an official complaint from the parents. Most of their visits are to female schools.

Hadya argued that, regardless of supervisors’ competence, their visits and support to schools were inconsistent. She believed supervision should be an organised ongoing process, not just a response to principals’ requests for support:

I asked for some support for one of my teachers and the supervisor came to my school and attended one of her lessons. Then he gave her feedback and some recommendations to improve her performance.
And that was the only support that this teacher received. There wasn’t a second visit to follow up on her performance and to find out whether some progress had been achieved or not. If I don’t call again, no one will show up.

The effects of inconsistent instructional support, Hadya argued, were exacerbated by principals’ lack of skills in instructional leadership. Principals were required to appraise teachers’ performance and progress using criteria that they had not been trained to use. Hadya said:

I have been a principal for three years and I haven’t been trained on or informed about how to assess a lesson. It is my own personal effort and my passion for my job that drives me to learn more.

Most principals confirmed the need to involve qualified principals in delivering MoE training programs, in particular for training that required trainers to draw on practices in schools. For example, Rafiq argued:

The issue here is that they do not involve principals in teachers’ training and I don’t understand why. Training has to be coordinated between schools and supervisors. Schools have to be activated as training centres.

For example, supervisors and principals have to facilitate class observation for pre-service teachers to provide them with some skills on how to manage a class, what to expect when they teach or how to learn some tricks and manoeuvres when dealing with students.

Pre-service teachers have to be familiar with the class environment before they start teaching. Qualified school principals should be involved in training. Most of the trainers and supervisors were teachers not principals and many of them admit they learn new skills from principals during training sessions.

**In summary**

This chapter has examined principals’ views on professional development programs MoE provides. Most principals agreed that ERfKE has provided them with quality
training that broadened their vision as leaders and their approach to school leadership. However, principals felt that they still lacked the skills to translate theory into practices to improve teaching and learning. Data revealed external and internal factors that led to teachers’ resistance to ERfKE and impeded sustainable change in the education system. Major external issues discussed in this chapter included poor school infrastructure, inconsistency between imported reform policies and schools’ capacity to implement them, conflicting decisions and advice from MoE, ineffective training and variation in implementation of MoE. Lack of appropriate qualifications among educators and school stakeholders’ cultural values emerged as internal obstacles to sustainable change in schools and teachers’ acceptance of ERfKE. These factors will be examined in chapters Eight and Nine.
Chapter Eight: Qualification dilemma

من دخل دار أبو سفيان فهو آمن

An Arabic saying by Prophet Mohammed which translates into ‘whoever enters Abu Sufyan’s house is safe.’ Before the conquest of Mecca by the Muslims in 630 AD, Prophet Mohammed declared that whoever enters Abu Sufyan’s house is safe to honor Abu Sufyan, the leader of Quraysh of Mecca at that time. Nowadays, it is used to provide assurance and reduce the feeling of risk knowing that one is in a safe place and nothing can harm them.

Figure 8-1: Qualification dilemma

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Chapter eight explores principals’ views on factors in schools that lead to resistance among teachers to education reform efforts and sustain traditional organisational cultures. Two main factors emerged from the data: poor academic and professional qualifications among educators, and cultural values in schools. This chapter examines the lack of qualified teachers and principals in the Jordanian education system and the influence of this on implementation of reform programs in schools. Chapter Nine examines the influence of culture on principals’ and teachers’ practices in schools.

8.1 Teachers’ qualifications

8.1.1 Bachelor’s degree

The majority of principals argued that many teachers, and male teachers in particular, showed no commitment to or passion for teaching. Principals explained that many teachers had chosen their career because they had no other alternative. Rafiq said:

Now this is a disaster. They had no choice but to choose this career. This is the Ministry’s biggest flaw. There is no interview for the teachers to evaluate their attitude to this job and to the subject they will teach.

How will such a teacher be convincing to students? The problem is in the teacher himself. Additionally, in the past, teachers used to receive a pre-service diploma to qualify them to teach. This is not the case anymore.

Now, the Ministry’s performance fluctuates, and it varies based on the vision of the new Minister. Sometimes teachers get some training, which is not enough in any case, and sometimes they receive nothing.

And even with the training they receive, the benefit remains contingent upon the supervisor’s qualifications and attitude.
Hadya argued that problems with the quality of pedagogy and learning in Jordanian public schools began:

with taking on incompetent, unqualified teachers because it is their turn in the civil service bureau list of names. The Ministry recruits new teachers with no qualifications and sometimes even with improper attitudes and conduct, and principals have no say.

Managing underperforming teachers added to principals’ workload. Hadya said principals should have greater scope to choose teachers and give proper feedback on their performance during probation:

‘Whoever enters Abu Sufyan’s house is safe’ (من دخل دار أبو سفيان فهو أمن)

We need to have more authority to appoint new teachers and offer them permanent jobs at the end of the probation period. Having said that, this also can be risky because even principals can build their judgment on personal considerations.

There have to be valid criteria to assess performance. And principals have to be trusted to make the right decision with regards to the teachers’ performance. Supervisors from the directorate can assist the principals with their appraisal of the teachers’ performance and then there have to be strict measures to deal with it.

What happens in reality is that this teacher remains in place as a burden on the school. We have to have a say in teachers’ appointment, or at least our reports about teachers’ performance must be addressed with priority.

Teachers do not care about our procedures at schools because they feel that there are no consequences (من دخل دار أبو سفيان فهو أمن).

8.1.2 Teachers’ ‘warranties’ and the learning leader

Rafiq said universities should guarantee the competence of their teaching graduates:
Teachers’ ‘warranties’

Some teachers are academically incompetent. They cannot teach their subjects. There has to be a guarantee from the university that the teachers they graduate have basic knowledge necessary to teach at schools. If they do not, they should not graduate.

Some math teachers at my school do not know the basics of math. They make terrible mistakes. They cannot solve a numerator and denominator question. The university graduates are poorly informed in their subjects in addition to not being trained to teach.

I think universities should provide teachers’ warranties. Our universities are prestigious and well established, and it is a shame that they graduate students at such low academic level. They should provide a warrantee that this teacher is competent in the subject he is going to teach.

Novice teachers should go under probation for a certain period of time and if they prove to be unable to teach the subject they were assigned, they have to go back to university for remedial courses. These teachers are the university’s responsibility not the students. [The participant is asking for universities to be held accountable for the quality of education they provide. It is the university’s responsibility to graduate competent teachers. The participant complains that oftentimes this is not the case and that is why students end up being taught by teachers with poor academic performance].

What I know is that you cannot let a surgeon into the operating room if they are unable to identify their tools and operate with them. We need a warrantee.

What is interesting is that Jordan University sends PE teachers to schools to get some training and practice as part of their bachelor program. This is only done for PE teachers. Why doesn’t the University follow the same procedures with other subjects?

Only when they believe that the teachers are qualified to teach should they send their name to the civil service bureau to start work at a school.
Principals agreed on the need for them to participate in and lead learning at schools to provide technical and academic support for teachers. Aqeel explained:

The most important thing in teachers’ learning is that principals build their own capacity as well. Principals need to join teachers in the training to qualify as instructional leaders and bridge the gap between the teachers and principals’ knowledge. For example, last semester, Queen Rania’s Academy provided training on teaching strategies. I was the first to enrol in this training.

I have to know what strategies teachers were trained on, so that when I attend any of their classes in my capacity as a resident supervisor, I can tell whether they are implementing these strategies or not, especially now that what we know about teaching and learning is far more advanced than what we knew in the past in terms of brainstorming and cooperative learning.

For example, there is a photo gallery strategy that we have learned and implemented in our school. It proved to be a big success. Now the Ministry does not object to the principals’ participation in teacher training, but it does not encourage them to participate, either. It is all contingent upon the principals’ self-motivation.

Majid supported the idea of the ‘learning leader’:

The learning leader is always respected by the teachers and stands as a role model for them to keep learning. I read a lot and try to enhance my abilities as an instructional leader. I have to know what to look for when I attend lessons and what support and feedback to give to each teacher.

We are constantly learning at my school and I am learning with my teachers as well. They come to me and tell me that they have learned nothing about teaching at universities…

We are all enjoying it. The leader is the engine of the school. This is all personal effort and it is still missing in the Ministry and directorate.
The need for principals’ capacity building was indicated in one of the focus groups’ conversations. However, the conversation illustrated some discontinuities between principals’ understanding of their roles as instructional leaders:

**Principals as instructional leaders**

Researcher: What kind of instructional support do you provide your teachers with at your schools?

Azzam: We attend classes. However, the only support we can give is technical. When I attend the lessons, I try to observe how often the teacher uses the board, if he asks questions and discusses the answers with the students. We cannot assist with the instructional aspect.

This requires people of the same specialisation. I don’t understand physics and my English is horrible. How will I be able to assess the teachers’ academic performance? I call the supervisors for academic support if I feel the need for it.

Researcher: Do teachers do exchange visits?

Azzam: [It] won’t work. It is not recommended they visit each other’s classes. Teachers won’t accept criticism from their colleagues. And they won’t benefit.

Kamal: This can work for novice teachers. I ask them to attend one or two classes with veteran teachers to learn some class management skills.

Abdu al-Aziz: I attend classes every now and then. However, if any student complains, I address this directly. My students feel confident to address me with any pressing issues they face at school.

In this case, I talk to the teacher and try to provide support. One time I received a complaint by one of the students and I took the risk and asked the teacher and the student to sit together and sort it out in my office. And they did.
Kamal: But you took the risk because you knew that the teacher was flexible. That is not always the case.

Azzam: I received some complaints about the Arabic teacher and I attended one of his lessons. He was terrible. He could teach any subject but Arabic. I called the supervisor at the directorate and we decided to transfer him immediately from Grade 12 to Grade 11.

Kamal: But you didn’t solve the problem. You transferred it to another group.

Azzam to the researcher: That is your part. No one is listening to us. I mentioned that to the director of the directorate when we were discussing education development.

I told him that they want us to produce better results and better student outcomes, but I need more authority to be able to choose the right kind of high school teachers for my school. Good results need competent teachers.

Kamal to the researcher: You know what the biggest disaster in our schools is? When we have an unqualified teacher and we do not know what to do with him. We complain, and the directorate transfers the teacher to another school and the new school has to suffer the same way.

Then the school complains to the directorate and the teacher is moved again. Now the teacher is happy. There has to be more appropriate measures to handle this. Change his job to a secretary, a clerk, anything but teaching. The harm is less.

Abdu al-Aziz: This is what they are after. They do not want to teach.

Kamal: In such a situation, there should be a special committee of supervisors who attend and observe this teacher’s class. They should give him support and give him more than one chance, but if he doesn’t work hard enough to improve his teaching then, he should be laid off.

Kamal: New teachers had to do an exam and the results were horrible.

Abdu al-Aziz: One of the physics teachers was asking me basic questions and I was shocked. There are no interviews for teachers. They employed a blind
teacher at my school and I cancelled the whole subject. How can he teach a class of teenagers? They might leave the class and he is not aware of it.

The practice of transferring underperforming teachers to other schools emerged consistently in the data. Dergham said:

I utilise all kinds of methods to deal with resistant teachers. I talk to them individually. I ask their close friends to assist me and to talk to the resistant teachers. I give them time to change and if all doesn’t work, I use punitive measures and the teachers would be dismissed out of this school.

This happened here last year. Unfortunately, we failed to change three teachers and we had to apply the regulations. They were transferred to another school and now our school is doing well. There is no more resistance or trouble on the side of the teachers.

8.1.3 From teachers to principals

Principals explained that teachers with five years of teaching experience and a diploma or master’s degree in education could apply for school principal positions. In the past, prospective school principals were interviewed as part of the selection process. However, selection criteria were modified and now, teachers had to sit an exam prior to their interview. Some principals (for example, Aysha, Fatimah, Dergham, Majid and Rafiq) described the interview process as ‘ineffective’. Hadya and Dhahab argued that selection criteria should be ‘more transparent’. They did not trust that selection criteria were appropriate or fair. They believed principals were chosen based on their connections. Fatimah argued that:

The criteria for principals’ appointment depends on their diploma and the number of years of their service. However, the principal should be a role model. Sometimes, some principals are chosen because of their connection despite their horrible records.
The criteria are there and clear, but they are not applied to all people. Even with the exams, I know many principals who were able to print out the exam’s questions and had the answers ready.

In her first interview for this research, Salma had expressed support for new MoE policies on choosing principals. In her second interview, however, Salma described novice principals in the public sector as less competent and knowledgeable than existing principals:

Based on the quality of current schools’ performance, I can tell that these new criteria are still not producing qualified principals. The new principals are not qualified, and the quality of leadership is deteriorating at schools. We don’t have leadership.

We have perfunctory managers. The exam does not reflect how qualified the person is. The interview has to get more weight than the exam and it has to be a true one. Qualified principals should be part of the interview committee.

Aqeel criticised MoE selection criteria that allowed teachers to become principals without first working as vice principals. Aqeel said vice principal experience would help prospective principals understand school administration. He said, ‘many principals are ignorant about schools’ administrative basic rules and regulations and there is no induction program for them’. Principals needed strong administrative skills:

I do not think five years is enough to build principals’ capacity to assess the performance of other teachers. They will not be qualified as instructional leaders considering that they spent the first year under probation with no teachers’ qualification. If I want to talk about my own experience, I have been in the education sector for 17 years now and I have not received any training as a novice teacher.

So, teachers do not have any training and if they do, it is not efficient because trainers themselves are not efficient. Then the next three to four years will be
barely enough for the teachers to work on their own qualifications as teachers. So, they will not be ready for a sudden transition of roles. We will end up with incompetent and mediocre principals.

8.2 Principals’ qualifications

8.2.1 Gaps between male and female principals’ performance:

Principals pointed to differences in the competence and performance of male and female principals. Majid explained:

There is a big difference between the performance of schools with male and female principals. The implementation of the new leadership program in the male principals’ schools is not more than 25 percent, if not less.

The directorate has no choice. They have to be lenient with the male principals’ schools because many men are escaping this career. They are abstaining from joining the education sector.

Majid thought social expectations might account for this gap:

Female students who score 90 percent and above in high school exams are encouraged to become teachers, whereas male students who score 75 percent and above will be encouraged to study engineering, pharmacy or medicine. Males who score less than 75 percent might consider teaching as their last option.

Azzam, Kamal and Abdu al-Aziz argued that ‘female principals’ schools are much more disciplined and their scores on the national and international exams outperform their male schools’ counterparts’. Hadya noted that ‘qualified male principals can be counted on the fingers’. Dergham said his directorate admitted his district had a ‘serious problem with regard to the qualification of male principals’. This affected learning in schools in the directorate:
Lack of qualified male principals

Students are not attending school and teachers are usually absent. There is not proper teaching and learning. The curricula are not covered. Schools have cleanliness issues; bathrooms are dirty; facilities are dirty. Many things are missing. And it is all because of the wrong choice of leaders.

However, it is not all the directorate’s fault. When they try to choose principals, they do not have alternatives. These are the kind of male teachers and principals that we are getting in the work market. There aren’t many qualified male principals. They have to choose anyone to fill this position regardless of his qualification as a leader.

I’ll give you an example: last week in our district a new principal was appointed. He was an assistant and they brought him in to work as an acting principal. In this principal’s file, it was noted that he was an incompetent teacher who could not control his class despite frequent visits by supervisors to assist him.

Now the directorate has put him in charge of 400 students instead of 40. If you ask them why, they say, ‘give us an alternative’. Therefore, to solve a problem in class, you create a massive one for a whole school.

An incompetent principal can destroy the performance of a leading school. How will they be able to appraise the performance of the teachers if they were incompetent as teachers and are not qualified as instructional leaders? At least for new principals, let them enrol in the leadership program so that they start their career with 15–20 percent of the necessary leadership skills and knowledge.

Many principals described quality of public education in Jordan as declining. Although they had been appointed by MoE, many principals had little regard for newly appointed principals and selection criteria for principals. Aysha argued that real leaders were still missing in schools and that some characteristics of effective principals could not be taught:
Inappropriate selection criteria for principals

The process of principals’ appointment is not a successful one. You pass an exam that you are already familiar with the questions and you get a full score. Does that make you a leader? The choice of principals is a failure and one proof of that is the number of leaders you can find in our district. Out of 20 principals, you can barely find three to four leaders.

In the past, the choice was based on an interview with the director of the directorate. The principal would be asked one general question that does not relate to the position of principal.

Other criteria that would be considered were previous training programs and their employment records for the last two years. All of this doesn’t determine that this person is qualified as a leader. This choice has led to poor outcomes. Our education system is declining.

Principals’ leadership qualifications have to be put to the test. The selection committee has to assess the principals’ ability to address various real issues that they might encounter as school leaders.

If I get to the position where I decide on principals’ recruitment, I would definitely have different criteria for selection, not because I claim to be smarter than the directorate’s personnel, but because I am experienced, and I know what is missing in the field. The exam is not indicative. Criteria have to change.

Only one principal, Burhan, argued that selection criteria for principals had improved:

In the past, principals used to be appointed based on traditional criteria in addition to favouritism and nepotism, which led to carelessness and neglect. But now, the principals have to go through an exam followed by an interview. Additionally, the applicants’ old records are checked and considered for their appointment.
8.2.2 Lack of professional learning communities for principals

Researcher: How often do you meet with other principals?

Ameen: Principals do not meet to exchange ideas. I have worked at schools for 12 years as a teacher, an assistant and as a principal and there are no meetings. In fact, this is the first time we have met like this in person to brainstorm and discuss education issues about leadership.

Fahed: We never have the chance to meet with other principals to reflect on our practices and exchange experiences.

Researcher: How do you meet as principals?

Ameen: We meet at the beginning of each semester. But usually these meetings have fixed agendas of 15 to 20 points that we have already memorised. These are four meetings a year.

Principals described schools as ‘isolated islands’. Aysha and Hadya complained that principals were not invited to join professional learning communities or focus groups to exchange experiences or discuss instructional issues in their schools. Their few meetings with directorates were to discuss funding or receive instructions from the director. Dergham argued that:

There are no constructive informative meetings between the principals and the directorate other than the one at the beginning of each trimester to discuss housekeeping issues which we can be informed about by mail. Principals’ professional learning communities are non-existent. Our meetings should address pressing pedagogical issues.

Principals should be asked to prepare recommendations to address serious issues that our schools face and then an action plan should be developed collaboratively. Our meetings are mostly generic to inform us about some of the shortcomings in schools’ practices such as the issues of cleanliness, or attendance.
If two or three schools are facing these issues, these should be addressed as individual cases. Why would you call 60 schools for a meeting to discuss these matters that do not concern everyone?

Jamila suggested that learning communities be facilitated between schools in the same district and across districts:

Why don’t I get the chance to visit schools in districts other than mine? Why don’t I exchange experiences with school principals in another governorate? Their schools’ environments are completely different from mine.

Why do they not come to our governorate to learn more about the challenges and realities our schools have to deal with? We cannot leave our school to exchange visits without an official letter from the directorate, otherwise we are considered absent.

Burhan said that principals rarely meet to exchange their expertise, in part due to lack of financial incentives:

Meetings depend on the director’s vision. For example, at my directorate, I tell them that I want to meet with principals and so I visit them at schools, but principals do not meet as a group unless there is a training. Now this is written on paper but not found in practice.

We have many excellent strategies on paper that are not implemented. We tried to activate these meetings a few years ago. We used to meet with principals to exchange school supplies, but principals were not motivated to attend because these meetings are not funded. Money moves everything.

Rafiq wanted directorates to facilitate monthly learning communities:

Principals have to meet in person, listen to each other and assist each other. Sometime a principal can be facing a problem that can be solved in few words, but he lacks the experience.

These meetings are non-existent. They do not have to be formal. They can be spontaneous and chatty at times. Principals need to feel that they want to join these meetings, instead of attending because they have to.
Cluster meetings are forced on us and they are not always organised. They are not authentic. The meeting is fake, and people’s hearts are not into it. I am calling for a different initiative for principals to meet voluntarily and enjoy what they are doing. We know each other, and we know those who are truly dedicated to their work. This can be a starting point.

Hadya said she and other likeminded female principals had formed their own learning community. They used social media to communicate and exchange ideas and successful practices. She said: ‘We believe that if we want to reform education in Jordan, we have to work collaboratively.’

8.2.3 Principals’ pre-service training

Principals indicated their concerns about criteria for selecting principals. Even so, they maintained that changes to recruitment criteria alone would not improve the competence of novice principals. All principals confirmed that novice principals were ‘not receiving proper pre-service training’. Principals’ diplomas or master’s degrees mainly focused on theory. This did not equip principals to address challenges they might face in schools. Principals argued that novice principals should receive induction training to build their capacity as instructional leaders and skills and knowledge in school administration, rules and regulations. Majid argued that:

The support currently provided to newly appointed principals is still random and not institutional. All these random efforts have to be turned into a systemised, standardised and methodical plan and program that the Ministry provides not only to novice principals but also to novice teachers.
Fatimah said novice principals needed practical experience:

Novice principals have to visit schools that have successful leaders. They have to attend these schools and observe. Training should not be confined to papers and questions. Some people can pass exams but cannot handle a real situation.

Communication skills are very important, and some principals cannot work with their team. They should have some leadership skills. They won’t be successful leaders if these are missing. Exchange visits help build these skills in the leader.

Jenan said she ‘truly empathised’ with novice principals when they were forced to learn on the job, because she had to do the same. She said:

New principals are not getting proper support. I have met some of them who told me that they had no idea what to do. They were terrified and shaking. They have so many questions. At least give them an orientation for one week and then send them to the field. It is not fair.

They call me and ask what to do because they are clueless. They need assistance. That is the whole point. Novice principals are appointed. They have no idea how to manage school supplies, how to write an official letter, how to manage school finances, how to assume their roles as instructional leaders. They are lost…

When I first became a principal, I joined a small school. It was a new one, so it basically had no system, not even a school stamp. I was clueless at the beginning, but I gradually learned everything there and established a system.

I depended on trial and error and took risks. I made many mistakes. No one was following up because it was a small school, hardly noticed. Then when I moved to big school, I was ready and competent. But it was all my hard work.

Majid said many novice principals eventually became competent through hard work. However, principals might develop poor leadership practices in the meantime:

I have learned a lot as a leader for the past 25 years. However, coming to think of it now, I do wish I had learned many of these things at the beginning of this
career. If the training was present at the beginning of my career, I would have matured as a leader at a much earlier stage.

Principals’ views on their qualifications reinforce the need to build a culture of leadership and training leaders to assist implementation of distributed leadership in schools:

One principal’s personal initiative

After I trained 29 schools in my district, some of the principals who sensed and trusted that the leadership program was truly implemented and that schools had to work on their SIPs asked for practical examples from the field.

I arranged for 21 principals to visit my school for one day. They attended the morning line and then they attended some morning lessons, and it all was documented.

We had a supervisor from the directorate. I prepared a file of all the school’s administrative forms and gave everyone a copy. They also had extensive practical training on the four domains of the SIP. I designed four round-table mini workshops which were run by the coordinators of each domain.

Visiting principals were free to choose which of these four domains they wanted to learn more about and which table to join. The coordinator explained to them in detail how the work is done. At the end of the workshop, the principals were asked to evaluate the coordinators’ work and give them some feedback.

These principals were from two different groups of schools. Male principals came to my school and female principals attended a similar workshop at the one of the female principals’ schools. Principals were given teacher evaluation forms to fill out while they were attending classes.

All the work was real, not fake because it was based on two years of implementation of the SIP. Principals were learning and asking questions about issues they were struggling with. The director came for half an hour and was really pleased. It was a great learning experience.
Other principals had offered to collaborate with MoE and host training at their schools. Dergham explained:

I have requested at least 10 times that the new principals should be given training to inform them about the rules and regulations in the Ministry’s and directorates’ procedures. We are now in April and this is the ninth month in the scholastic year.

Eight new principals were appointed and if you ask them whether they know how to handle school finances, fundamental civil service rules and regulations, punitive procedures, or any other administrative matters, they are clueless.

The exam does not test their administrative competence. There has to be specialised training on all the various aspects of school leadership… I have been a principal for 10 years and I haven’t received any pre-service or in-service training to handle school administration…

I have offered to invite all new principals in my district to my school and give them training on essential administrative issues, but no one listens.

Aqeel argued that schools should support each other. MoE should draw on the skills and experience of high performers in the field and employ them as trainers and supervisors. He gave an example of an effective partnership between his school and another:

I have done school twinning with two small schools. This is not only important because we provide them with financial support, but there is also the administrative support. Usually these small schools with limited numbers of students and teachers are neglected and both teachers and students have no direction.

In these schools, there is no principal. Instead, one of the teachers will be an acting principal. Usually, there is a weakness in the administrative side. When we did school twinning, I invited the staff to my school and trained them. I gave them forms that would enable them to do their work.
Malak expressed disappointment in MoE’s marginalisation of principals: ‘We consider ourselves part of the most distinguished principals and yet we are not entrusted to assume any role beyond that of a school principal.’ Majid called for a ‘long term, consistent and sustainable plan’ to help school leaders address problems in schools. He argued that ‘there is a need to build the capacity of a group of qualified principals to become instructional supervisors and trainers to assist other principals in the field’.

He complained that many entry level programs focused on ‘superficial issues’ in education, not strategic ones. This accounted for the ‘lack of competent instructional leaders and leader trainers’ in Jordanian public schools. Dergham argued for principals to be given more ‘agency’ over their professional development. He felt training programs should be based on ‘needs analysis’. He said many principals attended training sessions that were not relevant to the needs of their school. This made principals doubt whether professional development could enhance their performance as leaders. Dergham said:

Teachers and principals should not be forced to attend seven to eight training sessions if they need one or two. Training will be useless. When supervisors visit schools, they should identify the needs of each school and invite the schools who need the training. Why do you force me to attend if I do not need it? And then other essential areas are neglected.

Other principals said MoE could enhance the appeal of training by running it at more convenient times and locations. Siddiqa argued:

Does it make sense that principals receive training from nine to five on a weekend? This is a crime. And the female teacher has to leave her kids and her house on her weekend. The teachers are usually exhausted towards the end of the week especially because of their overload. They need a break.
Some principals expressed their views on MoE training programs in strong terms. Khadijah said:

The training conditions were inappropriate. I finish work at school and I am exhausted and then I go to another school from one to six that might not have the facilities for training. Sometimes there weren’t proper chairs to sit on. The food was so average. We had chicken every day. We were about to lay eggs.

Burhan, on the other hand, said MoE had adopted new approaches that would enable Jordan to become a leader in education among Arab countries and across the world. He described ERfKE as building principals’ and directorates’ capacity. Burhan conceded that trainers with experience as principals tended to be better qualified:

Some trainers in the leadership programs were not principals. They were teachers who taught for five years and then did their master’s degree and became supervisors. For me I was a teacher, a principal and then a supervisor and a trainer.

But I noticed that the trainees prefer to be trained by principals because they bring in their experience and help the trainees relate what they are learning to practice in the field. Therefore, those who were principals are more qualified to train.

Burhan thought principals’ resistance to training sometimes could be attributed to socio-economic factors:

Training is for everyone. Some principals are resistant and do not like to attend any of these training sessions. Even when training is compulsory, they write their names and do not attend. Many of them have another job in the afternoon because their income is limited, and they won’t bother attend the training.

8.2.4 Financial incentives

Participants said MoE should consider financial incentives for teachers and principals to participate in training. Teachers and principals were underpaid.
Financial incentives also might motivate teachers and principals to work harder. Burhan said:

There should also be some financial incentive for the employees to motivate them to enrol in these programs. For example, if they are trained for 160 hours, they should get a grade up the career ladder. Then all the principals will compete to attend these courses.

In this case, I have won more principals into the training and this will improve schools’ performance because principals’ qualification, competence and perception of their role as participative leaders has been enhanced.

We have to address their intrinsic and their extrinsic motivation to work. Sometimes we need the extrinsic motivation to start change. Empowerment has to be translated into practices. Principals need to feel that these training programs are rewarding because they enhance their skills and they are benefiting financially.

Now, when the directorates conceive that principals’ practices and perceptions are changing, it can shift the incentive to focus more on their intrinsic motivation.

This can assist in eliminating or at least reducing this notion of autocracy that this principal is carrying. And a new leadership stance starts prevailing in our schools.

Dergham argued for higher pay to improve school principals’ performance:

<table>
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<th>Financial incentives</th>
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<td><strong>Principals’ social environment, their families and how stable and comfortable their lives all affect their practices at school. If they are financially comfortable, they will perform better because they will not be preoccupied with all their financial commitments, which they cannot meet, while they are in school. They are distracted.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>What makes the difference between the levels of implementing at schools is the principals’ intrinsic motivation for work and change. This motivation does not only spring from their beliefs, but it is also impacted by their socio-</strong></td>
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economic circumstances. Living conditions are very hard and things are very expensive.

Now, despite the big title of the school principals, their salaries are not enough. There are no incentives. The principals and the teachers are distracted because of the economic pressure. Many people think they will work according to the pay. They won’t work harder.

Why do you find more productivity in the private sector? Because there is a decent return for your work. Unfortunately, there is barely any incentive for work at the Ministry.

There is neither a financial nor a moral support. Nowadays, with the difficult life we live, we need decent pay more than ever. How do they expect the people to work if they have debts and financial commitments they cannot cover?

They come to work preoccupied with the electricity and water bills they cannot afford to pay, with their children’s university fees which they cannot cover and much more.

We have received no pay increases for the past four years. Now when we compare ourselves to other colleagues in different sectors, we feel we are not important. Our job is among the most difficult and yet this is not how it is perceived by the society and the Ministry. Principals who lack self-motivation are frustrated because they are not appreciated.

8.3 Silver lining

8.3.1 Principals’ agency

Four of the 24 principals said they sought feedback from teachers on their performance. They asked teachers to complete anonymous ‘principal performance appraisal forms’ to help them assess and amend their practices. Other principals in this research were sceptical of this practice. Five principals rejected the idea—they said teachers could not assess principals’ performance because of their ignorance of many aspects of school administration. Some principals worried that ‘teachers’
biases’ would lead to unreasonable feedback on principals’ performance. In one focus group meeting, Affifa explained her approach in seeking feedback from teachers. The conversation that followed uncovered other principals’ assumptions about power distribution:

Affifa: I have my performance appraised by teachers, parents and the supervisor in addition to the principal’s appraisal I get from the directorate. The surveys are completely anonymous.

Sometimes I would think that I did well in one area and then I am surprised to learn that my teachers thought it was merely satisfactory. Based on this feedback, I draw a plan for the next year to work on my performance.

Majid: But doesn’t this give them the power to criticise you?

Affifa: No. I trust they will give me a constructive feedback.

Majid: This reflects deep self-confidence. I am really impressed.

Affifa: I also have a board of directors.

Majid: What does that mean? And what does it do?

Affifa: The board of directors comprises the principal, assistant principal, school counsellor, lead teachers, student parliament representatives and elected parents. They supervise and follow up the school’s plan.

They check school records and monthly plans. Parent members of the administrative board visit the school regularly. They attend classes and school’s activities. They have their own forms to fill for feedback.

Jenan: I do something similar. I have formed a committee of key teachers for instructional support. They help when we have issues at school.

Affifa: Yes, I have an instructional support team. Some teachers are willing to assume leadership roles and support the principal. But not all teachers have the same attitude.
There are the ones who always complain and do not want to do anything beyond teaching. In my school, everyone feels able to have a leadership role.

Majid: On Mondays, I hold a meeting with all heads of department during the third period. We discuss school matters for the past week and plan ahead. Additionally, teachers have their own learning communities where they meet once a week with their coordinator.

Salma explained her approach to seeking feedback from teachers:

I always see the glass as half full. If other people do not implement distributed leadership, it is their problem. I believe in it and I refuse to be called a school principal especially with the new program the ministry is advocating.

I am a leader of leaders at school… Leadership initiatives are invited, and my teachers, staff and students feel empowered and authorised to take risks and make decisions.

Malak argued that a positive organisational culture and effective leaders could help teachers feel empowered and motivated:

When leaders create a shared vision, they create a strong culture that everyone feels committed to. I feel supported by my teachers. When I held the fourth students’ conference, we faced an issue with funding. The teachers were using their own money to buy decorations because they believed in it and they refused to reduce expenses.

They wanted it to expand and be more successful than the previous year. When I first held it in my school, no one from the directorate attended. I went to my office and cried. My teachers supported me.

They said this conference is for us not for them. If they want to come, that is their choice, but this is our success and it will be under your patronage. That is a big honour to us.
Dergham described the attributes of successful leaders:

**Benevolent autocrats**

There is no doubt that anything that is new to people is difficult to perceive and accept as the poet says, ‘people are enemy what they are ignorant about’. However, the successful leader is the one who can capture his employees’ and follower’s hearts with his kindness and openness, by delegating tasks to them and by building their capacity.

He is the leader and in order to lead them, he has to be among them. He has to *unbend and condescend* to reach to them. He cannot look at them from his ivory tower.

He cannot act high and mighty. This won’t work. If people at the organisation feel that the leader is one of them, that he empathises with them and works hard to empower them, he will definitely succeed. They will accept him and respond to change.

On the other hand, if they feel that this leader is a recording machine that passes on new regulations for them to implement—if he doesn’t act like a good role model and begin with the implementation himself, if he continues to treat them as subordinates and address them in a condescending manner—then he will definitely face high resistance to new policies because he instilled the wrong culture.

**8.3.2 Brave leaders**

The concept of the ‘brave leader’ emerged in interviews. Principals agreed that they sometimes questioned their ability to make good decisions and not feel threatened. However, only some principals agreed that practices based on shared understanding of school rules, regulations and culture empowered principals to make good decisions. Malak illustrated the importance of teachers’ support for principals:
Brave leadership and teachers’ support

I decided to fail some Grade 11 students based on the regulations of the Ministry, which were not implemented by the previous principal in this school.

Many students were at risk of failing because of their reckless attitude. Parents were furious, and they surrounded the school. I had to leave in the police car so that no parents could harm me…

The police car took me to the directorate and the director was mad at me. I explained that I applied the rules and regulations. That was a tough year. I had female high school students who couldn’t care less about going to university.

They wanted to finish high school and get married or join the police force. However, the reward came later when the school culture began to change. Two years later, I had a group of students who are committed and serious about their studies. Their grades in high school were the highest in our district.

I still remember the director’s words: ‘Which rules and regulations did you base your decision on?’ I knew what I was doing, and I had to stand for what I believed was right. The parents were mad at me at the beginning. They smashed my car’s front glass.

It was risky. The only ones who supported me back then were my teachers. They believed in me and they shared the decision with me and that’s why I had their full support, especially during the directorate’s investigation.

8.3.3 Appreciation and respect

Support and recognition from directorates emerged as important factors in building principals’ agency. Principals agreed that they wanted to feel appreciated by directorates. Khadijah said that when she decided to retire, she did not receive an end of service appreciation letter:
I have been a principal for 23 years. My school is one of the most difficult and challenging to manage. When I worked under our ex-director, I received 12 appreciation letters.

And now, no one asked me to stay or change my mind. No one cares if I leave. The only thing they were upset about was that no principal would fill my place because they know how difficult my school is.

Majid felt the same lack of respect and appreciation for his service in Jordanian public schools:

There are missing links between the Ministry and the field. Highly qualified principals are easily let off. When I decided to retire and informed the directorate, no one asked me to stay or change my mind.

I trained so many other principals in the past and I have been an active member in the teachers’ syndicate all my life and they know who I am in the directorate. However, no one cares if I leave. No one is interested in investing in my capacity any more.

8.3.4 Passion for one’s career

Principals identified passion for one’s career as another feature of effective teachers and principals. Hadya said:

Those who decide to become teachers should do so for the love of this job, not because they have no choice. When people with the right kind of attitude and passion towards this career, then it is the Ministry’s role to provide both pre-service and in-service training for them. We still have long way to go.

Fatimah said her ‘love and passion’ for teaching motivated her to continually build on her qualifications:

I believe I have to invest in teachers’ and students’ capacity and potential and motivate them to realise their own potential. This approach transforms people and brings out their best practices.
I established the gifted room in my school and used to hold professional training for the students, teachers and parents about brain-based learning, multiple intelligences, creative thinking and many other related topics that have a direct impact on the process of teaching and learning and that would fill a gap in the teachers’ training.

Rafiq said his love for his school and for his job had helped him build rapport with his students:

I love my students and teachers and I can read them well. I don’t know how but I can tell when they’re honest or when they are lying to me. I know all my students’ names, or at least their surnames. I have 400 students and I have to greet them one by one in the morning line-up.

If they don’t feel you love them, they won’t respect you. In some schools, if the student reaches the principal’s office, he is screwed. That is nonsense. The principal has to be with the students, among them.

**In summary**

This chapter has described principals’ views on external reasons for lack of qualifications among teachers and principals in Jordanian public schools. Factors identified included inappropriate criteria for teachers’ and principals’ recruitment and scarce and inefficient training programs. Principals argued these factors had led to lack of human capital to improve quality of education in Jordanian public schools. Principals felt many educators lacked the vision and motivation needed to transform schools. School improvement also might require principals to engage with cultural obstacles to change. This will be explained in the next chapter.

Principals recommended measures such as better selection criteria, pre-service training and probation periods for novice teachers and principals, and consistent assessment of schools’ performance. Principals argued that these
measures were mandated by MoE but not implemented properly in schools. If MoE bridged the gap between policy and practice, principals reckoned, they would be better equipped to transform teaching and learning in schools. Principals agreed that poor remuneration for teachers and principals hindered implementation of reform programs.

Male teachers and principals, in particular, were more focused on providing for their families than on their professional development. Principals believed higher pay could help public schools attract and retain bright and motivated educators. They urged MoE to focus on non-monetary rewards, such as recognition, trust, and respect to improve teachers’ and principals’ morale. Principals agreed that educators with passion for their career were better equipped to transform schools and implement reform programs. Some principals revealed that they considered themselves agents for change. Their attitude is radical compared to longstanding beliefs and practices in many Jordanian schools.
Chapter Nine: Culture and resistance

Chapter Nine examines the influence of tribal culture on principals’ practices in schools and educators’ resistance to change. Interviews with principals highlighted differences between Jordanian tribal cultural values and the values that underpin ERfKE. Interviews with principals also suggested that tribe members’ habitus could become better aligned with distributed leadership.
Patriarchy and power

Tribal values are existent, and the leaders brings them in to the work place. This is not confined to teachers and principals. People at the directorate and the Ministry carry the same values and they bring them in when they visit us in our schools.

Tribal hierarchal values are revealed with the first step these directorate personnel make into our school. The director walks into my schools, then to my office and he sits on my chair. I have to position myself on the side.

I respect him because he is the director, but it is not courteous nor respectful to sit on my chair. Authority, power and hierarchy are inherent, and the culture safeguards these values. This is a patriarchal society (Principal X).

9.1 Sheikhocracy and power

Power ownership emerged as an important concept in interviews with principals. Principals explained the influence of tribal culture on educators’ biases, conduct and practices in the organisation. Burhan, who was born and lived in the Jordanian desert, explained:

Tribal values of control and power

Human beings are possessive and dominating by nature, but you will find these attribute with darker shades in the Arab world. The little child would not let go of any stuff that he is given because he wants to control and have power.

These desires are innate. And in the desert and probably in Jordan, control and power are entrenched in the culture and tribal members grow with it.

Probably, it gets milder as you move to the urban cities, but the tribal system plays a significant role in instilling the values of dictatorship, dominance and subordination in the members. People are brought up like that. If you do not control, you are frail and susceptible, and others will control you.
I was taught that the female is a female and the male is a male and that being a female in the tribe means that she has no say and no role whatsoever in making any decision. I was brought up to believe that there must be a leader of the family who holds the reins. He is the one and only.

Even when it comes to the tribal control, each member will be waiting for the right moment to step in to overthrow the Sheikh and take over. The Sheikh of the tribe mostly runs the show exclusively. He usually invites others to share their opinions, but they know that they don’t dare to disagree or suggest anything that might oppose the decisions of the Sheikh.

This is a well-known notion of pseudo-consultancy and when people articulate a disapproving thought, they are reprimanded and commanded to keep their views to themselves. All the followers will be there to support the Sheikh as they acknowledge his power and authority.

So, when a tribe member becomes a principal, he perceives school as his father’s ranch which he’s inherited with all the employees perceived as workers to serve his interest. Anyone who would think of resisting his power will be severely punished in a way that can affect their jobs. That is not the case in Jordan only. That is the case in many other Arab countries…

I don’t want to be a principal in the Arab world. I was a principal and I really regret that year. Now I am a trainer and a researcher. The first thought that comes to mind when you think of a principal is a dictator.

Now I have reached a new conviction that this dictator had some serious issues of being controlled as a child and now he is trying to compensate for that suppress within his position in management. If I find people who can understand what distribution means, I will consider to be a principal once again.

Dergham agreed that principals’ practices in schools were consistent with tribal values:
Sheikhocracy

Unfortunately, the most prevalent leadership style is autocratic and bureaucratic. This means that the principal is the sovereign and everyone can only act according to what he sees as the right thing. He thinks that he is solely responsible for running the school’s business and that’s why he is the only one entitled to make decisions.

He doesn’t consult anyone and does not welcome any second opinion. This is what we see at other schools and of course this reflects negatively on the schools’ performance and the staff wellbeing.

Peoples’ convictions cannot easily change especially if they are based on cultural values. Our problem in the Arab world is that all the levels of leadership whether political, educational, social etc. are saturated with the culture of the idolised individual leader.

In the education sector in particular, most of our colleagues reflect this culture in the way they lead their schools and their families. They are the offspring of this culture and they feel they personify the sheikh. We need to change this culture and that is not easy.

9.2 Principals’ coterie

Another example of tribal culture in principals’ practices is the coterie many principals maintain. Dergham said:

Some principals discriminate against their staff and colleague teachers based on their regions and their family. These thoughts contradict our religious beliefs, our ethics, our virtues, and our pan Arabism.

For example, soon after a principal joins a new school, he checks the list of employees’ family names and a group of teachers is privileged accordingly.

These practices are extant and subsisting and as we say, ‘the sun cannot be blocked with a sieve’. So, the new principal gets the list of names and makes decisions regarding the structures within his or her school based on that. No doubt this is toxic, and this is what their own culture has instilled in them.
The privileged teachers become his coterie. This favouritism influences the principal’s decisions and he will not be fair to his teachers. His clique will control him; they will control his practices and his attitude. There are many examples of this at our schools.

Hadya and Aysha agreed that many principals had a favoured group of teachers ‘who run the show at the back stage’. Hadya said:

The majority of principals are dictators and have no notion of what distribution means. Unfortunately, they have their close circle of teachers who are his or her friends and board of trustees. Other teachers try to reach to this group to have a connection that would let them reach the principals.

Aysha said:

No teacher is favoured at my school. I don’t understand what I would do that for. We are here to work and serve our country. This is our duty. Outside school we can have friends and connections. I start at eight and finish when everyone goes home. I don’t have friends at work. They are all my sisters and their work is what promotes them.

9.3 Perception of tribal values

Principals did not agree on the influence of tribal values and ‘sheikhocracy’ on their practices. Some principals argued that tribal values did not always influence practices in Jordanian schools. These principals thought educators determined the effects of tribal values on their thoughts and behaviour. Fatimah said:

Our social values do not interfere with the workplace unless principals allow them to, and unless principals do not possess sufficient knowledge and skills to assimilate the notion of distributed leadership. Additionally, if the principal carries the values of sheikhocracy, then they can employ the positive side of these values.
As a tribe, we are united, and we are one big family. Our organisation should be perceived as this family, which means that we are all compelled to devote ourselves to the service of our big family, our school.

Our religious and cultural values serve the notion of distribution because as family members we have our own roles and contribution to making decision in the family and we bring the same values to our workplace.

Practices do not depend on the values of the individuals as much as on their perception of these values. Some might employ them to create a culture of segregation in school, where the principal’s close circle will be defined by his or her whim based on nepotism and favouritism.

This fortunately does not happen in Amman. People have good work values because they are educated. The principal’s charisma, disposition and practices have to be authentic and trustworthy.

Malak thought tribal values did not suit the needs of the modern education system:

Unfortunately, the young abuse the tribal values. They mistake the tribe to mean connection and power. There are so many examples of tribal figures who were decent and worked hard to serve their country.

Principals who hold the tribal mentality or sheikhocracy won’t succeed because the world is changing.

Aqeel provided two examples of the benefits of tribal values on practices in schools:

**The social leader**

Tribal values have two sides. They can hamper, and they can build. This is the role of the social leader. The principal has to know how to direct the local community to support his school. There should be a partnership with the community. The principal has to reach to them for support. Our people are generous. This is a salient value in the tribe.

If I reach out to them and talk to them, they can help. They can assist with enhancing school facilities, for example.
The father

I am against perceiving oneself as the sheikh of the school, but I am with being a father of the school.

Delegation and distribution do not mean that the principal loses his authority. It is a matter of assigning roles to organise the school’s work. The leader is a supervisor. He checks that work is done properly and how much work was done as well.

He has to give appropriate support and interfere when work is not done properly. Some principals misunderstand their jobs. They think they have to do everything because they are the managers and the ones responsible. This is a flaw in their understanding.

The principal said, ‘I am the boss. The power is mine and I will do it all. And I’ll control it all.’ Most of the principals are like this. They do not like to authorise anyone or to distribute the roles of leadership because they don’t want to distribute power and authority.

Burhan also thought tribal values could have positive effects in schools:

There are some positive aspects in our culture which we can invest in, such as generosity and collaboration in happy times and during hardship. People would give all they can to help each other. These are positive aspects that we can invest in to improve education.

Dergham thought the influence of tribal values on principals’ practices depended on different variables:

…So, there are many factors. Principals’ social background plays a role in their leadership style, but there is also the education factor. The more principals are educated and trained and the more experiences and cultures they are exposed to, the easier it is for them to transform their practices at schools.

Unfortunately, some of our colleagues are resistant to change. Their perception remains superficial and shallow… Sheikocracy exists at varying
levels and it is really harmful because it imprisons people and confines their thinking.

Principals are supposed to free themselves from the pressures that affect their leadership and interfere with their work.

Principals agreed that sheikhocratic leadership practices were more prevalent in male principals’ schools because of patriarchal cultural values. Some conversations between principals in focus groups revealed inconsistent and ambiguous views on gender, power, democracy and distribution in Jordanian society:

**Patriarchy in action**

Khadijah: In the Jordanian family, there is consultation between the father and the children according to their age.

Ameen: I believe that in our society, the father is the only one in the family who enjoys full power and authority.

Khadijah: There is not one rule that applies to all Jordanian families. Generally, this is a patriarchal society, but practices vary. Leadership starts at an early stage in the family. Each member has tasks to perform.

If this exists in the family, it will then be reflected in the organisation. A lot of my practices at school stem from the way I was brought up.

Researcher: Generally speaking, how are people brought up in Jordan?

Khadijah: Through consultation. The father of course has the final say, even if the family members are not convinced. Probably the father consults them and then, he alters their advice because he is not convinced that this is the right decision. Many people do this. They ask others and they do not listen. There is a flaw in their thinking.

They think they own the power and they won’t let go of it, but they sometimes they have to pretend that they are consulting others. Unfortunately, most of our politics is like that, ‘consult them and then disagree’.
Now what I believe is that we can find our way into this leader. As middle leaders, we need skills to reach to leaders at the top and shrewdly turn them into our side.

Researcher: What if you lack these negotiating skills and cannot reach out to this leader?

Khadijah: Then you are not a true leader, because leadership means you should have the skills to influence others. So, those who have more influence will lead others.

Ameen: Now, the answer to the prevalent leadership stance in Jordanian society will differ according to many variables. One of them is the individual’s surrounding environment. And the other is gender.

There is a difference between male and female perceptions of this topic. My colleague answered from her perspective as a female. However, for me as a male, I believe that we are in one society, one environment with the same culture and values.

This is a patriarchal society and the power is in the hand of men. They inherited this power from their fathers, grandfathers, their uncles, from all the men in their environment. Sometimes men use the power of congregation to legitimise their authority.

Allah says, ‘Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has made one of them to excel the other, and because they spend (to support them) from their means’ (An-Nisa verse No. 34).

Khadijah: [Being sarcastic] And, ‘women are lacking in religion and thinking’.

Fahed: As leaders, we carry our cultural values that we learned in our family and environment: If your father is the eldest, he is in control. If your uncle is

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12 This refers to Prophet Mohamed admonishing women for their lack of generosity in giving charity. The ‘lack of reason’ refers to their limited duty in giving testimony regarding business contracts, as mentioned in verse 2:282 of the Qur’an. The ‘lack of religion’ refers to women’s limited duty regarding prayer, as women do not perform the ritual prayer while on their menses. It does not mean, as a general rule, that women are less intelligent or less pious than men (Elias 2013).
the eldest he is in control. If the grandfather is alive, he is in control and we follow.

At school, people bring this culture with them and stand as role models. The teacher is the role model for the student and the principal is the role model for staff and teachers.

Researcher: Do these values contradict the notion of distributed leadership?

Khadijah: Yes. So much, so much, so much. My colleagues said that teachers carry the tribal values. If I, as a leader, try to distribute roles based on expertise, teachers will refuse because they cannot see themselves assuming smaller roles than others regardless of how much work they do or how qualified they are. It is all about being proud.

They will refuse to collaborate with subject coordinators, for example, because they see themselves as more entitled to that position because of who their family is. This instigates resistance.

As a female I face a barrier when I address the local community. To begin with, men perceive me as inferior to them and refuse to communicate. Second, the women do not understand what we are doing here at school.

There is a need for campaigns to raise mothers’ awareness of their role and schools’ roles in raising the new generation. ERfKE assumes that the community is ready take part in education for change, which is not true.

We need first to reach to parents, educate them and then engage them in our vision. Where school is located plays a big role in facilitating or hampering the implementation of distributed leadership. You won’t come across the same issue in Amman, for example.

Researcher: So, you think there is a contradiction between tribal culture and distributed leadership?

Khadijah: If the leader is the son of a tribe, things will work out. If he is not and the members of school are the sons of the tribe, they will lead him and lead the school the way they want. And this is everywhere, not only in school.
The tribal law still prevails. Families might be expelled and forced out of their place by the tribal law. We suffer from a cancer called tribalism.

9.4 Tribal power

Interviews with principals also revealed the influence of tribalism on dealings between school principals and community members, education directorates and teachers. Principals were ‘susceptible’ to coercion from well-connected school stakeholders. Some teachers had more power than principals. Interviews on this topic suggested some principals lacked confidence to make decisions. Khadijah argued:

For distributed leadership to succeed, we have to give more support to the teachers and principals. They are quite vulnerable. They have no authority from the Ministry. Students feel that teachers are defenceless and powerless, so they go too far. They do not listen.

All the Ministry’s rules and regulations are against the teacher. There is no respect for the teacher or even for us. We are insulted by parents and students. And with this kind of conduct we won’t have disciplined schools and we shouldn’t expect better academic performance and better results.

Sometimes the principal is under pressure and under the power of teachers who have strong connections. Or, if principals move to a new school that has the same tribe, they will try to twist school leadership practices to serve their needs.

If the principal resists, they will keep issuing complaints against him at the directorate. And sometimes they reach out to the local community to work against the principal.

Jamila argued:

Sometimes the directorate interferes with the principals’ decision and they pressure them to change it because someone is using their own connection.
This will definitely shake the principals’ self-confidence. They will think 100 times before making any decision, even if it serves their students’ interest.

When those in power interfere in my work, I might become indifferent. I do not care about work. I will bend with the wind. I will have peace of mind. Let them lead the school. I do not care.

However, is this the way we want it to be? Then I am not a leader. Leaders are social warriors. Sometimes, we are addressed inappropriately. There is no respect from the directorates.

Dergham said:

Another example of teachers’ control is in some schools in districts that are of the same tribe and the staff in these schools will be of the same family. When their principal is not of the same family, they try to control him or her.

There is another kind of pressure that places principals and sometimes teachers in a vulnerable position. I went through this experience myself. I was sent to a school that was lagging behind and I had to apply strict measures to control the chaos.

I succeeded eventually but I had to pay the price. My car was smashed. Students broke the windows and the lights.

One principal explained that principals and teachers might change their decisions ‘to avoid losing face’ in response to social pressure from tribe members:

Parents think they have the right to alter school decisions, especially when it comes to students’ results. They use and abuse their connections at the directorate to force us to change grades and pass their sons and daughters. The teacher feels coerced to change the grades. Parents will come to our houses and we will feel embarrassed.

We cannot let them down. We will lose face. So, it is a double-edged weapon. It is even worse for female teachers. They are pressured through their husbands.
One time a parent talked to the husband to help him change his wife’s mind about some school-related issue and finally he told him: ‘That is fine if you have no say over your wife as a man, probably someone else at the directorate can make her change her mind.’

The husband was so embarrassed and insulted. He told his wife to deal with this because he could not face people. This woman had to change her decision because she did not want her husband to feel humiliated and lose face.

Hadya said principals needed to be brave social leaders to deal with tribal pressure at schools:

Principals who move to a school that has members of the same family or tribe should be brave social leaders with high emotional intelligence. They should be able to assimilate the culture of that school and discreetly and prudently lead the people in it and transform their practices. This is difficult and requires capable leaders.

9.5 Symbolic violence: Suppression and punishment

Principals agreed that school stakeholders’ practices in Jordan were the product of tribal cultural values. These values were instilled in young children by their family. This led school stakeholders to accept hierarchies of power that were maintained through suppression, punishment, and other forms of control. Burhan, an ex-principal and leadership trainer, explained family practices that sustained tribal practices in Jordanian schools:

> It is essential to pay attention to details in our families. Children are sensitive to their environment and at a young age they accumulate images, experiences and stories which transform into codes of behaviour and social practice when, for example, they see their father throwing their jacket on the sofa and the mother hangs it in the closet, or if they watch their father yelling at their mum or even beating her.
These practices shape their social values and practices in life at a later stage. Therefore, practices at schools are rooted in older practices in the family.

Parents colour the vision of their children with whatever they do at home. Sadly, these values can be reinforced in the child if their teachers at school have similar practices. These images turn into values.

Therefore, we have to concentrate our efforts on building the capacity of teachers through ongoing professional development sessions by experts. This should also address the local community. They have to engage in focus group discussions, to watch real life scenarios and to be educated about the impact of their practices.

Schools should not suppress and punish students. This will instil violence in the child. We have to take good care of our children and students to have good citizens with the right kind of attitude and values.

Parents’ education is still not institutional but dependent on schools’ vision and the effort they exert to engage the local community. But hopefully this will change in the future because community work is one of the four pillars of ERfKE.

Principals said suppression and punishment were widespread in Jordanian education, for example in directorates’ practices. Some principals called for punitive measures to enforce implementation of reform programs. Rafiq explained that procedures to control smoking in one Jordanian public school showed that practices to instil trust were received poorly by directorates and public school principals:

Reflections on punishment

Smoking in Jordanian public schools is an epidemic despite punitive measures, rules and regulations by the Ministry. Cigarettes are cheap, and they are available.
Parents are either unaware that their children smoke, or they feel unable to address this issue. I thought, I have to devise a method other than punishment to convince students not to smoke.

I asked the chemistry teacher, who is popular among students and who was a heavy smoker, which led to coronary heart disease, to talk about it to the students.

We arranged a small awareness campaign in which the chemistry teacher and I visited classes and he explained to them how he had to stay in hospital for about a month after a coronary angioplasty and how his life was at risk because of smoking.

I was there asking him questions that he would answer to illustrate to students how fatal smoking can be. Students were encouraged to ask questions themselves and by the end of the day we felt we were able to alter our students’ convictions. The next step was for me to talk to them.

I asked them if they love me and they said, ‘they do because I am kind to them and I care for them’. They said they hated my assistant because he is unkind to them. (Of course, my assistant and I have decided on our roles, I am the angel. He is the devil because he’s at the frontline with them and we have this mutual understanding about our roles.)

The students and I had a deal to hand me in their packet of cigarettes in the morning and I’ll give it back to them in the afternoon before they leave school. That was very effective. Many students felt embarrassed to come and ask for it. Sometimes, they gave me 10 packets in the morning and only five come to take them back. Sometimes, I follow the students when they are leaving and tell them that they forgot their packet of cigarettes and they say they don’t want it.

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13 Smoking in the presence of a significant adult like the father, uncle, teacher or principal is considered a sign of disrespect in Arab society, so even if a teenager wants to smoke, they will not smoke in the presence of a superior.
Now, when I mention this at the directorate and discuss it with other principals, they consider it a ‘passive and ineffective action’ because I kept the cigarettes in my office.

The right procedure, according to them, is to search the students and confiscate the cigarettes. But how can I search the students? This is condescending and disrespectful. No. I deal with this gradually.

First, I build a culture of mutual trust and then as a second step, we can engage in a difficult conversation about smoking and try to educate them to quit. We have to move gently first.

250 students out of the 400 in my school smoke and 80 are heavy smokers. We have to find a way to approach them. Now, they add me on Facebook and I see some of them smoking cigarettes and shisha, but I never reprimand them. I want to build a culture of love and trust in my school.

9.6 Disrupting practitioners’ habitus

9.6.1 Difficult conversations

Principals argued for the need for ‘difficult conversations’ between the directorate and principals. Both parties should be able to ‘transcend the mandates of social relationships’ to redirect conversations to address professional pressing issues. For example, Aqeel said:

There have to be some difficult conversations with school principals and this is what the accountability unit is there for. They have to face the principals and put aside tribal matters. We have to concentrate on work. When principals do not do their work properly, they have to be notified.

They should understand that this is not lack of respect. It is a kind of support. Accountability has to go through phases and should be based on transparent criteria. The accountability team has to be qualified and capable of holding these difficult conversations with the principals.
Principals argued that educators needed exposure to novel experiences to challenge their thinking on teaching and leadership. Hadya said:

**Changing workplaces**

Teachers and principals are not expected to change unless their surroundings change. This is not only true of theoretical training but also of transformation of practices of senior Ministry officials.

They also need to change the place of work and move to new schools to be exposed to new experiences. Teachers usually resist change and refuse to move to different schools because they are satisfied with the routine they established for themselves. Teachers mix between their homes and the workplace and their classes become their second families.

Their home practices are transferred to class. The same can be said of school principals who consider their schools their empires. Schools are named after their principals, which indicates ownership that is mutually accepted by the principals and community alike.

This ownership grants the principals feelings of power and control over their school, their tribe. This cannot change unless principals are aware that they will have to change their work place every five years, for example.

This will hopefully transform the way principals and teachers perceive their relation to the workplace and create a more professional, less complacent perspective on the part of teachers and less possessive attitude on the part of principals.

Some principals stay in the same school for 20 years and there is nothing new. They’ve repeated their first-year experience 20 times. Now there is a new law that principals have to change schools every five years, but I don’t think it will be implemented.

As long as we have favouritism and nepotism in this country, nothing will be implemented. It will only remain on paper. And principals will not relinquish their throne.
9.6.3 Professional learning

Some principals thought training might lead to cultural change in schools. Burhan said training programs and postgraduate studies had transformed his practices and helped him understand his own cultural convictions:

**Renouncing sheikhocracy**

My postgraduate studies showed me that the ‘sheikhocratic mentality’ is not effective… My perception of my role as a principal began to change. I became aware of the need to empathise with others, whether at work or at home.

Training programs transformed me as a person and completely changed my life, even at home. They changed my perception of my role in life. I used to think that I was the one and only at home and in school. If a teacher comes to my office, he should be shaking, and he could come merely to sign a paper and leave.

Those who were late to school would be warned and reprimanded in an autocratic manner. Now I have become more empathetic with employees. I feel more with them and show my concern about their family matters and offer to help. All of this is due to my training.

I believe that trying to train principals with sheikhocratic views on leadership is challenging because we are trying to instil a new culture of participation in the leaders and the followers. We are trying to convince leaders to accept others' opinions.

And that should be done at a later stage. Jordan should be divided into regions and the distributed leadership training would begin by addressing those who are less impacted by sheikhocracy and less resistant to change.

Participants thought ERfKE leadership training had exposed principals to novel approaches to effective leadership practices. However, principals maintained that programs had to be consistent and implementation had to be sustained for these
programs to lead to change. MoE had to appeal to principals’ intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Dergham said:

One, two or even three training programs will not change principals’ convictions, but at least these training programs will modify them a little, which is better than nothing.

We have attended a number of training programs which have been useless because they expire once the funding is over and they all lead to the same result, which is why the beliefs and convictions are still the same. This is a society’s culture that cannot change with one or two training sessions.

Aqeel thought training could effect changes in principals’ leadership practices:

After the leadership program, schools’ practices started to change. Distributed leadership has become much more applicable and acceptable. However, it is still on a small scale.

9.7 Religious power and leadership

Data revealed competition between tribal and religious culture in Jordanian public schools. Principals pointed to Islam as the only factor with greater influence than tribal values on Jordanian culture. Dergham described an example of the social importance of Islam over tribalism. Dergham’s father was a sheikh. However, Dergham said his practices in his work as a principal were not sheikhocratic:

I believe my disposition, beliefs and practices are shaped by Islam. My religious education and conviction, which I feel honoured to belong to, constructed and modelled my leadership stance. And no doubt the way I was brought up had a big role.

My father, may God bless him and give him a long life, is a social sheikh who resolves families’ conflict. Sheikhocracy is part of who I am but I do not allow it to control my behaviour or my attitude towards my colleagues. My sheikhocratic values were refined and adapted by my religious belief.
In summary

This chapter examined the role of tribal culture on values that underpin the practices of principals and teachers in schools. These values explained the struggle between tribal culture and implementation of distributed leadership in Jordanian public schools. They highlighted the obstacles principals faced as they sought to implement distributed leadership. Data showed distributed leadership being mediated through historical and tribal cultural factors in Jordanian public schools. For example, principals called their schools their families or tribes and compared their role to that of the father or sheikh.

On the other hand, many principals demonstrated awareness of the role of culture on relationships among school stakeholders and resistance to change. Some had been able to change the culture in their school. Participants made clear that tribal practices are widespread in Jordanian schools. Principals knew their attempts to implement distributed leadership were counter-cultural. Data highlighted the practice of pseudo-consultation in tribal culture. This contrasted with democratic values that underpinned distributed leadership. These contradictions between MoE policies and practices in schools highlighted obstacles school principals faced as they implemented ERfKE.

Distributed leadership under ERfKE denotes more than distributing power. In Jordanian schools, it may require stakeholders to accept different roles than those they fill in the context of their tribe. Principals showed that school stakeholders’ resistance to distributed leadership stemmed from culture bound views on leadership. Data suggested that transformation in Jordanian schools would entail capacity building among school stakeholders. Data also demonstrated incoherence
between principals’ practices and their perceptions of their roles. This suggested many principals were struggling to reconcile distributed and tribal models of leadership. Chapters 10 and 11 examine the grounded theory that emerged from the findings of this research. Chapter 10 identifies the core theme that arose from the data examined in the preceding five chapters. The grounded theory explains the relationship between hegemony and transformation in Jordanian tribal culture. Chapter 11 elaborates on factors that sustain tribal values in Jordanian public schools. Chapter 11 concludes with messages and limitations of this research.
Chapter 10

Al faza’a leadership: A structuring and structured structure

Cultural reproduction in Jordanian public schools

Generating the grounded theory of this research

Data generated in this research have revealed the influence of Jordanian tribal culture on values and practices of stakeholders in Jordanian public schools. Principals referred to an ‘al faza’a leadership’ style. This leadership model epitomises culture bound leadership practices in Jordan. For this reason, al faza’a leadership is the core theme of the grounded theory of this thesis. This leadership stance is seen among principals in Jordanian public schools and in the notion of al faza’a in tribes. Theoretical integration of this research is illustrated in Figure 10-1. Chapter 10 examines the social meaning of al faza’a in Jordanian tribal culture. The chapter uses Bourdieu’s theory of practice to analyse findings from the data and generate the grounded theory that emerged from this research. The grounded theory led to novel understandings of al faza’a leadership. Next, the chapter examines al faza’a leadership and its implication for implementation of distributed leadership in Jordanian public schools. To distinguish between the doxa and habitus of al faza’a, al faza’a will be italicised when it refers to tribal doxa, and the term ‘al faza’a leadership’ will denote principals’ habitus at schools (Bourdieu, 1977). Chapter 11 analyses factors that sustain al faza’a leadership in Jordanian education. To conclude, it discusses the implications and limitation of this research.
Figure 10-1: Theoretical integration
10.1 All Jordanians belong to tribes

All Jordanians, including the royal family, are descended from a tribe (Bin Mohammad 1999, p. 9). Jordanian society is organised along tribal lines (Hodges 2015). As such, the most dominant theory of action in Jordan is the theory of the tribe. This dictates social expectations and approaches to childrearing and education (Antoun 2000; Bin Mohammad 1999; Hodges 2015; Scott-Jackson 2008). Parolin explains that:

Citizenship (muwaṭanah) in the Arab world is essentially defined by the individual’s membership in a kin group, in a religious community and in a nation-state... Membership is generally established by birth, thus involuntarily.

From the banū Fula’n (‘the sons of Tom’, i.e. the members of the kin group) down to the abna’ al-balad (‘the sons of the homeland’, i.e. the citizens of the nation-state), descent is the key device of membership’ (Parolin 2009, p. 115).

Membership of the tribe is not contingent merely on family descent. It requires unconditional allegiance to one’s tribe (Bin Mohammad 1999). To this end, members of the tribe survive collectively by ‘belonging to that tribe and behaving accordingly’ (ibid, p. 13).

10.2 Al faza’a

The roots of the Arabic word faza’a are the noun faza’ and the verb afza’a. These two words convey different but complementary meanings. For example, the noun faza’ means:

- ‘fear of something in the future; apprehension, awe; an object of fear or awe
• great and sudden fright, alarm, horror or panic

• fear and excitement caused by the expectation of danger’ (Almaany Dictionary 2017a).

However, by turning the noun into a verb by stressing the second letter (fazza’a), the verb comes to carry another meaning:

• ‘to give support or relief to

• to save or bring away somebody or something from danger, captivity, etc.

• to help someone to overcome trouble’ (ibid).

The verb afza’a’ is the second root of al faza’a. It has two distinct yet consonant meanings:

• ‘alarm; daunt; dismay; frighten; horrify; panic; scare; terrify; terrorise, or

• aid; help; relieve; succour’ (Almaany Dictionary 2017b).

The term al faza’a is the sum of the two meanings. It refers to providing help and support to others in times of adversity (Al Ta'ani 2013; Al Anzi 2017; Al Sarraf 2012). Therefore, one definition of al faza’a connotes socio-economic support, cooperation and shared liability. However, the term also is used to refer to an emotional, cunning, explosive and abrupt response to social situations that leads to impulsive short term action (ibid). The data have shown that at the organisational level, al faza’a leadership is not founded on consistent institutional processes that can support educators to change their practices in schools.
Al faza’a in its social meaning is entrenched in the tribal value of solidarity. Tribal solidarity signifies the collective survival of the tribe in the face of adversities. This requires consensus, association and harmonised action from tribe members (Bin Mohammad 1999). Tribal solidarity is rooted in the pre-Islamic era culture that is commonly referred to as ‘shame culture’. For this reason, solidarity may have different meanings in tribal and Islamic contexts. For example, tribal doctrine mandates instinctive and exclusive allegiance to one’s tribe. This controverts Islamic tenets of virtuous living (Bin Mohammad 1999).

Tribe members see themselves at the centre of a ‘concentric’ circular world. This is illustrated in Figure 10-2. In this way, tribal solidarity is self-serving (ibid, p. 21). Bin Mohammad captures tribe members’ world view: ‘Indeed, the most famous of all tribal adages says: “I against my brother; my brother and I against my cousin; my cousin and I against the outsider”’ (p. 22).
In the Arab world, blood relations sometimes are so strong as to threaten ‘the spirit of citizenship’ (Parolin 2009, p. 117). Parolin notes that tribal solidarity in Arab societies might be obscured at times. However, it persists across the modern Arab world (ibid). In tribal societies, one negative feature of *al faza’a* is the expectation of support from one’s tribe when engaging in any form of violent physical encounter with non-tribe members (Al Ta'ani 2013; Al Anzi 2017; Al Sarraf 2012). Tribe members take for granted the support of their tribe without questioning the appropriateness of their actions (ibid). Members assume the backing of their tribe members, even in dealing with problems of their own making. Bin Mohammad argues:
Every tribesman, Settled, Semi-Nomadic or Nomadic, has in the back of his mind of belonging to his tribe, of the history and particularity of his tribe, and of the tribe being the last thing, ‘if push comes to shove’, that will defend him.

This is evinced particularly in times of crisis and personal adversity (Bin Mohammad 1999, p. 18).

10.3 Cultural reproduction

Findings from the data highlighted the need to view leadership practices of principals in Jordanian public schools in the context of tribal culture. Examination of Jordanian cultural values highlighted generating mechanisms that sustained and nourished these practices in schools. For this reason, Bourdieu’s concept of habitus helps explain traditional leadership practices in Jordanian public schools. Habitus is formed by dispositions, practices, habits and interactions in the field. People get habitus from the time they start to grow. Culture is inculcated early in childhood through social values.

These are reflected in habitus, ‘the dialectic of the internalisation of externality and the externalisation of internality’ (Bourdieu 1977, p. 72). By clarifying how principals’ al faza’a leadership mimics tribal leadership practices, Bourdieu’s theory contributes to novel understandings of leadership in Jordanian public schools. Principals’ al faza’a leadership, as shown in transcripts of interviews with them, is an example of habitus. It stems from historical tribal practices and experiences of solidarity transferred to tribe members through their families and social interactions to build tribes’ capacity to face threats.

The characteristics of al faza’a leadership are determined by the established cultural doxa. This forms the structured structure of the tribe. Principals’ repeated
references to their ‘solidarity’ with other school staff against threats, such as an inspection by the Ministry or directorate, highlight the presence of these values in schools. Under these conditions, the social reproduction of al faza’a is sustained. This makes al faza’a leadership a structuring structure. Al faza’a leadership involves the interplay of all four forms of capital: symbolic, cultural, social and economic. The principals’ position grants them symbolic and social capital as sheikh-like figures. Solidarity among school staff that is sustained by cultural norms is another example of cultural and social capital. Finally, economic capital comes from perceptions among school staff that loyalty to their principal can be exchanged for job security. In this way, al faza’a is a protective and reactive practice that calls upon special skills and concerted mastery of the game.

Al faza’a leadership is a form of illusio (Bourdieu 1977, 1990). Al faza’a leadership is evidence that ‘actors are not rule followers or norm obeyers but strategic improvisers who respond dispositionally to the opportunities and constraints offered by various situations’ (Swartz 1997, p. 100). Strategies are skills. For this reason, actors need time and practice to master the rules and tempo of the game to increase their gain (Maton 2008; Swartz 1997). Bourdieu believes that practitioners’ strategies—that is, their skills as game players—are defined by their current capital and by the ‘evolution over time of volume and structure of [their] capital’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 99).

Strategies are the disjunction between what people should do and what they choose to do based on their interest. Actors make decisions, as they master the illusio, on whether to conform to the doxa of the field—‘the point of view of the dominant, which presents and imposes itself as a universal point of view’ (Bourdieu
1998, pp. 56-57)—or to exploit their strategies and play the game. Bourdieu proposes three steps to understand the dynamics in a field. These were used in this study to examine findings in the data to identify patterns of national and organisational cultural reciprocity:

1. ‘Analyse the position of the field vis-a-vis the field of power.

2. Map out the objective structures of relations between the positions occupied by the social agents or institutions who compete for the legitimate forms of specific authority of which this field is a site.

3. Analyse the habitus of the social agents, the different systems of dispositions they have acquired by internalising a determinate type of social and economic condition, and which find a definite trajectory within the field under consideration a more or less favourable opportunity to become actualised’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, pp. 104-105)

Chapter 10 will use the first and third steps. The second step will be employed in Chapter 11 to describe ‘the objective structures of relations between the positions occupied by the social agents’ in the Jordanian public education sector (ibid). In addition, principals identified other factors that the researcher considers meet the preconditions for the reproduction of doxa:

1. There is a teachers’ qualification crisis due to lack of proper pre-service and in-service training programs.

2. There is a principals’ qualification crisis due to MoE selection criteria for new principals.
3. Principals and teachers are underpaid. This distracts them from their work.

4. Implementation of new policies at the Ministry and directorate level is inconsistent and declines when a program’s funding finishes.

5. There is high job security in the public education sector. As such, underperformance is unlikely to lead to losing one’s job.

6. Procedures usually are not institutionalised. Implementation is contingent on attitudes among staff.

7. Relationships between the Ministry, directorates and schools are hierarchal. Decisions are made from the top down. Schools are field workers who implement orders.

10.3.1 Field of education vis-à-vis the field of the tribe

10.3.1.1 Tribal doxa

Interviews with principals highlighted the tribal doxa. This is ‘the collective belief’ (Bourdieu 1977, p. 167) that governs relations between tribe members and translation of these relations into conforming patterns of behaviour at the organisational level. Data revealed that tribal doxa is evident in the Ministry, directorate and schools. Peoples’ habitus reflects tribal values in their work practices. In Chapter Nine, Dergham explained that practices at schools were based on tribal views:

Our problem in the Arab world is that all the levels of leadership, whether political, education, social, etcetera, are saturated with the culture of the idolised individual leader, the one and only.
In the education sector in particular, most of our colleagues reflect this culture in the way they lead their schools and their families. They are the offspring of this culture and they feel they personify the sheikh. We need to change this culture and that is not easy (Interview Four).

Principal X said:

Tribal hierarchal values are revealed with the first step these directorate personnel make into our schools. The director walks into my school, then to my office and he sits on my chair. I have to position myself on the side. Authority, power and hierarchy are inherent, and the culture safeguards these values. This is a patriarchal society.

Data revealed that relations between the leader of the tribe and tribe members were top-down, with power vested in the leader. Burhan, born and raised in the desert, said:

In the desert and probably in Jordan, control and power are entrenched in the culture and tribal members grow with it. The tribal system plays a significant role in instilling the values of dictatorship, dominance and subordination in the members. People are brought up like that. If you do not control, you are frail and susceptible, and others will control you (Interview Three).

10.3.1.2 Illusio

Interviews with principals illustrated forms of illusio in the tribal doxa that are reflected in practices in schools. This highlighted illusio as a higher-level concept in the data. For example, Khadijah, Burhan, Hadya, Aqeel and Majid explained that seemingly submissive tribe members were in fact in search of power and financial gain (interviews Three and Six; focus groups One, Two, and Five). Tribe members have learned the rules of the social game, the illusio, since childhood (Bourdieu 1990b; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). Some tribe members use compliance as their strategy to gain power (ibid). Principals explained that sheikhs also had mastered the
game by feigning consultation with tribe members and then ignoring members’ advice. In Chapter Nine, Burhan said:

Even when it comes to the tribal control, each member will be waiting for the right moment to step in to overthrow the Sheikh and take over\textsuperscript{14}. The Sheikh of the tribe mostly runs the show exclusively.

He usually invites others to share their opinions, but they know that they don’t dare to disagree or suggest anything that might oppose the decisions of the Sheikh.

This is a well-known notion of pseudo-consultancy and when people articulate a disapproving thought, they are reprimanded and commanded to keep their views to themselves. All the followers will be there to support the Sheikh as they acknowledge his power and authority (Interview Three).

Ali (1989) argues that pseudo-consultancy is meant to ‘prepare subordinates to accept decisions already made by managers and to improve the individual manager’s image in a society where tribalistic values still have some important influence’ (p. 26). These values are inculcated in the habitus of tribe members (Bourdieu 1977). When tribe members assume leadership positions in organisations, they practice similar pseudo-consultancy. Burhan said:

When a tribe member becomes a principal, he perceives school as his father’s ranch which he’s inherited with all the employees perceived as workers to serve his interest.

\textsuperscript{14} The position of the sheikh signifies power and authority. This grants him many privileges including: glory, honor and superiority. These privileges are coveted by other tribes members especially those who perceive themselves to be more rightfully entitled to this position. These members cannot defy the sheikh explicitly because they fear his power. Therefore, they covertly seek opportunities to overthrow the Sheikh and take his place.
Anyone who would think of resisting his power will be severely punished in a way that can affect their jobs. That is not the case in Jordan only. That is the case in many other Arab countries… (Interview Three).

Data revealed kin solidarity as another tribal value that contributes to illusio. At the tribal level, kin solidarity provides protection and assures members’ survival in the face of adversity. The data showed that kin solidarity featured in the habitus of each tribe member (Bourdieu 1977; Bourdieu 1990b). Bourdieu (1977) believes that ‘the habitus is precisely this immanent law, les insita, laid down in each agent by the earliest upbringing’ (p. 81). Kin solidarity regulated relationships between principals and staff. Dergham said: ‘Some principals discriminate against their staff and colleague teachers based on their regions and their family’ (Interview Four). Hadya said:

The majority of principals are dictators and have no notion what distribution means. Unfortunately, they have their close circle of teachers who are his or her friends and board of trustees (Interview Six).

The data showed that in schools, principals felt they could not rely on sound practices and relevant qualifications for job security. Instead, they perceived their coterie as their best defence against the consequences of mismanagement at their school. Principals’ coterie is social capital that legitimises their authority by supporting the doxa of tribal solidarity in their organisation (Bourdieu 1977). The habitus of all school members contributes to misrecognition of these practices. This is because ‘social agents typically embrace their fate and “misrecognise” the arbitrary for the essential’ (Maton 2008, p. 59).
10.3.1.3 Habitus: Tribal culture vs Islamic culture

Most Jordanians are Muslims. Tribal and Islamic culture are interrelated and, to an extent, consonant in Jordan (Bin Mohammad 1999). In many cases, it is unclear whether Jordanian values stem from tribal culture and or from religion. Tribal values do not always comply with Islamic tenets. Indeed, some tribal values conflict with Islamic teachings and principles of leadership (Ali 1995; Bin Mohammad 1999). Nepotism, for example, is not consistent with fundamental Islamic tenets (Ali 1995). Tribal culture existed before Islam. Bin Mohammad (1999) claims that, ‘in its extreme form, [solidarity] always was—and still is, to this very day—inherently and implacably opposed to Islam’ (p. 21). In interviews, principals expressed tension between tribal and Islamic values. Dergham said:

These thoughts contradict our religious beliefs, our ethics, our virtues, and our Pan Arabism. No doubt this is toxic, and this is what their own culture has instilled in them (Interview Four).

Islamic and tribal culture both are deep in the habitus of Jordanian society (Barakat 1993; Bin Mohammad 1999; Rice 2003; Sabri 2012)—how Jordanians behave, interact and play the game. Data suggested that some participants had developed their ‘feel for the game’ (Bourdieu 1990b, p. 103) to master the illusio. For example, in Chapter Nine (focus group caption: Patriarchy in action), Ameen and Khadijah quoted verses from the holy Qur’an and the Prophet’s sayings that could be taken to support tribal values of patriarchy and male dominance. This illustrated some participants’ tendency to reference Islam and tribalism as a strategy to produce misrecognition to legitimise their power. However, it is beyond the scope of this research to examine the influence of Islam on leadership practices of principals in Jordanian public schools.
10.3.1.4 Principals’ capital

Bourdieu argues that practices in the field depend on factors other than the habitus—that is, practitioners’ capital and the field of practice (Bourdieu 1984). Practitioners bring their inherited capital in all forms to the field once they begin their profession as teachers. They continue to build more capital to gain advantages and advance their position. Relations in the field are antagonistic and the game is competitive. Players constantly are placed in positions of inequality (Bourdieu 1990b, 1992). Burhan argued that principals’ nepotism and favouritism toward some teachers marginalised other teachers to create politics of resistance and challenge in schools (Interview Three). Burhan said marginalised teachers pretended to perform tasks that were delegated to them. In practice, however, they delayed following orders that were imposed on them and felt unfairly treated (ibid).

Principals felt favouritism and nepotism also were common practice in MoE (for example, Hadya, Jamila, Dergham, Fatimah, Dhahab and Majid quoted in Chapter Six). This research suggests that abuse of social capital through nepotism and favouritism encourages workplace cultures that are based on lack of trust. This may lead teachers and principals to revert to al faza’a leadership practices rather than invest in their professional learning and other merit based ways to progress their career. Dergham argued that the influence of tribal values’ on principals’ practices depended on different variables that structured principals’ capital (Interview Four). He explained that many factors contributed to principals’ leadership style. These included their social and education background. Dergham argued that tribal practices could be transformed through education and training to expose principals to novel experiences and enable them to accumulate capital to support implementation of
changes in schools. However, he said some principals were sceptical of knowledge that contradicted their long-held values (ibid):

Unfortunately, some of our colleagues are so resistant and prefer to remain in a bottle. Their perception remains superficial and shallow... Sheikhocracy exists at varying levels and it is really harmful because it imprisons people and confines their thinking. Principals are supposed to free themselves from the pressures that affect their leadership and interfere with their work (ibid).

Principals’ responses revealed other patterns of abuse of social capital in the form of tribal power brought to bear on principals by the community, directorates and, at times, teachers. This made relations among school stakeholders even more antagonistic. The majority of principals agreed that tribalism in Jordanian society made them susceptible to coercion by school stakeholders (see Chapter Six: The game of power and connection). As illustrated below in Figure 3-3: Capsized power, some teachers in Jordanian schools command more power than principals. Parents also can use social connections to exert pressure on principals.

Figure 3-3: Capsized authority
Interviews with principals have shown that some teachers and parents exploit their social capital to gain advantages and preferential treatment. For example, in Chapter Six, Abd al-Aziz said:

We are obliged to enrol students in our schools even if their average does not give them the right to enrol in a certain stream. We receive a phone call from the directorate informing us that we have to enrol students and as a result we end up with 40 to 50 students in class whereas another nearby school would have 10 to 12 students in class.

These practices are an example of illusio. They reproduce the doxa of tribal solidarity at all levels in Jordanian public schools. Khadijah, Jamila and Dergham explained that these practices curtailed principals’ confidence in their ability to make sound decisions (focus groups One and Two; Interview Four). Principals noted that tribe members felt pressure to comply to social norms to avoid losing face (Siddiqa, Focus Group Two; Al Suwaidi 2008). In such situations, *al faza’a* tribal solidarity likely will prevail. Tribal solidarity reproduces the doxa of the field of power, the tribe in Jordanian public schools. Even so, some practices that are generated by tribal solidarity might contradict the doxa of the field of education advocated by ERfKE. This could impede school improvement.

### 10.3.2 Habitus of social agents: Al faza’a leadership

Differences between MoE policies and practices in schools emerged as another higher-level concept in the data. Most principals argued that schools pretended to implement ERfKE and write SIPs. In practice, schools continued their pre-reform practices (see, for example, Hadya, Salma, Burhan, Affifa, Dhahab quoted in Chapter Seven). They viewed principals with traditional views of leadership as resistant to change (ibid). Such principals have been in the field long enough to
master the illusion (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). Aqeel explained: ‘things do not have to be right, but they have to look right on paper and should be well-documented in the records’ (Interview 14). The data revealed unique leadership practices that several participants referred to as ‘al faza’a leadership’. Burhan explained that some schools delayed building SIPs that would enhance teaching and learning. However, when they were informed of visits from directorate or Ministry officials, an emergency mode of leadership emerged (Interview Three):

These principals copy other schools’ plans or write random plans without identifying their schools’ priorities to present camouflages SIPs, which resemble an SIP in form and content but is devoid of value (ibid).

Aqeel explained al faza’a leadership in such situations as:

Leadership in response to a predicament which is not preceded by strategic planning and usually holds short-term goals. An example of that can be a visit by the Minister which will trigger a whole-school collaboration to cover up for school practices and make things sound better than what they actually are.

The term is derived from the social al faza’a during big fights where relatives and connections defend their kin without considering the reasons for this fight or the consequences of their actions (Interview 14).

Khadijah viewed al faza’a leadership as widespread throughout government organisations in Jordan:

Al faza’a [leadership] prevails to bridge a gap and meet an immediate need regardless of what will follow. What matters is to put on a façade to cover up practices, during an inspection for example. The leader faces an emergency which forces him to make sudden decisions under the pressure of unanticipated dilemmas.

So, these principals have to practise leadership unexpectedly as a self-protection mechanism. Therefore, in preparation to face the emergency,
principals call upon collaborative efforts from all students to clean the school and pretend to be attending classes regularly. Teachers have to fix their records. School plans have to be prepared or even copied from other schools (Interview 13).

Dergham described practices in these schools:

Students are not attending schools and teachers are usually absent. There is not proper teaching and learning. The curricula are not covered. They have cleanliness issues; bathrooms are dirty; facilities are dirty. Many things are missing (Interview Four).

In some situations, al faza’a leadership practices constitute intentional unethical behaviour. Principals and teachers deliberately collaborate and manoeuvre to hide their underperformance.

As shown earlier, favouritism and nepotism from principals instigate resistance from marginalised teachers. These micro-politics inform the habitus of teachers (See, for example, Burhan quoted in Chapter Nine, and Hadya, Dergham, Fatima, and Aysha, quoted in Chapter Six). However, al faza’a leadership calls for immediate collaboration of all school actors. In this way, al faza’a leadership can lead teachers to suspend the doxa of negative micro-politics for the social doxa of solidarity. Tribal solidarity is captured in the dictum, ‘I against my brother; my brother and I against my cousin; my cousin and I against the outsider’ (Bin Mohammad 1999, p. 22). Principals and teachers have mastered the illusio. They trust that the social doxa of solidarity will prevail. This entices them to join the game of al faza’a leadership. In other words, their reciprocal interests transcend and suspends their internal conflicts.
10.4 Rethinking distributed leadership

Al faza’a leadership is an embodiment of the social *al faza’a* of the tribe. By definition, then, it incorporates cultural values that underpin this tribal habitus. Cultural values influence relationships between and practices of school practitioners (Hallinger & Leithwood 1996; Hofstede et al. 2010). This holds significant implications for implementation of ERfKE in Jordanian public schools. Education reform programs are based on values and beliefs that derive their standards. However, meanings are mediated through culture and history (Hofstede 1980, 2001; Hofstede et al. 2010). Thus, values that underpin imported reform programs are interpreted through the lens of host cultures (Nguyen et al. 2009; Sperandio et al. 2009). This research has shown that this mediation also can include moments of tension and contradiction between the values of imported programs and host cultures. There also may be periods when the game is changed to suit the conditions of the moment.

For this reason, the following section examines values that underpin ERfKE. This illustrates that interpretations and meanings of values that are assumed to be universal can be modified and altered as they are mediated through new cultural lens (Danielewicz-Betz 2013; Hallinger & Leithwood 1996; Nguyen et al. 2009; Sperandio et al. 2009). This discussion is significant, since there is still a lack of ‘culturally grounded knowledge base’ to guide implementation of education reforms in Arab countries and in Jordan in particular (Akkary & Rizk 2012, pp. 1-2).

10.4.1 Distributed leadership

ERfKE and SDDP programs are based on collaboration between school stakeholders to improve teaching and learning (CIDA & MoE 2010). As explained in Chapter
Two, work on an SIP requires principals to lead their team of teacher-leaders in four domains of teaching and learning, student environment, school community, and leadership and management, in which ‘all teachers are expected to be involved at various stages of the program’ (CIDA & MoE 2010, pp. 1–8). This is an example of ‘planful alignment’ (Leithwood et al. 2009). This form of distributed leadership involves coordinated planning and distribution of formal and informal leadership tasks. It provides a clear plan to involve teachers and principals in school leadership and decision making.

However, implementation of distributed leadership is problematic in Jordanian public schools. Chapter Two showed that, from the Western perspective that originated the concept, distributed leadership pertains to democratic collective processes of strategic planning and resolving problems. Teachers, teacher leaders and principals are entrusted, based on their competence and mastery, to share leadership responsibilities, lead as formal and informal leaders, receive acknowledgement for their work regardless of their titles, and make decisions and be held accountable for them (Harris 2005; Harris & Spillane 2008; Starr 2014). However, interpretation of distributed leadership is culture bound (Romanowski 2017; Sperandio et al. 2009). Interpretation of distributed leadership in the Jordanian public education sector is an example of this. In Cultural Discontinuity and Arab Management Thought, Ali (1995) depicts characteristics of sheikhocracy in Arab workplaces. These contrast with the above definition of distributed leadership. Ali explains that sheikhocracy includes:

Hierarchical authority, rules and regulations contingent on the personality and power of the individuals who make them… Chain of command, scalar
principles, and division of labor are also characteristics of the sheikhocracy (p. 16).

Leaders’ centralised power emerged in interviews with principals as a higher-level concept. Consequently, in hierarchal Jordanian culture, distributed leadership can be perceived as a form of authoritarian top-down task delegation (Danielewicz-Betz 2013; Miller & Sharda 2000). This explains misinterpretation of distributed leadership by many Jordanian principals. For example, as quoted in Chapter Five, Dhahab said: ‘The implementation of distributed leadership depends on the leader’s conviction and qualification’ (Focus Group Three). Azzam said:

I believe that a true leader is the one that would delegate tasks top-down to the teachers to perform in addition to the regular tasks they perform based on their job description. In my school, I have 15 to 20 delegated tasks, so I have 15 to 20 principals. But of course, this doesn’t grant them the authority of the principal (Focus Group Four).

Kamal said:

I have distributed leadership and that is why I can be here because I told my assistant what to do and he is now in charge until I am back. I am in fact texting him right now to tell him what to do next (Focus Group Four).

These examples illustrate that in an authoritarian tribal culture, distributed leadership might be interpreted as a form of giving instructions that is accepted by leaders and subordinates (Hofstede et al. 2010). In part, this interpretation can be attributed to large power distances in Arab cultures (ibid). Hofstede et al. explain that in this situation:

Superiors and subordinates consider each other as existentially unequal; the hierarchal system is based on this existential inequality. Organisations centralise power as much as possible in a few hands. Subordinates expect to be told what to do (p. 73).
These values influence both parties’ expectations. In this stratified context, superiors believe that tasks will not be executed unless they give instructions and sometimes orders (Danielewicz-Betz 2013). Subordinates will be reluctant to perform task unless they have been asked to (ibid). Interviews suggested that introduction of distributed leadership in Jordan’s hierarchal public education system gave rise to lip service as an example of illusio that perpetuated al faza’a leadership. As illustrated in the data chapters of this thesis, many principals (for example, Affifa, Aysha, Burhan, Aqeel, and Fatimah) saw examples of distributed leadership practised in schools through pseudo-consultation. In this setting, leaders presented their practices to appear distributive. For example, Affifa said:

There is another type of distributed leadership which is in fact pseudo sharing, and that can be found at the directorates and many schools where people perceive and describe their practices as shared where in fact they are not (Focus Group Five).

As quoted in Chapter Five, most principals viewed distributed leadership practices as non-existent between the Ministry, directorates and schools. Aqeel said: ‘decision making is still centralised when it comes to the relationship between the Ministry and the principals despite the call for decentralisation’ (Focus Group Two).

ERfKE calls for distribution of leadership roles that even extends to students and the school community. However, this does not consider that leadership in an authoritarian society signifies the power of dominant actors. In authoritarian societies, distributed leadership requires decisions and desire on the part of dominant actors to relinquish power to dominated actors. In this sense, implementation of distributed leadership in Jordanian public schools depends on principals’ attitudes. It can be sanctioned or undone by their authority (Hatcher 2005). Hatcher says:
Leadership ‘from below’ can only be translated from the sphere of ideas to that of action when it is sanctioned by the authority of the head teacher [principal] (or when the balance of micro-political relations of power is sufficiently favourable to allow that authority to be contested in practice) (p. 256).

However, power is a ‘relational process’ that should be analysed in the context of social structures (Navarro 2006, p. 12). In other words, leadership practices in Jordanian public schools should be analysed in relation to practices in the field of power in Jordanian society (Bourdieu 1992).

In Jordan, organisational leaders personify the Sheikh and reproduce the habitus of sheikhocracy. In this culture, ‘Leadership tends to be personal, loyalty is personal, and disloyalty or usurping of authority is taken very seriously’ (Arnold 2015, p. 279). Therefore, if subordinates are to assume leadership roles, this needs to be preceded by cultural change. This transformation in leaders’ perceptions of their roles is not evident in Jordanian public schools. Many participants attempted to depict their leadership practices as distributive. However, many examples in the data highlighted principals’ failure to meet expectations of distributed leadership under ERfKE (see Chapter Five: Leadership discourses). Indeed, participants’ perception of distributed leadership reflected tribal cultural values. Their culture bound interpretations were influenced by the prevalence of tribal doxa in schools. This also mediated their interpretation of values that underpin distributed leadership: democracy, equity, trust and risk taking.

10.4.2 Democratic decision making

Democracy is among the fundamental values that underpin distributed leadership (Harris 2003; Harris & Spillane 2008; Starr 2014). Therefore,
implementation of distributed leadership in Jordanian schools depends on shared democratic decision-making by principals and teachers. However, interpretation of democracy also is culture bound. In Jordanian public schools, this means novel meanings will be ascribed to democracy as it is mediated through local history and tribal culture. This is an obstacle to democracy in Jordan. For example, Strike et al. (1998) argue that democracy exists from the Western perspective if ‘[t]he interests of each individual are fairly considered’ and ‘[e]ach individual has a fair influence on the decision’ (p. 98). However, Jordanian society is highly stratified, with power sanctioned by the tribal doxa and legitimated by dominant actors’ practices (Bourdieu 1984, 1990b, 1992).

Therefore, tribal cultural contexts give rise to novel interpretations of democracy from the perspective of dominant and dominated actors. Democracy collides with practices that are subordinate to power (Swartz 1997). In the tribe, where pseudo-democracy prevails (Abdalla & Al Hamoud 2001; Ali 1989) through ‘directive-consultative decision style[s]’ (Al-Yahya 2008, p. 391), consultation is not meant to invite participation in decision making. Instead, its purpose is to calm followers and gain their support (Ali 1989).

As explained in Chapter Nine, data revealed that decisions in tribal settings are made exclusively by the Sheikh. Tribe members understand that decisions cannot be disputed. Khadijah said:

Many people do this. They ask others and they do not listen. There is a flaw in their thinking. They think they own the power and they won’t let go of it, but at the same time they have to pretend that they are consulting others. Unfortunately, most of our politics is like that, ‘consult them and then do it differently’.
Now what I believe is that we can find our way into this leader. As middle leaders, we have to possess the skills that would enable us to reach to this big leader and indirectly convince him or twist his decision to our favour (Focus Group One).

Khadijah described an example of pseudo-democracy, whereby ‘misrecognition of the reality of class relations is an integral part of the reality of those relations’ (Bourdieu 1990b, p. 136). In addition, her description invited subordinates in this setting to practise and master strategies of illusio to enable them to transcend tribal rules. Her interpretation of pseudo-democracy aligned with the idea of ‘compliance’ as a strategy to gain advantage, as identified by Burhan (Interview Three).

By acknowledging such practices, Khadijah reproduced the social interpretation of power, the essential condition for reproduction of the tribal doxa. Burhan, Fahed and Affifa referred to pseudo-democracy also. In these examples, leaders have ‘denied participation to people who are entitled to participate in the decision’ (Strike et al. 1998, p. 94). In addition, data revealed unintentional pseudo-democracy in Jordanian public schools. This shows that what some principals perceived as distributed leadership in fact could involve top-down delegation. For example, many principals described sheikhocracy as an inappropriate leadership style in schools. Instead, they invoked the idea of fatherhood. This is another culture bound concept that should be interpreted in its local and historical context.

Principals referred frequently to teachers, staff and students as their family or tribe, and to their role as the patriarch, father and care giver. Hofstede et al. (2010) maintain that in societies with large power distances, ‘the ideal boss in the subordinates’ eyes, the one they feel most comfortable with and whom they respect most, is a benevolent autocrat or “good father”’ (p. 73). The father is viewed in tribal
societies as more benign than the Sheikh. However, participants indicated repeatedly that the father in Jordanian society is the head of the family. Therefore, he retains the final say on decisions. Many participants (for example, Khadijah, Ameen, Fahed, Jamila and Siddiqa) identified the relationship between the father and his family as autocratic or pseudo-democratic.

Subordinates’ perception of leaders and distribution of power also is culture bound (Hofstede et al. 2010). For this reason, it is important to examine perceptions among teachers in Jordanian public schools of leaders’ democratic practices and tendency to distribute leadership. Muna (1980) argues that:

While subordinates in Arab countries expect to be consulted about decisions, they do not expect participation in the decision-making process, as subordinates might view joint decision-making as an indication of management weakness (cited in Mellahi 2000, pp. 299–300).

Many principals cautioned that democracy could be perceived as signifying frailty. As quoted in Chapter Five, Rafiq said: ‘There are limits to the teacher’s role in administration. Sometimes with democracy, teachers assume they can exceed these limits’ (Interview Five). Some principals argued that they could not be firm without being dictatorial (see for example Khadijah, Aysha, Siddiqa and Jamila in Chapter Five and Burhan, Rafiq and Hadya in Chapter Nine). They felt schools and directorates shared this view. Aqeel said:

I still remember when I first became a principal, the director told me that he would give me a precious gift, which was a piece of advice. He warned me never to empathise with the staff nor share any decision at work because my work will lose its value, and no one would respect me as a leader.

He thought he was doing me a favour by giving me proper pre-service training (Focus Group Two).
This example highlights MoE and directorate officials’ views on power and leadership. It represents an important narration around the habitus of practitioners in formal leadership positions. In addition, it illustrates that educators’ practices legitimise and sustain the doxa of autocracy. Aysha maintained that ‘principals are dictators and impose their decisions on the rest of the staff whom they perceive as their followers’. She considered it easy to identify the few schools that were implementing distributed leadership—these schools were identified by their leaders and even named after them (Interview One).

10.4.3 Trust

ERIC stipulates ‘trust, candour and the spirit of cooperation’ as fundamental for schools to develop and implement their SIP (CIDA & MoE 2010, p. 2). Without mutual trust among teachers and principals, cultural change will not take place in schools (Harris 2002). Harris, a leading theorist on distributed leadership, names trust as among the most important factors that support an environment conducive to distributed leadership:

- ‘Establishing trust among colleagues;
- Inviting them to participate,
- Affirming their ideas;
- Providing opportunities for innovation and risk-taking’ (p. 12).

However, once again culture bound interpretations of values that underpin reform programs contest the merit of Western reform programs that are argued to hold universal values (Hallinger & Leithwood 1996; Nguyen et al. 2009; Sperandio et al.)
2009). For example, Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) describe trust from a Western perspective as ‘one party’s willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the latter party is (a) benevolent, (b) reliable, (c) competent, (d) honest, and (e) open’ (p. 189) (cited in Hallam et al. 2009, p. 51). Leaders’ benevolence is based on being caring, sincere, discrete, fair, empathetic, equitable, altruistic, acting in the best interest of others, showing goodwill and concern, and not being opportunistic (ibid, p. 52).

The habitus of tribal solidarity and al faza’a leadership both are anchored in tribe members’ social tribal trust (Bin Mohammad 1999). However, this is based on assumptions that differ from assumptions about trust that underpin the above definition. Interviews with principals and the literature on tribal culture show that trust can mean different things in tribal cultures that prioritise values of nepotism, favouritism, fear, threat, solidarity and face-saving.

Interviews with principals revealed overt practices of nepotism and favouritism in Jordanian schools. This highlights lack of trust as a higher-level theme in the data (see Chapter Six: Lack of trust, and Chapter Nine: Principals’ coterie) and mistrust as one of the doxas in this field. For example, as quoted in Chapter Nine, Dergham said:

Some principals discriminate against their staff and colleague teachers based on their regions and their family. So, the new principal gets the list of names and makes decisions regarding the structures in his or her school based on that. His clique will control him; they will control his practices and his attitude. There are many examples of this at our schools (Interview Four).
Hadya said:

The majority of principals are dictators and have no notion what distribution means. Unfortunately, they have their close circle of teachers who are his or her friends and board of trustees. Other teachers try to reach to this group to have a connection that would let them reach the principals (Interview Six).

Trust is crucial for getting things done in tribal cultures. However, tribe members build trust based on kinship connections (Barakat 1993; Bin Mohammad 1999; Rice 2003). Therefore, teachers cannot trust managers or colleagues if they lack social capital in the form of connections through tribal descent.

Under such conditions, teachers’ and principals’ practices can run opposite values like those that underpin ERfKE as they augment the self-serving tribal habitus (Bin Mohammad 1999). This environment can demotivate educators to collaborate on cultural change. Arnold (2015) argues that, ‘In the Middle East where authority is indeed concentrated in the leader, few subordinate leaders are willing to push back on authority or do something they fear their boss might not approve (Arnold 2015, p. 279). Principals complained that centralised power reflected the Ministry’s mistrust and restricted their practices. For example, Aqeel explained that principals lack authority to make decisions in their own schools:

We try to distribute leadership, but the bureaucracy sometimes stifles creative ideas. We have to wait for a long time for an answer. We should be authorised at schools to make decisions if we are perceived as leaders.

However, there is no trust. The directorate and the Ministry do not believe in us and won’t give us the authority to make any decision in our schools. Creative ideas are squashed by bureaucracy (Focus Group Two).

MoE says ‘the improvement of schools as the incubators of creative Jordanian decision-makers is the core business of the Ministry of education’ (CIDA & MoE,
Schools are expected to ‘create productive, moral, motivated, qualified, creative-thinking, problem-solving graduates’ (CIDA & MoE 2010, p. 1–1). The Ministry’s vision, however, ignores the fact that an environment of fear and threat is not conducive to risk-taking. This is essential to creativity and decision-making (Akkary 2014; Akkary & Rizk 2012). Akkary (2014) explains that:

In Arab countries, initiating reform is viewed as the sole responsibility of national governments.

This has resulted in a learned passivity, where teachers see no reason to become proactive agents of change in their institutions; a serious problem that is aggravated by a belief among teachers that taking initiative and bringing new ideas is too risky as it might upset people in critical positions and trigger retaliations (p. 189).

Interviews with principals confirmed this argument (for example, Khadijah, Fatimah, Aqeel, Ameen, Siddiqa and Jamila). As quoted in Chapter Five, Jamila warned that fear and threat defined the relationship between schools and directorates:

The new leadership program which represents the Ministry’s policies asks the principal to embrace the notion of distributed leadership. However, the principals do not feel safe to practice it. All the formal correspondence with the directorate and the Ministry has one sentence at the end: ‘Subject to penalty and the principal is held entirely responsible’.

So even with distributed leadership, there isn’t distributed accountability. (Focus Group Two).

This highlights the paradox of distributed leadership in Jordanian public schools. Principals feel at risk because accountability for decisions is individual, rather than based on collective performance (Peck & Reitzug 2014; Starr 2014; Wallace 2001). This might make principals reluctant to distribute leadership to limit the chance of
underperformance or mistakes (Timperley 2005) for which they are held solely accountable. Fatimah said:

The Ministry’s policies frustrate us. The new training calls for distributed leadership. The principal should have a supportive development team. However, when the directorate accountability department follow up the implementation of the SIP, they question the principal not the team.

The principal is held accountable for all school’s work. How am I going to distribute leadership and authorise people, when accountability measures are hierarchal? Each member in school should be recognised for their achievement and accountable for their mistakes (Interview Two).

These concerns are augmented by the habitus of tribal culture. These are practices that are developed and seen as normal that perpetuate patriarchy and domination (Bourdieu 1977).

As illustrated in Hofstede’s et al. (2010) cultural dimensions, Arab countries have a ‘large power distance’ (p. 57). Children are raised in a culture of fear, respect and submissiveness in the family. At the work place, power is centralised with ‘tall hierarchies reporting to each other’ (ibid, p. 73). Culture that is fear-driven instils in people the value of ‘mistake-avoidance’ (Arnold 2015, p. 280). This appears in strict adherence to rules and regulations, waiting to be told what to do, or even at times doing nothing. Under these conditions, mistakes are tolerated since no one can be blamed for following orders and ‘if unsure, doing nothing can be the safest course’ (ibid, pp. 279–280).

Interviews highlighted trust as a contested idea among principals. This raises another concern about the contradictions and discontinuities between practices and assumptions in the field with relation to trust. On the one hand, participants perceived an absence of trust in and across the hierarchal structure of MoE. For
example, Hadya said: ‘I honestly and transparently feel that people at the Ministry do not trust people in the field’ (Interview Six). Jamila said:

The Canadian leadership program is applied in Canadian schools where each school has its own budget. The Ministry tries to apply the same system or program in the Jordanian schools, but they won’t be able to do so because this program is based on trust in the leader which is missing in our Ministry’s perception of school principals (Focus Group Two).

For this reason, principals desired authorisation and empowerment to make decision in their schools. However, interviews showed that many principals held on to power, perpetuating authoritarian and top-down structures in their relationships with teachers.

Principals’ responses also disclosed forms of illusio (Bourdieu 1977) as part of the traditional doxa of education. Many participants thought educators and bureaucrats at all levels of MoE employed strategies at all times to bend the rules and gain an advantage (Bourdieu 1990b). For example, as quoted in Chapter Eight, Hadya insisted that principals should have a more active role in choosing teachers and giving proper feedback about their performance during probation. However, she cautioned that some principals based their judgments on personal considerations (Interview Six). These forms of illusio can make senior managers reluctant to delegate authority to make decisions.

Another facet of Arab culture is the meaning of face. Face signifies esteem and honour (Al Suwaidi 2008). Any critical remark can be seen to bring shame and lead to loss of face. In this sense, face represents a form of capital and losing face means losing capital. This is relevant to trust in Jordanian public schools for several reasons. To begin with, work on SIPs ‘requires that everyone involved be willing to
participate in an honest evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses that exist in a particular learning situation, and to help determine what can be done to improve inputs and outcomes’ (CIDA & MoE 2010, pp. 1–5). The four school stakeholders—teachers, students, parents and principals—are expected to answer anonymous survey questions to evaluate school performance.

The first part of the teachers’ survey, for example, focuses on curriculum and instruction. It asks teachers to reflect on their understanding of the framework of the curriculum and their knowledge of learning outcomes. However, teachers cannot be expected to give honest feedback on areas that need improvement when mistrust prevails in the school culture and survey response hold implications for their annual performance appraisal or their sense of face. In addition, teachers might not trust that their answers to the survey will remain anonymous among school stakeholders if, for example, teacher-leaders are responsible for tabulating results from the surveys. The same is true of principals in their responses to their surveys. Principals might not trust that they can share their feedback on their performance with the directorates. Mutual trust between leaders and subordinates is needed if educators are to expose themselves to risk and loss of face in their workplace through honesty. This requires the traditional habitus of fear, threat and face saving to be disrupted, renegotiated and reframed.

Second, face saving is an obstacle to difficult conversations that are essential for school stakeholders to provide honest feedback. Many principals pointed to the need for difficult conversations between directorates and principals and between principals and teachers. Principals thought these conversations should address pressing issues around school improvement. In tribal cultures, however, face-saving
prevents managers from giving constructive feedback on performance because subordinates respond poorly to criticism. Arnold (2015) states:

In analysing PDI’s 360 data from the Middle East, we find people rate themselves and rate others about one-half a standard deviation higher than we see in our US and European data.

In Middle Eastern organisations performance records typically suggest that everybody is above average, and no one underperforms, making it difficult to use this performance data to make solid business decisions about personnel. (p. 278)

Principals view face saving as more prevalent in male principals’ schools. For example, as quoted in Chapter Eight, in one focus group meeting, principals said peer visits were not encouraged in schools because they were deemed ineffective. Principals maintained that teachers would not accept criticism from colleagues. As quoted in Chapter Five, Kamal said:

We cannot engage in difficult conversations in male principals’ schools because male teachers can’t draw a line between personal relationships and work. Female principals’ schools are more successful than male principals’ schools because male principals cannot draw the line between professional and personal relationships (Kamal, Focus Group Four).

For this reason, principals reverted to positive feedback or avoided performance discussions altogether if possible. A similar concern about face-saving was explicated in the principals’ focus group discussion quoted in Chapter Eight. This highlighted some principals’ hesitation to seek feedback from teachers on their performance:

Affifa: I have my performance appraised by teachers, parents and the supervisor...

Majid: But doesn’t this give them the power to criticise you?
Majid’s question shows that principals themselves might not accept engaging in brave conversations that criticise their practices.

The data have shown that procedures and processes in Jordanian public schools are based on personal relations. This can make it difficult for leaders and subordinates to draw the line between personal and professional practices. The data have also revealed that practices of nepotism and favouritism, threat, risk avoidance and face protection prevail in the Jordanian public schools. These practices nourish and sustain practitioners’ understandings of trust. In this sense, they reproduce the tribal cultural interpretation of trust. This contests the merit and assumptions of values introduced by ERfKE.

In summary

Chapter 10 has explained al faza’a leadership as the grounded theory that emerged from the analysis of the data for this research. By employing Bourdieu’s theory of practice, this chapter has examined traditional leadership practices in Jordanian public schools in the context of Jordanian tribal culture. This chapter also discussed culturally mediated meanings of values that underpin ERfKE—distributed leadership, democracy and trust. In this way, this chapter has illustrated that the values that underpin imported education reform programs do not hold universal meanings and that interpretation of values can be culturally bound. The next chapter uses Bourdieu’s second analysis step to ‘map out the objective structures of relations between the positions occupied by the social agents or institutions’ (Bourdieu &
Wacquant 1992, pp. 104-105). This will highlight conditions that sustain al faza’a leadership in Jordanian public schools.
Chapter 11

Conditions in the Jordanian public education sector

Chapter 11 examines principals’ views on conditions in the field of education in Jordan. These conditions are factors that sustain the status quo and drive the reproduction of the al faza’a leadership habitus in this field. As stated in Chapter One, this research draws on national studies and evaluative reports on ERfKE (Ababneh et al. 2014; Hua et al. 2014; NCHRD 2009; Shyne 2008; Tweissi et al. 2014; Sharif et al. 2008) as secondary data to verify participants claims.

11.1 Al faza’a leadership as habitus

Principals acknowledged positive aspects of social al faza’a in terms of group solidarity. However, principals who identified al faza’a leadership in schools perceived it as a social practice that shapes the habitus of school stakeholders—principals, teachers, parents and students. These principals agreed that features of al faza’a leadership that led teachers and principals to conceal underperformance were an accepted part of culture in Jordanian public schools.

This research raises the concern that these practices do not only represent an ‘intentional unethical act’ (Shalvi et al. 2015, p. 125) of cheating that is promoted and sanctioned by responsible adults. These practices also are evidence of moral institutional decline that degrades community trust in the public education system. Burhan, Aqeel, Kadijah, Ameen, and other principals described al faza’a leadership as prevalent in government institutions other than public schools. One possible
implication of this is that cheating has become normalised in the public sector culture in Jordan. Bourdieu (1977) observes that:

In a determinate social formation, the stabler the objective structures and the more fully they reproduce themselves in the agents’ dispositions, the greater the extent of the field of the doxa, of that which is taken for granted…

The established cosmological and political order is perceived not as arbitrary… but as a self-evident and natural order which goes without saying and therefore goes unquestioned (pp. 165–167).

Moreover, teachers and principals under al faza’a leadership in schools employ strategies to serve their interests. In this way, they are not ‘conscious or even unwitting conformists’ (Swartz 1997, p. 99). On the contrary, principals and teachers exhibit agency. They make decisions to suspend the doxa of the education field as well as the doxa of conflicts that are triggered by school micro-politics. They also mobilise strategies to intimidate outsiders. Data suggests that teachers and principals preceded their reflexive use of al faza’a leadership to mask their underperformance with another decision. Interviews provided examples of teachers, consciously or not, neglecting their instructional roles by overlooking students’ learning needs. Participants described principals shirking their responsibilities as leaders in instruction and transformation to focus on hiding underperformance from outsiders.

11.2 Factors that sustain al faza’a leadership in Jordanian public schools

Al faza’a as a form of group solidarity is an established tribal doxa (Alwerthan et al. 2017; Barakat 1993; Bin Mohammad 1999; Rice 2003). Nevertheless, findings from the data demonstrate that other factors than teachers’ and principals’ habitus contribute to al faza’a leadership. The persistence of these factors reproduces the doxa of the field and legitimises al faza’a leadership in public schools. The next
section highlights factors that emerged from the data analysis and examination of secondary data.

11.2.1 Lack of qualified leaders

Lack of qualified educators that lead school transformation in the Jordanian public education sector emerged as a major finding in the data and national reports (AHDR 2003; Akkary & Rizk 2012; Akkary & Rizk 2014; Faour 2012; MENA Development Report 2008). Most principals described large numbers of unqualified principals in Jordan’s public schools due to the Ministry’s ineffective recruitment criteria (see Chapter Eight: From teachers to principals). For example, Aysha explained that:

The process of principals’ appointment is not a successful one. You pass an exam that you are already familiar with its questions and you get a full score. The exam is not indicative.

Principals’ leadership qualifications must be put to the test. The selection committee must assess the principals’ ability to address various real issues that they might encounter as school leaders (Interview One).

Selection of public school principals in Jordan is based on Article 18 of The Education Act of 1994. Article 18 stipulates that ‘the principal of the school must have a minimum education qualification of one academic year beyond the first degree (BSc) and must be experienced in teaching in the Ministry of Education for a minimum of five years’ (MoE(a) 2017).

In addition, prospective principals must pass an exam and interview (Naour Directorate of Education 2014). Most principals interviewed for this research doubted that interviews were merit based. These participants perceived these interviews as ‘ineffective’ and lacking transparent and consistent criteria for selection. As quoted in Chapter Eight, Fatimah argued that:
Sometimes, principals are chosen because of their connection despite their horrible records. The criteria are there and clear, but they are not applied to all people. Even with the exams, I know many principals who were able to print out the exam’s questions and had the answers ready (Interview Two).

Some participants supported the new criteria MoE had introduced for prospective principals. For example, Burhan, a strong advocate of ERfKE, said:

In the past, principals used to be appointed based on traditional criteria in addition to favouritism and nepotism, which led to carelessness and neglect. But now the principals must go through an exam followed by an interview. Additionally, the applicants’ old records are checked and considered for their appointment (Interview Three).

However, later in the same interview, Burhan said, ‘We have many excellent strategies on paper that are not implemented’ (ibid). Similar inconsistencies in interviews with other principals likely were due to differences between MoE policies and practice.

More important, the role of personal connections in appointment of principals diminishes educators’ trust in MoE processes and in the practices of senior Ministry officials. Practices that breach MoE rules and regulations are examples of illusio used for personal advantage, such as recruiting unqualified principals. Chapter Three: Theoretical framework explained that the field of power, which supports the interests of dominant actors, has reciprocal influence on other fields through ‘ongoing co-constructing’ (Thomson 2008). Similar acts of illusio among senior Ministry officials become habitus second nature as the social game embodied (Bourdieu 1990, p. 63). This legitimises illusio—in this case, al faza’a leadership—by creating the necessary misrecognition.
Furthermore, retelling stories of these and other incidents of favouritism and nepotism provides ‘self-serving justification [that is] the process of providing reasons for questionable behaviours and making them appear less unethical’ (Shalvi et al. 2015, p. 125). Shalvi et al. explain: ‘Pre-violation justifications lessen the anticipated threat to one’s moral self by defining questionable behaviours as excusable’ (p. 126). When dominant actors such as senior MoE officials contravene ethical obligations, such as transparency and credibility, this legitimises al faza’a leadership to sustain forms of illusio at schools. At the same time, it enables other game players to feel moral as they engage in questionable behaviours.

Even with nominally transparent and fair processes for appointing principals, Aqeel, Jamila, Siddiqa, Majid and Dergham described selection criteria as inadequate. Participants felt the Ministry should require teachers to work as vice principals before becoming principals (Focus Group Two and Five; Interview Four). Aqeel explained that experience in vice principal roles gain helps prospective principals understand school administration (Focus Group Two).

In addition, most participants called for pre-service training for principals. They described newly appointed principals assuming their position without adequate knowledge of basic administrative rules and regulations and school management. Majid said, ‘the support which is currently provided to newly appointed principals is still random and not institutional’ (Focus Group Five). Jenan empathised with new principals:

New principals are not getting proper support. I have met some of them who told me that they had no idea what to do. They were terrified and shaking. They have so many questions. At least give them an orientation for one week
and then send them to the field. It is not fair. They call me and ask what to do because they are clueless. They need assistance (Focus Group Five).

Other participants said novice principals were not given the chance to visit schools, with pre-service training confined to theoretical material on building SIPs. One principal quoted in Chapter Eight provided an example of effective training for principals. However, the principal said that their initiative did not represent consistent nor institutionalised practice in the Ministry.

11.2.1.1 Augmented leadership crisis at male principals’ schools

The data showed that the qualification crisis in Jordanian public schools is further worse in schools with male principals and teachers. Secondary data substantiated this finding. Most principals described gaps between the qualifications and performance of female principals and teachers and their male counterparts. As quoted in Chapter Eight, Majid, Dergham, Hadya, Kamal, Azzam and Abd al-Aziz said the lack of qualified male principals and teachers impeded improvement and change in schools. For example, Majid said:

There is a big difference between the performance of male and female principals’ schools. The implementation of the new leadership program in the male principals’ schools is not more than 25 percent, if not less (Interview Five).

Hadya said, ‘Qualified male principals can be counted on the fingers’ (Interview Six). Participants said this qualification gap meant female principals’ schools outperformed male principals’ schools academically. Most participants described female teachers as more accountable, disciplined, and committed than their male counterparts. National studies that were used as secondary data in this research substantiated participants’ claims in this respect.
For example, in 2014 The Gender Gap in Student Achievement in Jordan\textsuperscript{15} indicated that ‘Jordanian students (both males and females) are performing below the average (centre-point) in national and international assessments’ (Ababneh et al. 2014, p. 7). However, the study showed that female students scored better than male students in national and international exams in all directorates. The study also found wider gaps between male and female students’ achievement in government than non-government schools (ibid). In addition, the study found that:

- ‘Students, teachers, and principals in female schools reported behaviours and attitudes more conducive to learning than their counterparts in male schools.

- Female teachers reported higher job satisfaction than male teachers, and female schools were reported to be safer than male schools.

- Female schools seemed to have more qualified teachers to teach subject-specific classes, better student-teacher relations, less teaching limitations due to disruptive students, and more supervision of homework.

- Male principals reported fewer resources in their schools than female principals. Female principals reported closer supervision of teachers, less teacher turnover, and higher parental participation’ (ibid, p. 6).

\textsuperscript{15} The study was carried out by ‘the research team working under the Monitoring and Evaluation Partnership (MEP) Program, which is supported by USAID in Jordan, and implemented by World Education, Inc. in the U.S. and the National Center for Human Resource Development in Jordan’ (p. 2)
Principals’ claims about gender were validated by an earlier national study by NCHRD. The study assessed effects of ERfKE I on schools from 2003 to 2008 through a ‘structured school walk through approach’ (Shyne, 2008). The findings of the study demonstrated that:

- ‘School staff and students in girls’ schools seemed generally more engaged, constructive and focused than male counterparts’ (p. 3)
- ‘Principals at girls’ schools seems to be more goal oriented than many, but by no means all of their male counterparts’ (p. 3)
- ‘Boys’ schools generally lag behind girls’ schools in both technological and pedagogical application. Teachers at these institutions appear unable or unwilling to relinquish control to their students’ (p. 56)

These studies demonstrate that the gap between performance and competence of female teachers and principals and their male counterparts in Jordanian schools dates back at least 15 years. It makes sense, then, that the leadership crisis in male principals’ schools in particular emerged as another higher-level concept in the data. Analysis of the data revealed socio-economic factors that perpetuated underperformance in male principals’ schools compared to female principals’. The doxa of Jordanian culture is another source of data to explain this trend in male principals’. This will be discussed in the next section.

11.2.1.2 Financial pressures

Data suggested that gender-based gaps in educators’ performance stemmed from financial pressures on male principals and teachers. As quoted in Chapter Eight, Dergham (Interview Four) described these pressures:
Financial incentives

Principals’ social environment, their families and how stable and comfortable their lives are all affect their practices at school. If they are financially comfortable, they will perform better because they will not be preoccupied with all their financial burdens, which they cannot meet, while they are in school. They are distracted.

What makes the difference between the levels of implementing at schools is the principals’ intrinsic motivation for work and change. This motivation does not only spring from their beliefs, but it is also impacted by their socio-economic circumstances. Living conditions are very hard and things are very expensive.

Now, despite the big title of the school principals, their salaries are not enough. There are no incentives. The principals and the teachers are distracted because of the economic pressure.

Many people think they will work according to the pay. They won’t work harder. Why do you find more productivity in the private sector? Because there is a decent return for your work. Unfortunately, there is barely any incentive for work at the Ministry.

There is neither financial nor moral support. Nowadays, with the difficult life we live, we need decent pay more than ever. How do they expect the people to work if they have debts and financial commitments they cannot cover?

They come to work preoccupied with the electricity and water bills they cannot afford to pay, with their children’s university fees which they cannot cover and much more.

Socio-economic pressures on male teachers and principals led to different social perceptions in Jordan of male and female teachers (Ababneh et al. 2014). Jordan is a traditional patriarchal society. Men are responsible for providing for their families financially. However, teachers’ incomes do not cover the average cost of living in
Jordan (Faour 2012). For this reason, Jordanian men fear that teaching will not allow them to earn enough to support their families. This leads some male students to avoid teaching unless they have few other career options. Bourdieu (1984) believes that such choices are:

…the natural refuge of all those who have not obtained from the education system the qualifications that would have enabled them to claim the established positions their original social position promised them (p. 357).

This affects the qualifications and competence of male principals and teachers in Jordanian public schools. As quoted in Chapter Eight, Dergham explained that:

It is all because of the wrong choice of leaders. However, it is not all the directorate’s fault. When they try to choose, they do not have alternatives. These are the kind of male teachers and principals that we are getting in the work market. There aren’t many qualified male principals.

Last week in our district a new principal was appointed. He was an assistant and now they brought him in to work as an acting principal. In this principal’s file, it was indicated that he was an incompetent teacher who could not control his class despite the many frequent visits by supervisors to assist him.

Now the directorate put him in charge of 400 students instead of 40. If you ask them why, they say, ‘give us an alternative’. (Interview Four).

Majid explained:

The directorate has no choice. They must be lenient with male principals’ schools because many men are escaping this career. They are abstaining from joining the education sector (Focus Group Five).

Principals argued that financial pressures distracted male teachers and principals from focusing on their career. As quoted in Chapter Eight, Burhan said:
Training is for everyone. Some principals are resistant and do not like to attend any of these training sessions. Even when training is compulsory, they write their names and do not attend.

Many of them have another job in the afternoon because their income is limited, and they won’t bother attend the training. There should also be some financial incentive for the employees to motivate them to enrol in these programs (Interview Three).

Fahed argued that:

Incentives are missing. What impact did this training have on our financial income? … If we manage to liberate teachers of these pressures, they will be liberated of all psychological pressure they are under. Why does the society look up to doctors, engineers or university teachers?

Because their income is much higher, so their lives are much easier. If teachers had better income, they will be respected by the society. I am asking for a ‘chalk bonus’ for all the teachers (Focus Group One).

*The Gender Gap in Student Achievement in Jordan* confirmed these findings. It showed that ‘currently, male teachers are forced to hold multiple jobs to fulfil their social and financial obligations and that affects the time they can spend on preparing lessons and meeting the academic needs of male students’ (Ababneh et al., 2014, p. 7).

11.2.1.3 Gender stereotyping

The data showed different social perceptions among Jordanians of male and female teachers due to gender stereotyping around roles in Jordanian society. For example, as quoted in Chapter Eight, Majid said social pressure might explain the gap between male and female teachers’ qualifications:

Girls who score 90 percent and above in high school exams are encouraged to become teachers whereas boys who score 75 percent and above will be
encouraged to join engineering, pharmacy or medicine. Boys who score less than 75 percent might consider teaching as their last option (Focus Group Five).

Teachers do not command high social status in Jordan (Dr Munther Al Masri, cited in Sharif 2008; Faour 2012; Shyne 2008). Jordanians’ perception of teachers influences high school graduates as their habitus adjusts their ambitions and choices to meet the expectations of their society. Bourdieu terms this phenomenon ‘the causality of the probable’ (Swartz 1997, p. 105). Bourdieu (1977) argues that habitus is instilled by ‘objective conditions’. For this reason:

The most improbable practices are excluded, either totally without examination, as unthinkable, or at the cost of the double negation which inclines agents to make a virtue of necessity, that is to refuse what is anyway refused and to love the inevitable (p. 77).

The habitus of male high school students arbitrates their future career choices. It is conditioned by their perception of Jordanian society’s expectations of them. Greater numbers of male students might become teachers if they were not preconditioned by ‘established positions which are situated in a hierarchy and impose the unequivocal image of an occupation defined in its present and future’ (Bourdieu 1984, p. 259) or if teachers ceased to hold their ‘second class status’ (Shyne 2008, p. 4).

Jordanians’ views on the role of women also exacerbate the gap between male and female teachers’ and principals’ qualifications (Abu-Tineh 2012; Masri 2009). Abu-Tineh and Al-Qassim (2011) argue that, although the 1990 Jordanian National Charter mandates rights for men and women’s access to education and employment:

Senior leadership positions in the Jordanian Ministry of Education are held predominantly by men. Women are teachers and/or school principals… this under-representation of women is primarily due to culturally derived
stereotypes that see women as teachers or school principals, but not as superintendents (cited in Abu-Tineh 2012, p. 83)

Therefore, in spite of teachers’ low social standing in Jordan, the profession is commended for Jordanian women (Abu-Tineh 2012; Masri 2009). Masri (2009) points to discrepancies between ‘quantitative’ and ‘qualitative’ dimensions of gender equality in Jordanian education. He asserts that progress in Jordanian women’s education have not led to comparable participation of women in ‘political, economic or social’ life (p. 138). This demonstrates that education to date has not transformed gender stereotypes in Jordan. Male high school graduates are discouraged from becoming teachers. However, their female counterparts are directed into teaching, which in Jordan is respected as a ‘female segregated job’ (Shteiwi & Al-Lawzi 2004, cited in Abu-Tineh 2012, p. 83; Ababneh et al. 2014; Abu-Tineh 2012; Masri 2009).

11.2.2 Sporadic management

Turning schools around is a ‘wicked problem’…. These are problems that defy routine solutions, mutate over time, and re-emerge after we think we have put them to rest (Leithwood et al. 2010, p. 5).

School transformation is complex. It entails creating new organisational cultures and inculcating new practices in educators’ daily routines. Often, policy makers view education reform programs as a solution to teaching and learning problems in schools. However, such problems can be rooted in established cultural practices (Akkary & Rizk 2012). Policies to introduce novel organisational cultures necessitate disruption of the practitioners’ habitus. This kind of disruption can challenge the autonomy of the habitus. In turn, this can delay organisational change (Maton 2008). Bourdieu attributes this to ‘the hysteresis effect’:
The hysteresis effect necessarily implied in the logic of the constitution of habitus, practices are always liable to incur negative sanctions when the environment with which they are actually confronted is too distant from that to which they are objectively fitted (Bourdieu 1977, p. 87).

Adaptation of the habitus to new rules that do not align with the social doxa—as with distributed leadership in Jordanian public schools—can be slow-moving, as ‘practices of social agents can be seen anachronistic, stubbornly resistant or ill-informed’ (Maton 2008, p. 59). Hysteresis thus accounts for principals’ and teachers’ resistance to distributed leadership as introduced by ERfKE. This is because distributed leadership contests the values of tribal culture embodied in their habitus. Principals’ responses illustrated their inability to match the intended pace of implementation of ERfKE in schools. Khadijah said:

> The training span was not convenient. Not enough time was given to the schools to assimilate the content of the training and implement it. We were asked to study it, comprehend it and implement it to come up with the SIP. It is like being asked to do three in one.

> But I feel I still haven’t digested the information and I don’t know whom to choose as the school’s development team. Unfortunately, many principals provided unrealistic plans (Focus Group One).

Ameen said:

> We are not underestimating the impact of the training program we had, and we feel we were introduced to great new experiences in leadership, but I insist that we suffer from being incapable of transforming theory into practice (Focus Group One).

Many participants argued that practices among senior Ministry officials had impeded implementation of ERfKE. Practices that were identified by participants (as quoted in chapters Six and Seven) were confirmed by the findings of the 2014 National
The next section discusses some of the findings of this report and of three national studies on ERfKE: *Formative Evaluation Study of Two School Initiatives* (2008), *The Gender Gap in Student Achievement in Jordan* (2008), and *School Walk-Through Study as Part of the Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy* (2014). The findings of these studies will be examined against the practices of the Ministry and directorates and the findings of this research. This will facilitate triangulation and validation of the data collected for this research.

11.2.2.1 Limited financial support

Findings in the *National Assessment of School and Directorate Development Program* report highlighted the following challenges to sustainable education reform in Jordan:

- Education legislation does not fit program culture. For example, policies and legislation prevent school principals from receiving or accepting financial support from the local community.
- Insufficient financial support
- High staff among public school principals and teachers
- Absence of an accountability system (pp. 8–9).

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16 This report is a product of collaboration between National Center for Human Resources Development (NCHRD) and World Education, Inc. (WEI) researchers under the Monitoring and Evaluation Partnership (MEP) project. MEP is a four-year (2010–2015) USAID-funded project implemented by World Education with the aim to strengthen the technical capacity of NCHRD and to provide financial support for a series of program quality evaluations for the Government of Jordan’s Education Reform for Knowledge Economy (ERfKE II) program (p 1).
These challenges were illustrated in chapters Six and Seven. In Chapter Six, most participants (for example, Khadijah, Jamila, Kamal, Azzam, Aqeel, and Siddiqa) complained that the role of the community is restricted by Ministry rules and regulations. Principals’ discussions about parents’ donation of fans, coolers and heaters highlighted complicated procedures that frustrate donors and limit the assistance schools can receive. The principals’ remarks were affirmed in the following recommendation of the National Assessment of School and Directorate Development Program report:

Legislation and/or policies that would allow councils to make financial contributions to school improvements, to take some of the burden off the Ministry. Policies should be accompanied by simplified procedures to allow for easy implementation (p. 10)

Principals identified lack of funding from the Ministry as a major challenge for schools’ improvement. Lack of funding restricts schools’ ability to implement the activities that were identified in the SIP. For example, in Chapter Six, Aqeel said:

The leadership program was accompanied with financial support to school. When it was handed over to the Ministry; this support stopped, and they expect the same kind of work to be done. This money they are saving will be reflected on the students’ academic performance.

Siddiqa, Ameen, Jamila, Khadijah and Azzam thought reform programs could not succeed in Jordan due to discrepancies between school infrastructure in Jordan and in Western countries that developed these programs (focus groups One, Two and Four). Principals said many students at Jordanian public schools lived under tough conditions and were poverty-stricken. These students were not receiving enough assistance due to lack of school funding. This impacted these students’ learning outcomes (ibid). In Leading School Turnaround, Leithwood et al. (2010) identify
‘poverty’ and ‘ill equipment’ as two of the ‘five powerful interlocking factors’ that lead to school failure (p. 27). They maintain that:

The ‘school improvement’ literature has often been criticised for ignoring the powerful socioeconomic influences that affect schools and for offering naïve and sometimes simplistic solutions to complex social problems (see Leithwood, Harris & Strauss 2010, p. 29, citing Thrupp 2001).

11.2.2.2 Transparency

The National Assessment of School and Directorate Development Program report confirmed the need for more funding for Jordanian public schools. In addition, the report showed that current Ministry funding procedures were inconsistent:

Grants varied widely (JD100–JD500) and it appears that the Ministry did not distribute them according to school size. Moreover, it was not clear why some schools had received no financial assistance whatsoever at the time of this questionnaire. Clearly, transparency in grants disbursement is needed (p. 6).

Inconsistent practices and lack of transparent communication between schools and the Ministry can be interpreted as examples of preferential treatment for some schools based on personal considerations. Consequently, they illustrate practices of nepotism and favouritism that are entrenched in values of tribal solidarity and add to mistrust among school stakeholders.

Hofstede et al. (2010) argue that ‘corporate cultures are moved not by what top managers say or write, but by who they are and what they do’ (p. 376). To this end, the researcher theorises that preferential treatment as part of group solidarity sanctions breaching the rules in the field of education. This indicates to principals, teachers, parents and students that acts of illusio are condoned by the actors tasked to eradicate nepotism and favouritism. At the organisational level, school
stakeholders observe and live by prejudices of *al faza’a* culture that are sanctioned by solidarity and reciprocal protection.

11.2.2.3 Inconsistent implementation procedures

As explained in Chapter 10, al faza’a leadership thrives in response to emergencies. This thesis argues that the persistence of al faza’a leadership in schools strongly implies that the Ministry’s and the directorates’ accountability measures are inconsistent. The researcher’s assertion was validated by the majority of principals’ complaints about the Ministry’s visits and follow up on the implantation of the SIP.

To illustrate, in Chapter Six, Jamila complained that, while implementing new programs, only ‘top performing schools are brought to light’ (Focus Group Two). Literature on school improvement shows that additional support should be directed to poorly performing schools (Leithwood et al. 2010). The *National Assessment of School and Directorate Development Program* report recommended that, ‘special attention should be given to schools that scored low in gender and school leadership and to schools that performed poorly in documentation compliance’ (p. 10). MoE neglect of underperforming schools leads to lack of opportunities for these schools to improve teaching and learning. The data also raised another concern regarding funding. The data indicated that directorates’ implementation of ERfKE is not driven by intrinsic motivation for change, but rather to obtain funding from MoE and international donors. The data illustrated that directorates reverted to their pre-ERfKE practices once program funding ended. Aqeel said: ‘Most of our training packages are theoretical and they vanish when there is no more funding. We abandon the whole program and move to a new one.’ Rafiq said:
This is not consistent. It was implemented when it was managed by the SDIP. That was until last December and it has been a whole semester now and nothing happened, no meetings, no follow up.

Dergham said:

We have attended a number of training programs which have been useless because they expire once the funding is over. Our problem is that we have an established culture that we work for the funding.

Hadya said: ‘We haven’t had any meetings this semester, which means that we’ve had one meeting this whole year. The initiative is dead.’ Inconsistent practices on the part of the directorates might induce illusion or game playing from some schools as they develop and implement their SIPs. This reproduces al faza’a leadership conditions. Therefore, only when MoE and directorate follow-up becomes procedural and consistent can al faza’a leadership practices be eliminated. This is because emergency is the core condition that sustains al faza’a leadership practices. Procedures among senior Ministry and directorate officials that are sporadic and responsive to international funding or complaints from parents sustain al faza’a leadership across the public education system in Jordan.

11.2.2.4 Dilemma of school decentralisation

The data revealed that, after developing an SIP, principals were told how to spend funding their school received. Principals said they were not given the chance to direct funding to needs identified in the SIP. This contradicts SDDP’s objective to:

empower schools to create and carry out their own plans based on the needs identified through self-review and dialogue (CIDA & MoE 2010, pp. 1–2).

The Ministry’s decision to monitor school funding is controversial. On the one hand, it can be argued that this demonstrated practices of power and control that are not
consistent with the values that underpin ERfKE. On the other hand, these decisions can be seen as condoned consequences of principals’ game playing. In Chapter Six, Salma explained that:

Implementation is superficial and thus the plans are not reliable. Principals seek the funding to spend it on things other than the ones identified in the SIP. This is creating a big gap (Interview 16).

These practices represent an act of illusio. They provoked mistrust on the side of the Ministry and drove stricter procedures and rules that constrained principals’ agency, including principals not taking part in game playing. For principals, this signified MoE reverting old practices at the conclusion of program funding. In this way, the old rules of the doxa of power and control are reproduced. Another challenge to school decentralisation is the lack of clear definition of the school’s new role. The National Assessment of School and Directorate Development Program report says:

At its core, the SDDP focuses on the idea of decentralising educational authority to the school level. According to this model, principals, teachers, communities, and students operate under a set of centrally determined policies but have the autonomy to make decisions regarding their own operations and school management (p. 12).

However, the terms ‘centrally determined policies’ and ‘autonomy’ remain enigmatic unless the line between the two is specified. For example, Principal X complained about the failure of her students’ school conference due to bureaucratic procedures.

Principal X explained that prominent guest speakers were to be invited to address the students. The principal sought permission to receive these guest speakers at the school. This could only be approved by a special committee in the Ministry. The principal sent the request a month prior to the conference. However, the Ministry
sent approval two weeks after the conference was held (Interview 12). Similar stories emerged in the data about initiatives for professional learning sessions that were hindered by directorates’ or Ministry procedures (e.g. Aqeel, Chapter Six; Fatimah, Chapter Eight). Such practices at the upper management scale typify ‘top-down politically-driven mandates and centralised decision making’ (Akkary & Rizk 2012, p. 1). These practices restrict principals’ and teachers’ agency and contradict Ministry calls for autonomy. Teachers and principals perceive their roles as passive and dependent. Change is viewed ‘as being the responsibility of policymakers; as something that “happens to them” rather than something that “they initiate’” (see Akkary 2014, p. 184, citing Bashshur 2012).

11.2.2.5 Pseudo-transformation

The data indicate that the Ministry’s views on the role of teachers, rather than ERfKE policies, continue to drive practices and decisions. For example, principals confirmed that the demands of teachers’ school leadership role had led to increased workloads for teachers and administrative staff, including librarians, lab assistants and vice-principals (see Chapter Seven: Teachers’ overload). Most principals complained that they were preoccupied with administrative tasks and oblivious to their roles as instructional leaders. Teachers, on the other hand, were juggling the demands of their teaching workload and the requirements of role under ERfKE. The literature around school reform in Jordan confirmed this problem (Akkary 2014; Akkary & Rizk 2012; Akkary & Rizk 2014; Faour 2012; Shyne 2008; Tweissi et al. 2014).

Akkary (2014) argues that ‘formal role expectations for teachers in Arab countries depict teacher work as time spent on instruction inside the classroom,
hence completely filling teachers’ contractual hours with instructional duties’ (p. 187). Teachers’ overload emerged as a higher order concept in the data. Principals described it as important obstacle to distributing leadership and facilitating teachers’ professional learning. Fahed said:

The only thing we care about in the classroom is the door, the window and the blackboard. What about the extracurricular activities? What about the load that would facilitate having subject coordinators or head teachers who would assist me in distributing leadership roles? (Focus Group One)

Fatemah said:

What matters is how much you’ve covered in the book. ERfKE is a skill-based program. These are two contradictory visions and missions. The Ministry works with the same traditional old mentality (Interview Two).

Aqeel said:

They try to save money by increasing the teaching load. How will I enable him [the teacher] as a leader if he doesn’t have the time to engage in any leadership activity?

The teacher is a robot, a machine that moves from one class to the other. It is like the tape recorder that plays the same song in the different classroom (Focus Group Two).

Data analysis revealed another example of the persistence of old practices. The majority of principals complained about the lack of differentiated measures to support schools’ unique needs. Issues around engaging the local community in developing SIPS are one example. Principals’ responses showed that schools outside Amman encountered different challenges than schools in Amman (for example, Khadijah, Rafiq, Aqeel, Jamia, Siddiqa, Burhan and Fatima) in communicating with the local community. For example, Khadijah said parents in her school’s community
were less likely to engage in school matters due to poor socio-economic conditions and low levels of education. This indicates that the SIP process in areas of low socio-economic status should be preceded by strategies to engage the community. Accountability measures for these schools’ performance should be different than schools in wealthier areas. In Chapter Seven Khadijah said:

It is not realistic to ask principals to give surveys to parents when parents themselves are not ready yet to engage in school development plans. Parents still needed to go through education programs to increase their awareness of their role in school improvement.

Mothers have no clue what a vision, a plan or development mean and of course fathers won’t be bothered communicate to a female principals’ school. They were not ready. Out of 600 students, I had 10 parents who agreed to fill the forms. How representative do you think that was of the local community?

We complained and ended up asking teachers to fill the parents’ forms since teachers were parent themselves. These policies cannot be implemented in our schools because they are not compatible with our society and culture (Focus Group One).

To this end, the researcher warns that if the same measures of school assessment, accountability and support continue to be applied to schools with different socio-economic statuses, scant progress will be made and more fabricated reports will be produced.

Another example was the different types of schools that were identified in the data. The previous sections illustrated that failing schools usually are avoided by directorate supervisors (Jamila, Focus Group Two). Nevertheless, the data have revealed another hidden type of schools which is not properly attended to, that is ‘trapped’ ones (Harris 2002, p. 14). ‘Trapped schools are those that undertake all the necessary maintenance activities but neglect development work’ (ibid, p. 16). Focus
group discussions revealed that some principals at schools that were seen to be making progress were in fact ‘trapped’ (for example, principals quoted in Chapter Eight and Chapter Five). Trapped schools provide another example of schools with unique needs that MoE must address with distinct policies and procedures.

To this end, the Ministry’s ‘one size fits all’ approach (Akkary 2014, p. 189) can be seen as a traditional approach to reform that can impede school improvement (Harris 2002; Leithwood et al. 2010). Leithwood et al. (2010) argue that policymakers should take into account the needs of different school contexts as they implement a ‘common core’ for change (p. 15). They warn that:

This lack of procedural know-how is albatross around the reformers’ necks, placing a low ceiling on what it is possible to accomplish and, at the same time, encouraging the replication of failed improvement approaches in different guises. (p. 14).

The data have revealed that transformation of senior Ministry officials’ practices is confined to mechanical procedures to document implementation of ERfKE. As yet, many Ministry and directorate practices reflect the old doxa of the field of education. This conflicts with the agenda of new doxa of education reform. Jordanian teachers and principals are products of their tribal culture. Thus, their habitus produces the social ‘interpersonal acumen’ (Rosnow et al. 1994, p. 93) to depict discontinuities and contradictions between what is theorised and what is practiced. Many educators in this study failed to build cultural capital to support change. Their practices might reproduce discontinuities among senior Ministry officials. This raises the risk of pseudo-transformation at all levels in the field.
11.2.2.6 Symbolic violence

Data analysis identified marginalisation of school practitioners and bureaucracy and accountability measures as higher-level concepts (see Chapter Six). These findings were substantiated by the National Assessment of School and Directorate Development Program report (Tweissi et al. 2014). These provide examples of ‘symbolic violence’, ‘the gentle, invisible form of violence, which is never recognised as such’ (Bourdieu 1977, p. 192). Bourdieu claims that symbolic violence establishes unrecognised ‘euphemised’ relations of dependence that anchor ‘disguised’ rules of domination (ibid).

This thesis argues that symbolic violence against educators in Jordan commenced with Regulation No. 1 of 1995 (see Chapter Three) that outlined the organisational structure of the Ministry. This structure does not include schools. Regulation No. 1 states that the MoE consists of the Central Level, the General Directorates of Education and the District Directorates. In defining the duties of each unit, it mandates that the central level:

…is responsible for designing education policies and plans, their implementation and follow up. It comprises the office of the Minister, the Secretary General, general directors and specialised directors (IBE 2011, p. 4).

Under Regulation No. 1:

The school is considered the central unit of education process and it is managed by the principal and assisted by adequate staff to provide the necessary services (ibid, p. 4).

Regulation No. 1 centralised policy and decision making in MoE and confined the role of schools to providing services. It legitimised power relations that authorised
senior Ministry officials and denied educators in schools. This made relations between schools and the Ministry into sanctioned hierarchies. Principals understood that the confines of their roles as ‘workers serving the system’ (see Akkary & Rizk 2012, p. 18, citing Bashshur 2005) stifled their power. Abdu al-Aziz likened school principals to ‘someone listening to the radio and reciting the news’ (Focus Group Four). Aysha said:

Principal are field employees and therefore, they are implementers of policies and orders. Even the directorate has no say in policies making. The Ministry has their own council (Interview One).

Many principals gave examples of feeling intimated and insecure. Fatima said:

I feel threatened in every step. I have to provide a document for every tiny decision I make to cover my back. A teacher can be late in the morning and she would explain that to me and I don’t have to make a big deal of it.

Nevertheless, if I have a visit by the supervisor, I will be questioned because I haven’t held an investigation (Interview Two).

Jamila said:

All the formal correspondence with the directorate and the Ministry has one sentence at the end: ‘Subject to penalty and the principal is held entirely responsible’ (Focus Group Two).

These incidents of disempowerment undermine principals’ and teachers’ capacity to act as agents for change. Educators in Jordanian schools avoid taking risks lest they upset Ministry or directorate officials (Akkary 2014). Bourdieu (1977) believes that people’s habitus reminds them:

…of this distance and of the conduct required to ‘keep one’s distance’ or to manipulate it strategically, whether symbolically or actually, to reduce it (easier for the dominant than for the dominated), increase it, or simply
maintain it (not by letting oneself go’, ‘not becoming familiar’, in short, ‘standing on one’s dignity’ or on the other hand refusing to ‘take liberties’ and ‘put oneself forward’, in short ‘knowing one’s place’ and staying there) (p. 82).

In light of current social, cultural and professional defining of educators’ roles in Jordan, scope for principals and teachers to lead change in schools is inhibited by dominant actors’ power and dominated actors’ compliance. In traditional school systems, principals assume the role of the dominant actor to inflict symbolic violence on teachers and staff at the micro level. These practices can take the form of marginalising teachers, preferential treatment for the principals’ coteries, and superficial implementation of new policies. These all are features of al faza’a leadership.

**In summary**

Chapter 11 has examined two conditions that were identified in the data and substantiated by secondary data: lack of qualifications among school leaders and sporadic management. This thesis argues that these two conditions sanction the traditional doxa in the field of education. To begin with, data analysis has shown the lack of qualified principals and teachers in Jordanian public schools. This is due to ineffective recruitment criteria, nepotism and favouritism, and lack of proper pre-service training. The data also revealed lack of qualifications among male principals and teachers in particular, due to socio-economic factors and gender stereotyping of the teaching profession.

The second factor related to practices among upper management in MoE. Interviews with principals have shown that limited financial support and lack of transparency around distribution of funding to schools impeded implementation of
SIPs and intensified educators’ doxa of mistrust. The data have also revealed the paradox of centralised policy measures and procedures and the call for school autonomy. The persistence of traditional perceptions of teachers’ roles and ‘one size fits all’ procedures for implementation of ERfKE provide strong indicators of pseudo-transformation in the Ministry. Last, the researcher has argued that Ministry officials’ practices of marginalisation, bureaucracy, and accountability, which emerged as higher-level concepts in the data, are examples of symbolic violence inflicted on school practitioners. These practices are not conducive to improving pedagogy and learning in schools. Instead, they reproduce the habitus of al faza’a leadership and sustain pseudo-transformation at all levels in the Jordanian public education sector.
Messages

The findings of this research have contested the applicability of distributed leadership in Jordanian public schools due to the established tribal doxa in Jordanian society. This research has shown that the tribal doxa holds entrenched values that generate educators’ practices in schools. Inculcated in the practitioners’ habitus, these values permeate the public education system to reproduce al faza’a leadership practices. This research also has revealed other factors in the Jordanian public education sector that sustain the habitus as a structured structure and inhibit its faculty as a structuring structure. Therefore, this research has built an argument that the Ministry of Education has an ethical obligation to reassess assumptions and practices that contradict distributed leadership as advocated by ERfKE. The subsequent section discusses messages from this research. These messages are positioned in Bourdieu’s three essential analysis steps that were introduced in Chapter 10:

1. ‘Analyse the position of the field vis-a-vis the field of power.

2. Map out the objective structures of relations between the positions occupied by the social agents or institutions who compete for the legitimate forms of specific authority of which this field is a site.

3. Analyse the habitus of the social agents, the different systems of dispositions they have acquired by internalising a determinate type of social and economic condition, and which find a definite trajectory in the field under consideration a more or less favourable opportunity to become actualised’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, pp. 104-105).
The position of the field vis-a-vis the field of power

This research has revealed that there is lack of awareness of the influence of tribal cultural doxa on dispositions, practices and habits in the field of education. Therefore, this thesis recommends that the introduction of reform programs be aligned with training programs to support understanding of hidden mechanisms—that is, values—that drive educators’ practices in schools. Education reform requires education for practitioners. Collaboration on transformation in schools must be preceded by strategies to support understanding of culture and its influence on school stakeholders’ values. Education for practitioners must be used to effect deep change to support better understanding of things that are taken for granted—values, systems, and structures.

To this end, the researcher argues that a critical realist ontological position can enhance future research examining the social phenomena in the field of education the way it has enhanced the overall findings of this research. Critical realist reasoning enabled this research to move beyond the confines of empirical data to uncover the ‘historic’ and ‘current causal powers’ (Edwards et al. 2014, p.88) that shape the context of study and leadership practices in the Jordanian schools, directorates and MoE. Hence critical realism has extended the researcher’s understanding of the context of the field of study. The researcher argues that until recently, the majority of the research conducted in the Jordanian field of education has focused on providing a description and probably some theoretical explanation of empirical findings. Nevertheless, while empirical ontologies can reveal empirical and at times actual realities, critical realism examines what drives the empirical and actual in a stratified reality (ibid). Therefore, the researcher believes, critical realism
should shape future research. Adopting a retroductive method of reasoning grants the examination of reform programs and the development of training packages a critical and creative perspective on the one side. It can also provide more accurate and practical sociological explanations of the empirical findings on the other side (ibid).

Contemporaneously with critical realism, this research has employed Bourdieu’s (1977) critical theory of practice to explain how structure and agency are interrelated and how they drive school stakeholders’ practices in the field of education. Thus, it has highlighted the effect of contradictions and discontinuities in stakeholders’ practices on education reform. Practitioners usually do not consider factors that generate their practices. This can obscure the need to change their practices. Even practitioners with an understanding of factors that drive their behaviour might struggle to do things different. The researcher argues that, by adding the new lens of critical theories for transformation to professional development programs, practitioners can learn to reflect on their practices. This might equip practitioners to change their behaviour. This highlights the need for education policy makers to plan to disrupt the habitus. This is where critical theorists’ work is relevant.

ERfKE can be perceived as an example of disrupting the habitus. However, it is not clear whether ERfKE can sustain this disruption. ERfKE did not produce its intended transformation since it failed to suspend the illusio of al faza’a leadership. As explained in Chapters 10 and 11, the introduction of ERfKE has yielded two contradictory doxas in the field: the doxa of reform and the doxa of tribal culture. The tribal doxa dates back several hundred years. For this reason, it is difficult to
disrupt with an emerging doxa of an imported reform program. This has led to conflict between cultural capitals. This perpetuates al faza’a leadership and contributes to further hysteresis in practitioners’ transformation.

Therefore, a critical lens should not be restricted to the examination of the causal powers or generating mechanisms within the Jordanian tribal culture. It should also extend to assess the merits of imported reform programs. Examination of the reform programs, distributed leadership in this case, should assume critical and socially critical positions and not be delimited by functional descriptive and normative ones. In fact, functional distributed leadership could be part of the problem since some of the assumptions underlying distributed leadership (for example democracy and power distribution) proved not to be as valid as many theorists claim they are. Another posit of caution regarding functional positions is that distributed leadership as a recent leadership notion has gained prominence and was made popular in the west without concomitant empirical evidence to validate its utility. This should cast legitimate doubts not only around its applicability, but also about the advantages it hold to the leadership system in Jordanian public schools. Assuming a critical position can redirect emphasis from how and why distributed leadership (functional descriptive and normative positions) should be enacted into understanding the context in which distributed is to be practiced, i.e. Jordanian public schools. This also means that compatible critical lenses are simultaneously used to analyse the Jordanian culture and imported reform program. While this critical position can be applied to disclose the power structures-agency interplay within the MoE hierarchies, a socially critical position remains concerned with ‘emancipation’ (Gunter, Hall & Bragg 2013, and p.568). In this sense, education for educators that utilises critical and socially critical approaches to examine leadership
practices can delineate cultural transformation. Alternatively, traditional descriptive approaches will perpetuate cultural reproduction.

Finally, the preceding advocated education for transformation should not be confined to school practitioners. It should be directed to practitioners across the field of education, including Ministry officials. Redistribution of power entails redefinition of roles. This should be preceded by decisions to cede some authority to others. This is challenging amid the tribal doxa of sheikhocracy. The introduction of ERfKE has created novel rights and responsibilities. Dominant and dominated social actors must be re-educated if they are to embrace their new roles. Change in schools requires opportunities for school stakeholders to remake the culture in Jordan’s public education sector. Navarro (2006) argues:

If a research program is made possible in a given social order (a nation or specific social groups) so that the forms and structures generated by habitus are researched, forms of capital and their distribution are demonstrated and the constitution of fields are presented, then to understand society beyond superficial claims becomes a real possibility (p. 19).

Objective structures of relations between the positions

To achieve sustainable transformation in schools, the Jordanian Ministry of Education must build feasible plans to detach goals from people. This research has shown that educators’ practices remain contingent upon their convictions. Goals, programs and implementation of policies that thrive under one supervisor might be undone at the end of that supervisor’s tenure. This highlights that purposeful succession planning (Hargreaves & Fink 2006) must be integrated in reform plans and effected at the early stages of implementation. This means that practices must be benchmarked against standards rather than personal tenets. It necessitates that
policymaking be accompanied by capacity building to give all practitioners the ability to assume new roles. Practices can then become consistent, systematic and institutionalised, and hence, sustainable.

To achieve sustainable development, policy makers should accompany implementation of reform programs by efforts to build authentic national models for change. Sustainable reform needs to stem from local culture. Policy makers should move their focus from identifying suitable leadership models that are ‘developed elsewhere’ to ‘starting to build new models from the unique vantage point of [the Jordanian] culture’ (Dickson et al. 2003, p. 734). This research uncovered leadership potential among most participants, even those leading ‘trapped’ schools (Harris 2002). Salma, Malak, Affifa, Hadya, Aqeel and Majid explained that they transformed practices and improved learning outcomes in failing schools.

These and other success stories need to be brought to light to capture the common core of best practices in Jordanian public schools. Participants were adamant that imported reform programs could not succeed because they do not reflect the Jordanian identity. For this reason, principals were sceptical of ERfKE. Promotion of indigenous success stories will provide educators with authentic and relatable examples of transformation that demonstrate the feasibility of change. Moreover, lack of trust at all levels emerged as a predominant doxa in the field and obstacle to reform. In a culture where mistrust pervades, no one is prepared to disrupt the habitus because disruption is risky business. Therefore, the Ministry must plan to build stakeholders’ trust in the practices of its upper management. To this end, practices and decisions of the Ministry have to be made transparent. Many examples
in the data highlighted Ministry decisions that left principals in the dark. School practitioners need to understand the reasons for Ministry policies and practices.

Transparency will confine narratives around cheating and preferential treatment that sustain forms of illusion in the field. Practices need to remain consistent to build a culture for transformation. For example, the data have shown that meetings of groups of schools, which are at the core of ERfKE, stopped once DSIP ceased its management of the program. These practices sustain the doxa of mistrust and drive false transformation in the field. School practitioners need to be convinced in the merits of reform programs if they are to support their implementation. Reform programs should not be shared in circulated memos. Implementation of reform programs must be preceded by initiation programs that introduce the Ministry’s plans and policies and invite practitioners to help develop the vision and mission to achieve them.

In addition, practitioners need to trust in the credibility of their colleagues. This calls for rigorous and transparent measures to eradicate practices of nepotism, favouritism and ‘Wasta’ in order to sanction equity and fairness. Hofstede et al. (2010) confirm that ‘training programs without the support of hard changes usually remain at the level of lip service and are a waste of money’ (p. 376). Lack of merit-based processes in Jordan’s public education system will continue to hinder implementation of reform. As an example, principals’ repeated references to training as a ‘pie’ reflected their lack of trust in the reasons for education reform and their view that policy makers were motivated by funding from foreign donors.
The habitus of social agents

This research has identified a critical lack of qualified educators in Jordanian public schools. The data showed that newly appointed teachers and principals were poorly trained and prepared. Therefore, this research recommends that MoE revisit the criteria for teachers’ and principals’ recruitment. Moreover, novice teachers and principals require proper pre-service and in-service training, both theoretical and practical. This will help control the epidemic of learning on the job through trial and error. In addition, the Ministry should redefine the tasks of teachers and principals to enable them to work collaboratively and build the capacity to assume their new roles as leaders and educators. Harris (2011) argues that: ‘However well-intentioned or well-funded the approach to system reform may be; it will be destined to fail without serious and sustained attention to building the capacity for change’ (p. 626).

Capacity building equips practitioners to understand their role. This can empower them to replace their traditional practices with new ones that are conducive to school improvement.

Moreover, teachers and principals still lack cultural capital, in the form of voice in this case, that is necessary for them to form the intention to change their practices. This thesis has shown that principals view themselves as burdened with responsibilities while they receive limited recognition for their skills and practices. This highlights the need for the Ministry to identify and suspend marginalisation of school practitioners. The Ministry should devise procedures to make school practitioners more than field implementers and enable them to contribute to the process of decision making so that they can act purposefully.
In addition, the Ministry must address the serious issue of gender stereotyping through better pay for teachers. The data showed consistent declines in performance of schools led by male principals due to lack of qualified male educators and due to male teachers and principals being preoccupied with earning another source of income. The Ministry could create financial incentives for teachers and principals to focus on their professional learning and improve the quality of their work. Moreover, as suggested by one of the participants, Jordanian universities should guarantee the quality of their teaching graduates. The practice of transferring underperforming teachers to other schools will continue to affect teaching and learning. Support for novice teachers demands measures that go beyond ‘who ever enters Abu Sufyan’s house is safe من دخل دار أبو سفيان فهو آمن’. Measures should be devised to create a ‘sophisticated balance of pressure and support’ (Leithwood et al. 2010, p. 6) around educators’ practices and performance.

Last, the Ministry should remember that rushed reform efforts run the risk of yielding false transformation (Nguyen et al. 2009; Sperandio et al. 2009). The findings have revealed that a ‘hysteresis effect’ (Bourdieu 1977) might occur when the practitioners’ habitus has to embrace new values that challenge their current ones. Therefore, the Ministry should allow more time for change to happen. Principals complained that they were pressured to assimilate training material and implement policies before they could truly understand them. This led to the practice of forging SIPs as a form of al faza’a leadership illusio.

**In summary**

This research has shown that tribal cultural values shape practitioners’ habitus in the Jordanian public schools. Practitioners’ habitus influences their practices and
generates the culture bound al faza’a leadership style. Tribal doxa and other factors in the field sanction the reproduction of al faza’a leadership. This research also has illustrated contradictions and discontinuities between Jordanian cultural values that reproduce al faza’a leadership and ERfKE. This in turn has revealed many challenges to the implementation of distributed leadership in the Jordanian public schools. In this sense, the messages of this research point to opportunities for further research, both qualitative and qualitative, on examining the influence of Jordanian culture and disrupting the habitus to transform practices in the field of education in Jordan.

Limitations

One limitation of this research is that it examined ERfKE from the perspective of principals in the public education sector. Further qualitative and quantitative studies are needed to examine this topic from the standpoint of other education stakeholders to support the argument of this thesis. In addition, this research was carried out in Jordanian public schools in two governorates in Jordan. Similar research in other governorates in Jordan could reveal challenges to education reform other than the ones identified in this research. For example, socio-economic conditions and cultural practices in the Badia desert region of Jordan are different than in urban and metropolitan areas. Future research with schools in the Badia is likely to generate novel findings that can extend the scope of the findings of this research.

In addition, the Jordanian government piloted ERfKE in Jordanian public schools. In 2015, MoE adopted ERfKE as its policy to guide administration and schooling across the education sector in Jordan. It is likely that this will lead to implementation of ERfKE and distributed leadership in Jordan’s private education
sector. This research focused on practices of stakeholders in Jordan’s public education sector. For this reason, its findings might not describe practices among stakeholders in Jordan’s private education sector. Future research with participant samples from the private education sector in Jordan might identify other practices that influence pedagogy and learning. Such research might highlight other topics for research on education in Jordan.

In conclusion

Building a new school culture is an ongoing process that requires collaboration from all stakeholders in the education sector. ERfKE has not led to implementation of distributed leadership in all Jordanian public schools. However, some principals have shown potential to act as agents for change. Many principals have changed some of their leadership practices. Even in the system that is so hard to break through, there were some nuances in the data that gave a course of hope. Change was still there even if it was only a desire to do things differently.

For this reason, this thesis argues that the Ministry should invest in the local human capital in order to develop a more culturally relevant reform design. With previously tried reform models, Sheikhocracy and Tribalism proved to have the ascendance. Therefore, other future modes of reform need to be culturally savvy.

Even if the Ministry decides to maintain attempts to distribute leadership, the Ministry should revisit functional distributed leadership as introduced by ERfKE and the assumptions it holds. The functional domain showed that it could be part of the problem driving poor implementation. Interrogating the Paradox rejects this functional positioning and advocates for a socially critical positioning due to the
emancipatory tenor it holds. *Interrogating the Paradox* has shown that distributed leadership research suffers from a lack of critique with power relations, micro politics, culture and policy context, and whether it can ever be succinctly defined remains in question despite calls for this to be addressed. In this sense, *Interrogating the Paradox* has built an argument against transferring distributed leadership as a functional tool of reform across cultural contexts. Despite the promises provided by some writers of distributed leadership, a critical wariness is required.

The researcher hopes that the findings of this thesis will develop policy makers’ awareness of the power that the Jordanian culture retain over its members, which is consequently driving and sanctioning distinct perceptions and practices of leadership among them. It is aspired that this cultural awareness will enable the MoE to develop more critical approaches to determine the applicability and relevance of imported educational reform programs. In addition, the researcher hopes that the findings will open doors for further studies on culture and education in Jordan to enhance the capacity of education for transformation.
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Appendices
Appendix 1: List of interview and focus group questions

1. How do Jordanian principals describe distributed leadership in schools?
   - How would you define leadership?
   - How do you describe your own leadership style?
   - What does distributed leadership mean to you?
   - To what extent do you think distributed leadership is reflected in your leadership practices?
   - Do teachers take part in leadership practices in your school? How are they involved?
   - How do you foster distributed leadership in your school?
   - To what extent do you think distributed leadership is reflected in the practices of the Ministry of Education?
   - Do principals have a role in the development of education policies? Are they consulted? Is their opinion sought?

2. How does distributed leadership compare to traditional leadership practices in Jordanian schools?
   - How do you describe traditional leadership practices in Jordanian schools?
   - Having received ERfKE leadership training program, how do principals in the Jordanian public schools perceive the notion of distributed leadership?
How do principals implement distributed leadership in the Jordanian public schools?

How do teachers respond to distributed leadership implementation?

To what extent do you think that distributed leadership is enacted in the Jordanian schools?

3. How does Jordanian culture mediate and shape educators’ practices at the organisational level (that is, in schools)?

Do the Jordanian cultural values influence school culture and the practices of school practitioners? In what way?

4. How do principals perceive the effect of distributed leadership on pedagogy and learning?

How does distributed leadership influence pedagogy and learning? How does this influence school improvement?

How does distributed leadership influence teachers’ and learner’s practices in Jordanian public schools?

How does distributed leadership shape the relation between the principal and the teachers?

How can teachers’ acceptance and understanding of the notion of distributed leadership at schools be enhanced?
5. To what extent do Jordanian principals perceive their professional learning supports them to implement distributed leadership in schools?

- What are some of the factors that shaped your leadership style?

- How adequate do you find your qualifications and professional learning to implement distributed leadership in your school?

- How often do you meet with the other school principals to engage in professional learning activities and exchange knowledge and expertise?

- What support do you receive from the MoE to undertake your leadership role effectively?

- To what extent do school principals influence the Ministry’s decisions regarding schools’ professional development?

- Who provides professional development for school practitioners?

- What further role can the Ministry of Education have in supporting the implementation of the distributed leadership in schools?

- How have the professional development programs provided by the MoE enhanced or changed your leadership practices?

6. What factors hinder the implementation of distributed leadership in the Jordanian public schools?

7. What could MoE do to support implementation of ERfKE in Jordanian public schools?
What recommendations do you have for the Ministry of education to enhance the implementation of ERfKE reform program in the Jordanian public schools?
Appendix 2: Ethics: Letter of approval

Memorandum

To: Prof Karen Starr
School of Education

From: Faculty of Arts & Education Human Ethics Advisory Group (HEAG)

Date: 18 January, 2016

Subject: HAE-15-170
Fostering Distributed Leadership in the Jordanian Schools

Please quote this project number in all future communications

The application for this project has been considered by the Faculty HEAG under the terms of Deakin University’s Human Research Ethics Committee (DUHREC).

Approval has been given for Ms Reem Hashem, under the supervision of Prof Karen Starr, School of Education, to undertake this project from 18/01/2016 to 18/01/2020.

The approval given by the Faculty HEAG is given only for the project and for the period as stated in the approval. It is your responsibility to contact the Faculty HEAG immediately should any of the following occur:

- Serious or unexpected adverse effects on the participants
- Any proposed changes in the protocol, including extensions of time.
- Any events which might affect the continuing ethical acceptability of the project.
- The project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
- Modifications are requested by other HREC.

In addition you will be required to report on the progress of your project at least once every year and at the conclusion of the project. Failure to report as required will result in suspension of your approval to proceed with the project.

The Faculty HEAG and/or DUHREC may need to audit this project as part of the requirements for monitoring set out in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).

Kylie Koulloudinas
HEAG Secretariat
Faculty of Arts and Education
Appendix 3: MoE: Letter of approval

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Ref.No 3/10/62137
Date 17/12/2015

Directorate of Education of Qasabit Amman
Directorate of Education of Al-Jami’a District
Directorate of Education of Marka District
Directorate of Education of Al-Quweismeh District
Directorate of Education of Wadi Al-Seer

Subject: Educational Research

This is to notify that Mrs. Reem N. O. Hashem is conducting a study entitled “Fostering Distributed Leadership in the Jordanian Schools” in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral degree in educational leadership at Deakin University in Australia. Thus, the researcher needs a permission to conduct interviews with the school principals affiliated to the above-mentioned directorates.

Hopefully, you will facilitate the student’s mission and provide any possible help for her provided that data will be used for research purposes.

Best Regards

Minister of Education

HEAD OF DIVISION OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
A copy for file 370
Attachments: One page of interview questions
### Appendix 4: Participants’ gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Female participants</th>
<th>Male participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aysha</td>
<td>Burhan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatimah</td>
<td>Fahed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khadijah</td>
<td>Ameen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamila</td>
<td>Aqeel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siddiqa</td>
<td>Azzam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salma</td>
<td>Abd al-Aziz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhahhab</td>
<td>Kamal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malak</td>
<td>Majid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affifa</td>
<td>Dergham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenan</td>
<td>Rafiq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hadya</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noof</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aida</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jomana</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 5a: Coding families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding Family</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. The six C’s (74)</strong></td>
<td>Causes, contexts, Contingencies, Consequences, Covariances and Conditions. This is the “bread and butter” theoretical code of sociology. Most studies fit into either a causal model, a consequence model or a condition model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Process (74)</strong></td>
<td>Stages, staging, phases, phasing, progressions, passages, gradations, transitions, steps, ranks, careers, orderings, trajectories, chains, sequencings, temporaling, shaping and cycling. A process must have at least two stages. Process is a way of grouping together two sequencings parts to a phenomenon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. The Degree Family (75)</strong></td>
<td>Limit, range, intensity, extent, amount, polarity, extreme, boundary, rank, grades, continuum, probability, possibility, level, cutting points, critical juncture, statistical average (mean, medium, mode), deviation, standard deviation, exemplar, modicum, full, partial, almost, half and so forth. The point to remember in theory generation is that, since variables vary, everything we say implies a matter of degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. The dimension Family (75)</strong></td>
<td>Dimensions, elements, division, piece of, properties of, facet, slice, sector, portion, segment, part, aspect, section. The dimension family divides the notion of a whole into a parts. The more one learns of a category the more he begins to see its dimensions. It breaks down into “pieces of.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Type Family (75)</strong></td>
<td>Type, form, kinds, styles, classes, genre. While dimensions divide up the whole, types indicate a variation in the whole, based on a combination of categories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. The Strategy Family (76)</strong></td>
<td>Strategies, tactics, mechanisms, managed, way, manipulation, manoeuvring, dealing with, handling, techniques, ploys, means, goals, arrangements, dominating, positioning. The point to keep clear on is whether or not there was a conscious act to manoeuvre people. If not, then a behaviour pattern is a consequence of another behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7. Interactive family (76)</strong></td>
<td>Mutual effects, reciprocity, mutual trajectory, mutual dependency, interdependence, interaction of effects, covariance. This code is an effort to capture the interacting pattern of two or more variables, when the analyst cannot say which comes first.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9. Cutting Point Family (76)</strong></td>
<td>Boundary, critical juncture, cutting point, turning point, breaking point, benchmark, division, cleavage, scales, in-out, intra-extra, tolerance levels, dichotomy, trichotomy, polychotomy, deviance and point of no return. This family is a variation of the degree family. Degree focuses on the full range, while here we focus on significant breaks or cutting points on the range.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10. Means-goal family (77)</strong></td>
<td>End, purpose, goal, anticipated, consequence, products. This family is also sub-family of the 6C’s and the process family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11. Cultural Family (77)</strong></td>
<td>Social norms, social values, social beliefs, and social sentiments. Social norms are aggregates of rules, values aggregates of wishes or goals, beliefs aggregates of cognitions and sentiments aggregates of attitudes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. **Consensus Family**

Clusters, agreements, contracts, definitions of the situation, uniformities, opinions, conflict, discensus, differential perception, cooperation, homogeniety-heterogeniety, conformity, non-conformity, and mutual expectation.

13. **The Mainline Family**

Social control (keeping people in line), Recruitment (getting people in), Socialisation (training people for participation) Stratification (sorting people out on criteria which rank them), Status Passage (moving people along and getting them through), Social Organisation (organising the people into groups, aggregates and divisions of labour) and Social Order (keeping the organisation of life working normatively), Social Institutions (clusters of cultural ideas), Social Interaction (people acting with people), Social Worlds (symbolic surround of life), Social Mobility (patterned paths of people movement through society) and so forth.

14. **Theoretical Family**

Parsimony, scope, integration, density, conceptual level, relationship of data, relationship of other theory, clarity, fit, relevance, modifiability, utility, condensability, inductive-deductive balance and interfeeding, degree of, multivariate structure, use of theoretical codes, interpretive, explanatory and predictive power, and so forth.

15. **Ordering or Elaboration Family**

Structural, temporal and generality are the three principal ways to order data. Often and analysis of structure assumes that the flow of influence and power is down in the structure. But structural ordering of influence is an empirical question—whether and in what order the flow of a variable such as influence or decisions is up or down and in what order.-

15.b **Temporal ordering**

Temporal ordering is the standard way to order categories. One category comes after another in a temporal sequence. It is often implicit in coding.

15.c **Conceptual orderings**

Conceptual orderings are the least used generally, but none the less important and powerful and used often in grounded theory, as in specifications of concepts, and in developing properties of categories.

16. **Unit Family**

Collective, group, nation, organisation, aggregate, situation, context, arena, social world, behavioural patterns, territorial units, society, family, etc., and positional units: status, role, role relationship, Status-set, role-set, person-set, role partners. These are structural units which are familiar to all of us. The important thing to remember is to keep the units to which our categories refer clear. If the analyst confuses units or does not making them clear, other relevant properties of the units, such as contextual conditions, may be missed in the analysis.

17. **Reading Family**

Concepts, problems and hypotheses. They are the stepping stone for more intense coding of reading, if called for along the lines of other codes. They stimulate immersion in the reading and development of theoretical sensitivity.

18. **Models**

Another way to theoretical code is to model ones theory pictorially by either a linear model or a property space.

*(Glaser 1978, pp.74-81)*
### Appendix 5b: Examples of coding using coding families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding family</th>
<th>Examples from the data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>6 C’s family</strong></td>
<td>Causes: no coordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consequences: lack of trust, meeting with the Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conditions: no financial support, teachers’ overload, power of connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type family</strong></td>
<td>Leadership discourses:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Distributed leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Eclectic leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Traditional leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interactive family</strong></td>
<td>Lack of trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identity-self family</strong></td>
<td>Marginalisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brave leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Passion for one’s career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cutting-point family</strong></td>
<td>Inconsistent practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers’ overload</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural family</strong></td>
<td>Sheikhocracy and power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tribal values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religious convictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mainline family</strong></td>
<td>hierarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit family</strong></td>
<td>Infrastructure and financial support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>