

Supplementary Material

**ADVISER TO THE KING:
EXPERTS, RATIONALIZATION, AND LEGITIMACY**

By Calvert W. Jones

World Politics
doi: 10.1017/S0043887118000217

Replication data are available at:

Jones, Calvert W. 2018. "Replication files for Adviser to the King: Experts, Rationalization, and Legitimacy." Harvard Dataverse, V1. doi: 10.7910/DVN/RIRAGN.

Appendix A. Interviews and Ethnographic Research

During nineteen months of combined fieldwork between 2009 and 2017, I collected a wealth of information about expert advisers in the Arab Gulf. I was based in the UAE for much of the time, but also conducted fieldwork in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and Oman. I conducted over sixty-five in-depth interviews with experts, particularly those working in the education reform sector that is thriving across the region in an effort to build stronger and more diversified “knowledge societies,” but also those advising on urban planning, economic policy, and infrastructure. I also conversed informally with many more experts, attended expert-run events, and observed experts interacting with ruling elites in the context of palace meetings due to an unusual level of access to ruling circles. The fieldwork received the approval of the Institutional Review Boards (IRB) for human subjects research at Yale University and the University of Maryland, College Park.

The experts whom I met all possessed high levels of education and/or experience in their areas of expertise. They were also very multinational. Although I did not always ask directly for nationality because I knew this would make some interviewees uncomfortable—given tensions in the Gulf between citizens and the large non-citizen resident population—most of the experts whom I interviewed self-identified as being of British, American, Australian, or Levantine Arab background, and many were long-time residents or “expats.” Only a handful were Gulf nationals, which is unsurprising and likely mirrors the Gulf experts sector as a whole given the historical tendency for these rulers to work with foreign experts (as discussed in the body of the paper). In addition, many of the experts, while being based in one country, had experience advising in their areas of expertise across multiple Gulf country contexts, and in other countries around the world.

Due to the nature of the Gulf experts sector—with its high level of turnover, competition, and job insecurity—most interviewees requested anonymity, and all such requests have been respected in keeping with the IRB protocols granting approval for the fieldwork. Interviewees were very reasonably concerned that comments they might make would cast them or their organizations in a negative light, or else cause offense elsewhere that would have repercussions for themselves or others. As noted in the body of the paper, being blacklisted and deported are very real fears. Whenever interviewees gave their permission, I recorded interviews, and otherwise took extensive notes. The detailed information in my transcripts and notes are not publicly available because of the potential to compromise anonymity and thus violate the IRB protocols for this fieldwork. Interviews were numbered for reference and cited as such in the body of the paper.

The length of interviews varied from twenty minutes to an hour and a half, and most were conducted in offices and cafes or else by phone in English or Arabic. Recruitment of interview subjects began with my existing contacts in the region, and then continued via a typical snowball recruitment process. An oral consent process was used. Interviews were semi-structured, adapting frequently to any signs of discomfort or worry on the part of interview subjects. Below is a sample interview protocol that I used after introducing myself and the research and obtaining oral consent:

1. Tell me about your background in [area of expertise].
 - Where did you receive your training?
 - What kind of experience have you had in this area?

- Have you applied your expertise to these issues in other countries? Can you tell me a bit about that?
2. Turning now to the Gulf, how did you become involved with advising and assisting the political leaders here?
- How long have you been working here? Do you live here as an expat, or are you here for just a short time?
 - What reforms and other projects are you working on now?
 - Have you worked on these reform issues in other Gulf countries as well? Can you tell me more about that?
3. Let's turn now to what it's like to be an expert adviser here. What do you think are the main challenges and opportunities?
- What have you found to be most rewarding, and what have you found to be most frustrating?
 - Have you met any ruling elites, and if so, what are your interactions with them like? Can you give me any examples?
 - If you've had experience in other Gulf countries, have you noticed any differences working as an expert here?
4. [IF APPROPRIATE] Many people think that experts like you can help make government and policymaking *better*—for example, more rational and more evidence-based, or else build public support for policies and reforms.
- Do you think this is true, based on your experiences here? Why or why not?
 - Do you feel free to speak your mind?
 - Do you think the political leaders here take your advice seriously?
 - How do you think citizens here are reacting to your involvement? Do you think the characteristics of experts like you, such as your nationality, matter in terms of how local populations react to you? Please explain.
 - What is your opinion of other experts here?
 - How do you think expert-ruler collaborations here might be improved?

Appendix B. Question Wording and Answer Scales

Below can be found question wording and answer scales for dependent variables used in the three experiments. Approval of each survey question and the oral statement of informed consent given before administration of the survey was obtained from the University of Maryland, College Park Institutional Review Board (IRB). The survey did not elicit any personally identifying information from respondents.

		Survey Question	Answer Scale
<i>Study 1: Experts vs. No Experts</i>			
Legitimacy	Support for the reform	Now let's move to your opinions about the reform. Do you support or oppose the plan proposed by the politicians [<i>and international experts</i>]? Mark your opinion. What percentage of Kuwait's population do you think will support the plan proposed by the politicians [<i>and international experts</i>]?	Average of two items, rescaled 0-1. Original answer scales were 1=strongly oppose to 7=strongly support and 1=0% to 11=100%.
	Confidence in reform	On average, what percentage of projects like this would you say succeed? How certain are you that the plan proposed by the political leaders [<i>and international experts</i>] will succeed?	Average of two items, rescaled 0-1. Original answer scales were 1 = 0% to 11 = 100% and 1=not certain at all to 7=very certain.
	Patriotism	Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? "I love my country," "People should support the government even if they think it is doing something wrong," and "I am proud to be a citizen of my country."	Average of three items, rescaled 0-1. Original answer scale for each was 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree.
	Robustness of support	Now, to what extent do you support the plan? Mark your opinion.	Rescaled 0-1. Original answer scale was 1=strongly oppose to 7=strongly support.
Technocratic Mentality	Optimism about technological progress	How confident are you that advanced technologies will improve global healthcare within the next five years?	Rescaled 0-1. Original answer scale was 1=not confident at all to 7=very confident.
	Optimism about human achievement (Kuwaiti Nobel Prize winners)	If you had to guess, how many Nobel Prize winners do you think Kuwait will produce over the next 10 years? Enter a number.	Open-ended response

<i>Study 2: Nationality of Experts</i>			
Legitimacy	Support for the reform	<p>Now let's move to your opinions about the reform. Do you support or oppose the plan proposed by the politicians and [American/Kuwaiti/Chinese] experts? Mark your opinion.</p> <p>What percentage of Kuwait's population do you think will support the plan proposed by the politicians and [American/Kuwaiti/Chinese] experts?</p>	Average of two items, rescaled 0-1. Original answer scales were 1=strongly oppose to 7=strongly support and 1=0% to 11=100%.
	Confidence in reform	<p>On average, what percentage of projects like this would you say succeed?</p> <p>How certain are you that the plan proposed by the political leaders and [American/Kuwaiti/Chinese] experts will succeed?</p>	Average of two items, rescaled 0-1. Original answer scales were 1 = 0% to 11 = 100% and 1=not certain at all to 7=very certain.
	Patriotism	Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? "I love my country," "People should support the government even if they think it is doing something wrong," and "I am proud to be a citizen of my country."	Average of three items, rescaled 0-1. Original answer scale for each was 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree.
Technocratic Mentality	Optimism about technological progress	How confident are you that advanced technologies will improve global healthcare within the next five years?	Rescaled 0-1. Original answer scale was 1=not confident at all to 7=very confident.
	Optimism about human achievement (Kuwaiti Nobel Prize winners)	If you had to guess, how many Nobel Prize winners do you think Kuwait will produce over the next 10 years? Enter a number.	Open-ended response

<i>Study 3: Short-Term vs. Long-Term</i>			
Legitimacy	Support for the reform	<p>Now let's move to your opinion about the reform. Do you support or oppose the plan proposed by the politicians and international experts [who arrived yesterday in Kuwait City/who have been living and working in Kuwait City for ten years]? Circle your choice below.</p> <p>What percent of Kuwait's population do you think will support the plan proposed by the politicians and the international experts?</p>	Average of two items, rescaled 0-1. Original answer scales were 1=strongly oppose to 7=strongly support and 1=0% to 11=100%.

	Confidence in reform	On average, what percentage of projects like this would you say succeed? How certain are you that the plan proposed by the political leaders and international experts [<i>who arrived yesterday in Kuwait City/who have been living and working in Kuwait City for ten years</i>] will succeed?	Average of two items, rescaled 0-1. Original answer scales were 1 = 0% to 11 = 100% and 1=not certain at all to 7=very certain.
	Confidence in experts	Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the project, and the international experts [<i>who arrived yesterday in Kuwait City/who have been living and working in Kuwait City for ten years</i>]? “These experts will provide high quality advice,” “These experts will offer new and innovative ideas,” “These experts will have a good understanding of education in Kuwait,” and “These experts are probably out for themselves and the money” (reverse-scored).	Average of four items, rescaled 0-1. Original answer scale for each was 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree.
Technocratic Mentality	Optimism about technological progress	How confident are you that advanced technologies will improve global healthcare within the next five years?	Rescaled 0-1. Original answer scale was 1=not confident at all to 7=very confident.
	Optimism about human achievement (Kuwaiti Nobel Prize winners)	If you had to guess, how many Nobel Prize winners do you think Kuwait will produce over the next 10 years? Enter a number.	Open-ended response.

Appendix C. Descriptive Statistics and Balance Tests

The three tables below show means, standard deviations, and balance tests for the demographics (age, income, parents' education, and religiosity) in each of the three studies. (Although recent work argues against the use of balance tests for experimental data, it continues to be a common practice, and so I show these results here in the appendix.) Self-reported household income was measured on a scale of 1 to 7 (with higher scores indicating higher income). Religiosity was measured on a scale of 1 to 3, where 1=religious, 2=somewhat religious, and 3=not religious. Parental education represents the mean of mother's and father's highest educational level attained, where 1=none, 2=elementary or primary, 3=secondary, 4=BA or college diploma, and 5=MA or higher.

Study 1: Experts vs. No Experts

	No Experts		Experts		One-way ANOVA
Demographic	Education (n=80)	Infrastructure (n=70)	Education (n=80)	Traffic (n=51)	
Age	24.6 (5.3)	25.2 (6.3)	26.2 (5.3)	23.7 (3.3)	F(3,274)=2.50 NS
Religiosity	2.08 (.80)	1.78 (.67)	1.56 (.57)	2.08 (.50)	F(3,262)=10.2*** p<.001
Income	4.64 (1.1)	4.57 (.99)	4.67 (.98)	4.27 (.90)	F(3,275)=1.87 NS
Parental Education	3.50 (1.2)	2.96 (.98)	2.5313 (1.0)	3.20 (.94)	F(3,277)=11.8*** p<.001

Note: Because one-way ANOVA analyses revealed significant group differences for religiosity and parental education, regressions were also conducted that controlled for these two variables. The results for the main effect of expert involvement were the same as the findings described in the body of the paper in terms of the direction and level of significance for all dependent variables: support for reform, $p=.051^*$; confidence in reform, NS; patriotism, $p=.004^{**}$; robustness of support, $p=.002^{**}$; optimism about technological progress, $p=.004^{**}$, and optimism about human achievement (Kuwaiti Nobel Prize winners), $p=.033^*$.

Study 2: Nationality of Experts

Demographic	American Experts (n=63)	Kuwaiti Experts (n=68)	Chinese Experts (n=69)	One-way ANOVA
Age	20.2 (4.1)	19.9 (2.4)	20.4 (2.8)	F(2,196)=.344 NS
Religiosity (1-3)	2.13 (.635)	2.21 (.509)	2.28 (.61)	F(2,195)=1.09 NS
Income	4.40 (.76)	4.62 (.90)	4.39 (.73)	F(2,196)=1.71 NS
Parental Education	3.23 (.83)	3.38 (.82)	3.42 (.78)	F(2,197)=.977 NS

Study 3. Short-Term vs. Long-Term

Demographic	Short Term (n=81)	Long Term (n=86)	t-test for independent samples
Age	24.7 (4.3)	25.4 (4.2)	t(164)=1.13 NS
Religiosity	2.22 (.67)	2.01 (.69)	t(160)=-1.90 NS
Income	4.72 (.91)	4.44 (1.00)	t(163)=-1.88 NS

Note: Parental education was not measured in Study 3 due to time constraints.

Appendix D. Additional Results

Study 1: Main Effects of Reform Type

		Means (sd)		Regression Results: Main effects of reform type
		Education n=160	Infrastructure n=121	
Legitimacy	Support for reform	0.67 (0.15)	0.63 (0.17)	-0.04* (0.02) p=0.039
	Confidence in reform	0.59 (0.14)	0.59 (0.17)	-0.007 (0.02) NS
	Robustness of support	0.70 (0.2)	0.66 (0.22)	-0.05 (0.03) NS
	Patriotism	0.99 (0.06)	0.96 (0.12)	-0.02* (.01) p=0.048
Technocratic mentality	Optimism about technological progress	0.58 (0.22)	0.66 (0.24)	0.08** (0.03) p=0.004
	Optimism about human achievement (Kuwaiti Nobel Prize winners)	7.33 (9.92)	9.36 (14.68)	2.85 (1.90) NS

Note: Table shows main effects of type of reform (education or infrastructure). All dependent variables except Nobel Prize winners were converted to a 0-1 scale. Dependent variables were regressed on dichotomous indicators for expert involvement (1=no experts, 2=experts) and type of reform (1=education, 2=infrastructure). Table shows coefficients, standard errors, and p-values for the main effects of type of reform, while main effects for expert involvement are reported in the body of the paper. Effect size estimates (Cohen's *d*) were as follows: support for reform (0.22); patriotism (0.22); and optimism about technological progress (0.33).

Study 2: Effects of the Nationalities of Experts

		American Experts (n=63)	Kuwaiti Experts (n=68)	Chinese Experts (n=69)	One-way ANOVA (3 groups)
Legitimacy	Support for reform	0.63 (0.18)	0.71 (0.17)	0.71 (0.18)	F(2,194)=4.776 p=.009
	Confidence in reform	0.53 (0.17)	0.50 (0.2)	0.60 (0.18)	F(2,193)=4.695 p=.010
	Patriotism	.95 (.14)	.96 (.12)	.91 (.18)	F(2,189)=1.59 NS
Technocratic mentality	Optimism about technological progress	0.71 (0.25)	0.65 (0.23)	0.67 (0.23)	F(2,187)=1.132 NS
	Optimism about human achievement (Kuwaiti Nobel Prize winners)	13.7 (29.68)	9.13 (13.88)	16.58 (71.85)	F(2,143)=.333 NS

Note: Table shows means and standard deviations for each treatment group, along with one-way ANOVA results for the three experimental groups. All dependent variables except Nobel Prize winners were converted to a 0-1 scale. Effect sizes and p-values for pairs found to be significantly different based on Tukey HSD post hoc multiple comparison tests are reported in the body of the paper. * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *** $p \leq 0.001$; NS = Not significant.

Appendix E: Experimental Protocols

All three experimental studies employed the same basic procedures approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Maryland, College Park. Studies 1 and 2 were conducted in Kuwait in April-May 2016 using student samples (all female) across a large public university and a large Arab private university in Kuwait City. Study 3 was conducted in December 2016-January 2017 using student samples across the same two universities (all male). Universities in Kuwait are gender-segregated by law; Studies 1 and 2 focused on the female campuses, while Study 3 turned to the male campuses.

Although gender-segregated samples raise the possibility of gender effects, the mean scores for the dependent variables “support for reform” and “confidence in reform” fell within similar ranges, suggesting that both males and females make similar judgments about expert involvement. Possible gender effects cannot be analyzed directly, however, because the treatment conditions were different for the three studies.

Subjects were recruited from introductory classes in education, media, and communications, offered the voluntary paper-and-pencil survey in the classrooms, manually randomizing experimental conditions, and no students opted out (likely due to the break from class provided by the short surveys). The surveys (in Arabic) were introduced and explained at the beginning of class, with the opportunity for students to decline to participate following the

approved oral consent protocol. No incentives were offered other than the opportunity to participate in the survey. Surveys were anonymous and did not collect any personally identifying information. They took students 10-15 minutes to complete.

After collecting demographics, the three surveys asked students to imagine that Kuwait's leaders are embarking on a major reform, and then instructed them to "Please read the following news article about the plan carefully, answer the questions about the article, and then give us your perspective on the plan." After reading the mock news story, subjects answered questions tapping the dependent variables described in the body of the paper. Below are English translations of the mock news stories used in each study for replication purposes.

Study 1: Experts vs. No Experts


The first study employed four groups, and also presented an additional mock news story indicating the failure of a similar reform in a neighboring country. The mock news stories are below.

A. No experts/education reform

World Business Opinion Tech Science Health Sports Arts Style Food Travel

Political Leaders Propose Major Education Reform Plan

By STAFF WRITERS 5:03 PM



Plan proposed by politicians to reform education
Staff photographer

Political leaders today announced their major plan to upgrade the country's public education system, which will cost approximately 450 million KD. They announced that the project would dramatically improve learning, especially for young children. The plan calls for a project that will last 12 to 15 months.

Although opponents say the plan will just create more major disruptions in education and will not succeed, the politicians are very confident that their plan will succeed and that the project will also lead to economic growth.

orm:

Failure of Education Reform Project in UAE Raises Doubts about Politicians' Plan

By STAFF WRITERS 1:23 PM



Plan proposed by politicians to reform education
Staff photographer

The plan proposed by the state's politicians has come under fire by opponents because of the news that a similar plan in the UAE has failed. The failed plan cost about the same amount as the one proposed for Kuwait.

The politicians here in Kuwait are still very confident that their education reform plan will succeed and that the project will also lead to economic growth.

B. No experts/infrastructure reform

Political Leaders Propose Major Traffic Reduction Plan

By STAFF WRITERS 5:03 PM



Plan proposed by politicians to reduce traffic
Staff photographer

Political leaders today announced their major plan to upgrade the country's road and highway systems, which will cost approximately 450 million KD. They announced that the project would dramatically reduce the constant traffic jams, especially during rush hours. The plan calls for a project that will last 12 to 15 months.

Although opponents say the plan will just create more major disruptions and will not succeed, the politicians are very confident that their plan will succeed and that the project will also lead to economic growth.

Failure of Traffic Project in the UAE Raises Doubts about Politicians' Plan

By STAFF WRITERS 1:23 PM



Plan proposed by politicians to reduce traffic
Staff photographer

The plan proposed by the state's politicians has come under fire by opponents because of the news that a similar plan in the UAE has failed. The failed plan cost about the same amount as the one proposed for Kuwait.



The politicians here in Kuwait are still very confident that their infrastructure plan will succeed and that the project will also lead to economic growth.

C. Experts/Education Reform

World Business Opinion Tech Science Health Sports Arts Style Food Travel

Failure of Education Reform Project in the UAE Raises Doubts about Plan Proposed by Politicians with Advice from Team of International Education Experts

By STAFF WRITERS 5:03 PM



Plan proposed by political leaders to reform education, with advice from team of experts.
Staff photographer

The plan proposed by the state's politicians -- who received advice from a team of international experts and consultants with advanced degrees in education and extensive experience in education development in Britain, the United States, Sweden, Norway, Canada, and many other countries -- has come under fire by opponents because of the news that a similar plan in the UAE has failed. The failed plan cost about the same amount as the one proposed for Kuwait.

The international experts and the politicians here in Kuwait are still very confident that their education reform plan will succeed and that the project will also lead to economic growth.

World Business Opinion Tech Science Health Sports Arts Style Food Travel

With Help from International Education Experts, Political Leaders Propose Major Education Reform Plan

By STAFF WRITERS 5:03 PM



Plan proposed by political leaders to reform education, with advice from team of experts.
Staff photographer

A team of international experts and consultants in education conducted a lengthy study to develop a plan to upgrade the country's public education system, and the state's political leaders announced the plan today. The experts all hold PhDs in education and have extensive experience in education development in Britain, the United States, Sweden, Norway, Canada, and many other countries. The plan will cost approximately 450 million KD, and experts say it should dramatically improve learning, especially for young children. The plan calls for a project that will last 12 to 15 months.

Although opponents say the plan will just create more major disruptions in education and will not succeed, the politicians and the team of international experts are very confident that their plan will succeed and that the project will also lead to economic growth.

D. Experts/Infrastructure Reform

World Business Opinion Tech Science Health Sports Arts Style Food Travel

With Help from International Traffic Experts, Political Leaders Propose Major Traffic Reduction Plan

By STAFF WRITERS 5:03 PM



Plan proposed by political leaders to reduce traffic, with advice from team of experts
Staff photographer

A team of international experts and consultants in population, infrastructure, and traffic management conducted a lengthy study to develop a plan to upgrade the state's road and highway systems, and the state's political leaders announced the plan today. The experts all hold PhDs in civil engineering and have extensive experience in infrastructure development in Britain, the United States, Sweden, Norway, Canada, and many other countries. The plan will cost approximately

450 million KD, and experts say it should dramatically reduce the constant traffic jams, especially during rush hours. The plan calls for a project that will last 12 to 15 months.

Although opponents say the plan will just create more major disruptions and will not succeed, the politicians and the team of international experts are very confident that their plan will succeed and that the project will also lead to economic growth.

World Business Opinion Tech Science Health Sports Arts Style Food Travel

Failure of Traffic Project in the UAE Raises Doubts about Plan Proposed by Politicians with Advice from Team of International Engineering Experts

By STAFF WRITERS 7:03 PM



Plan proposed by political leaders to reduce traffic, with advice from team of experts
Staff photographer

The plan proposed by the state's politicians -- who received advice from a team of international experts and consultants with advanced degrees in civil engineering and extensive experience in infrastructure development in Britain, United States, Sweden, Norway, Canada, and many other countries -- has come under fire by opponents

because of the news that a similar plan in the UAE has failed. The failed plan cost about the same amount as the one proposed for Kuwait.

[The international experts and the politicians here in Kuwait are still very confident that their infrastructure plan will succeed and that the project will also lead to economic growth.



Study 2: Nationality of Experts

Study 2 followed a three-group design varying the nationality of the experts. The three mock news stories are below.

[World](#) [Business](#) [Opinion](#) [Tech](#) [Science](#) [Health](#) [Sports](#) [Arts](#) [Style](#) [Food](#) [Travel](#)

With Help from American Experts, Political Leaders Propose Major Traffic Reduction Plan

By STAFF WRITERS 5:03 PM



Plan proposed by political leaders to reduce traffic, with advice from team of American experts
Staff photographer

A team of American experts and consultants in population, infrastructure, and traffic management conducted a lengthy study to develop a plan to upgrade the state's road and highway systems, and the state's political leaders announced the plan today. The American experts all hold PhDs in civil engineering. The plan will cost approximately 450 million KD, and experts say it should dramatically reduce the constant traffic jams,

especially during rush hours. The plan calls for a project that will last 12 to 15 months.

Although opponents say the plan will just create more major disruptions and will not succeed, the politicians and the team of American experts are very confident that their plan will succeed and that the project will also lead to economic growth.

The other two conditions substitute "Kuwaiti" or "Chinese" for "American," with all other text the same.

Study 3: Long-Term vs. Short-Term

Study 3 employed a two-group design varying the length of time experts spend in country. The mock news stories are below.

International Experts to Advise Political Leaders on a Plan to Reform Education

By STAFF WRITERS 5:03 PM



International experts are advising political leaders on a plan to reform education
Staff photographer

A team of international experts and consultants in education, who have been living and working in Kuwait City for ten years, are advising political leaders on a plan to reform education in the country. The experts will summarize their advice to political leaders in a report at the end of this month.

The experts all hold PhDs in education and have extensive experience in education development in Britain, the United States, Sweden, Norway, Canada, and many other countries. The experts are confident their advice will lead to a very effective plan to reform education in the country and improve student learning.

Although opponents are doubtful, the politicians and the team of international experts who have been living and working in Kuwait City for ten years are very confident that the plan will succeed and that the project will also lead to economic growth.

International Experts Arrived Yesterday in Kuwait City to Advise Political Leaders on a Plan to Reform Education

By STAFF WRITERS 5:03 PM



International experts are advising political leaders on a plan to reform education
Staff photographer

A team of international experts and consultants in education arrived yesterday to advise political leaders on a plan to reform education in the country. The experts will be in Kuwait for about a month, and will summarize their advice to political leaders in a report at the end of this month.

The experts all hold PhDs in education and have extensive experience in education development in Britain, the United States, Sweden, Norway, Canada, and many other countries. The experts are confident their advice will lead to a very effective plan to reform education in the country and improve student learning.

Although opponents are doubtful, the politicians and the team of international experts who arrived yesterday in Kuwait City are very confident that the plan will succeed and that the project will also lead to economic growth.