formulation process under the Kishida administration—very different from the executive-branch predominance under the Abe administration (2012–2020)—was driven mainly by intraparty politics related to factions, in terms of not only the number of members but also their policy positions.

Second, the case of Japan implies that a comprehensive understanding of the legislative–executive relationship requires attention not only to constitutional arrangements or electoral and administrative institutions but also to informal institutions and intraparty dynamics.

Third, the influence of backbenchers could be eliminated again in the near future. Based on institutional reforms in the core executive branch, Prime Minister Kishida pushed for a fixed income-tax reduction in October 2023 without consulting with backbenchers. More important, as a result of the LDP factions' campaign-funding scandal in late 2023, most factions—including the Abe and Kishida factions—decided to dissolve. However, the intraparty dynamics became even more unstable after the LDP and the Komeito lost their majority in the October 2024 Lower House election, forcing the new Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba to lead a minority coalition government. It should be carefully observed how this intraparty turmoil will be subdued and its consequences on policy making within the LDP, which again can disrupt legislative–executive relations.

By recognizing these intraparty factors, a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of legislative–executive relations in parliamentary democracies can be developed.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author declares that there are no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research. ■

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LEGISLATIVE-EXECUTIVE PARALYSIS IN KUWAIT

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Compared to its neighbors on the Arabian Peninsula, Kuwait lags in investments, megaprojects, and infrastructure. It makes headlines for high-profile constitutional crises and constant elections. Between 2020 and 2024 alone, Kuwait had four elections and three parliamentary dissolutions, and it currently is experiencing an unconstitutional shutdown of the parliament. What led to this recent crisis and what accounts for Kuwait's persistent legislative–executive deadlock, constitutional crises, and short-lived cabinets?

Kuwait's Political System: An Overview

The Kuwaiti political system combines a hereditary executive-branch structure and a freely elected national assembly. Its framers envisioned it as an attempt to avoid the personalistic tendencies of presidential rule and the excessive democratic instability of parliamentarism in interwar Europe (Al-Saleh 2003). Institutionally, the emir—who is a member of the ruling Al-Sabah family—stands at the apex of this hybrid political system. The Kuwaiti National Assembly (KNA) was given considerable oversight and law-making power as well as checks on executive-branch power in the Kuwaiti constitution of 1962. Figure 1 illustrates the basic political structure of legislative–executive relations in Kuwait.

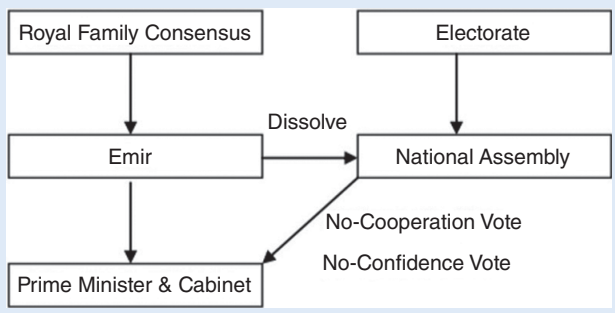
First, as shown in figure 1, the emir has considerable power, including dissolving parliament and issuing decrees of necessity. The emir also has the power to appoint the prime minister (by convention, also a member of the royal family). Through consultations with the emir and other key political players, the prime minister, in turn, appoints the cabinet ministers.

The KNA is composed of 50 Members of Parliament (MPs) who are elected directly by universal suffrage and secret ballot; MPs typically are self-nominated and they compete in multi-member districts[1] (Al-Saeedi 2003; Al-Shayeji 1988). In addition to elected MPs, cabinet ministers, appointed by the emir, are part of the parliament but they serve as ex-officio members. These cabinet ministers can vote on all issues except motions of confidence.

Similar to other parliamentary systems, *elected* members of the KNA can advance motions of confidence. The emir, in turn, has the right to dissolve the KNA (see figure 1). More precisely, the KNA as a legislature has three interconnected powers vis-à-vis the government and the executive branch. First, KNA MPs can interpellate cabinet ministers and the prime minister on matters within their jurisdiction, which can result in a motion of no-confidence against them. Second, the constitution grants the KNA a similar right called a motion of no-cooperation with the prime minister,

Figure 1

Legislative–Executive Relations in Kuwait



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but it is subject to slightly different rules. Third, the emir's power to dissolve parliament is discretionary even if there are no votes of no-cooperation against the prime minister.[2]

To summarize, the executive branch is composed of an appointed cabinet with dual responsibility to a popularly elected national assembly and an unelected hereditary emir (i.e., the head of state) with considerable constitutional power (Al-Saleh 2003).

Causal Theory: Permissive Rules, a Nonpartisan System, and Legislative–Executive Paralysis

Interpellations and motions of confidence are crucial for parliamentary oversight. Yet, when left unregulated, they are destabilizing and create perpetual legislative–executive paralysis. This article proposes a causal theory, shown in figure 2, of several elements to explain this dynamic.

First, interpellations and motions of confidence in Kuwait stem from multiple sources: charges of cabinet misconduct, policy disagreements, portfolio allocation, personal grievances, factional allegiances, and competition among power brokers (in particular, members of the royal family vying for the position of prime minister or crown prince).[3]

Second, Cheibub and Rasch (2021) classified the constitutions and amendments of European countries into three groups based on the details they contain about the government's responsibility to the parliament: silent, incomplete, and complete. In the first group, the documents are silent, in the sense that interpellations and motions of confidence are not explicitly mentioned. In the second group, interpellations and motions of confidence are explicitly mentioned but the conditions and context under which they can happen remain unclear. The third group contains complete and detailed information about these procedures. Based on Cheibub and Rasch's (2021) classification of constitutions and amendments regarding censure motion, Kuwait's constitution and parliamentary rules of procedure are closer to being incomplete documents, with permissible rules for initiating interpellations and motions of confidence. For example, interpellations can be advanced against cabinet ministers by individual MPs at any time and without limits on the number of times they can be targeted. Motions of confidence are more difficult to initiate because they must be preceded by an interpellation and they require the signature of 10 MPs. However, they nevertheless are permissible due to the lack of a specified limit on the number of motions per legislative term or session as well as the lack of specified limits per MP.

Third, Kuwait's constitution and laws do not ban or regulate political parties. Kuwait's system has political and parliamentary blocs that coalesce based on ideological and social affiliations and issue convergence, but they are un-institutionalized and experience high turnover (Al-Ghazali 2007).

Thus, Kuwait's political system combines permissive and incomplete oversight procedures with a highly individualistic, nonpartisan system. It is prone to abusing tools of oversight and ineffective coordination among MPs. This results in a situation in which interpellations and motions of confidence are a constant feature of the political system, driven largely by individual MPs compared to organized political groups.

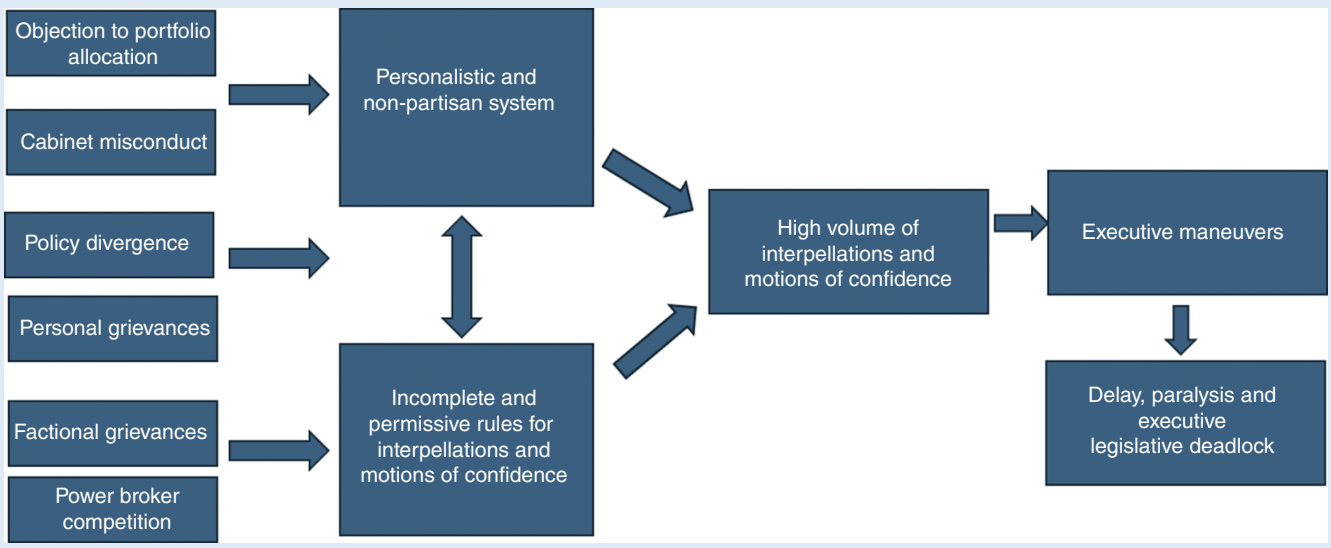
The strategies adopted by the executive branch to maneuver interpellations and motions of confidence often lead to delay, paralysis, and legislative–executive deadlock. The strategies include the emir's prerogatives such as constitutionally dissolving parliament and, in extreme circumstances, decrees of necessity. Moreover, the executive branch—primarily the prime minister and his cabinet ministers—uses vagaries in the constitution and rules of procedure to delay or obstruct interpellations and motions of confidence, which can lead to constitutional crises.

Legislative–Executive Paralysis and Its Potential Consequences

Until the post-1991 period in Kuwait,[4] interpellations were not used frequently. However, beginning in 2006 and as shown in

Figure 2

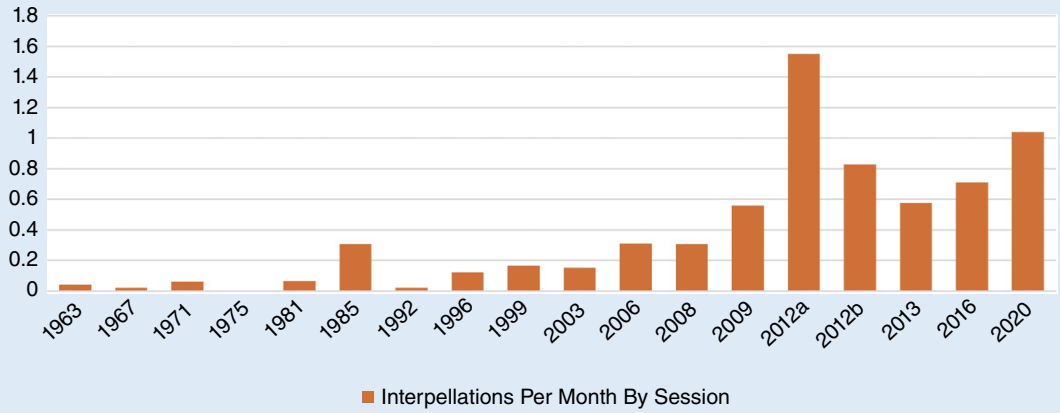
Causal Theory



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Figure 3

Interpellations per Month by Legislative Term (1963–2020)



Note: Author's own data compiled from multiple official sources.

figure 3, there has been an increased number of interpellations per month. This is due primarily to what scholars have argued is the severing of the post of the prime minister from the crown prince.

More important, most of these interpellations were advanced by individual MPs as opposed to being co-sponsored (figure 4). Therefore, for instance, in 13 of 18 KNA sessions, interpellations raised by individual MPs comprised 50% or more of the total interpellations compared to co-sponsored interpellations. In fact, of 149 interpellations from 1963 to 2020, 92 (61.70%) were raised by individual MPs.

Another notable feature of legislative–executive relations in Kuwait is frequent dissolutions, which illustrate the legislative–executive paralysis. As shown in table 1, of the 18 legislative terms in Kuwait's history, 11 were dissolved prior to the end of their full term. Although interpellations and motions of confidence did not result in all of these dissolutions, the majority were directly or indirectly related to interpellations or motions of confidence.

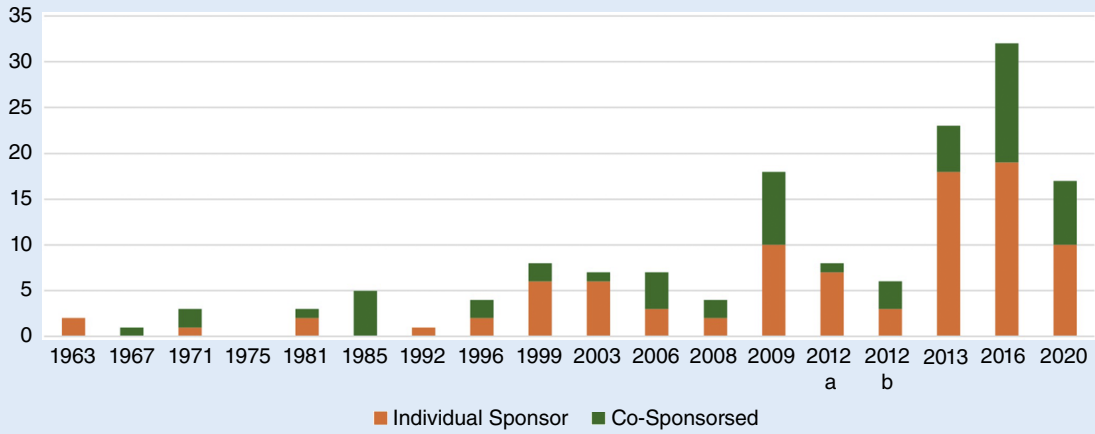
Table 1

KNA Dissolutions 1975–2020

Year Elected	Year Dissolved	Constitutional
1975	1976	No
1985	1986	No
1996	1999	Yes
2003	2006	Yes
2006	2008	Yes
2008	2009	Yes
2009	2011	Yes
February 2012	2012	Constitutional Court Order
December 2012	2013	Constitutional Court Order
2013	2016	Yes
2020	2022	Yes

Figure 4

Sponsored and Co-Sponsored Interpellations by Legislative Term (1963–2020)



Note: Author's own data compiled from multiple official sources.

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The institutional design of Kuwait's political system is in need of reform to streamline and rationalize its oversight procedures. This needs to be accomplished similar to many Continental European parliaments, which were reformed precisely because of endemic legislative–executive deadlock in the interwar period. Yet, as long as Kuwait's constitution continues to be viewed as a rigid document and serious reforms of parliamentary rules of procedure are generally unsuccessful and blocked by the executive branch, reform will remain elusive. Given these shortcomings and the way that the political system is set up, it was perhaps inevitable that the KNA was unconstitutionally dissolved by the emir on May 10, 2024, for the first time in 38 years.

NORWAY: STRONG PARLIAMENT FACING NEW CHALLENGES

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As Ishiyama (2020, 203) argued, analyses of the dynamics of legislative–executive relations should include both decline and revival of parliaments, and explanatory factors should comprise exogenous and endogenous as well as "distal" (long-term) and "proximate" (immediate) aspects. This article examines the Norwegian Parliament (i.e., the Storting)—one of "the strong parliaments of Scandinavia" (Damgaard 1994) and ranked 23rd among 158 legislatures on the Fish and Kroenig (2009, 756) power index.

As long as Kuwait's constitution continues to be viewed as a rigid document and serious reforms of parliamentary rules of procedure are generally unsuccessful and blocked by the executive branch, reform will remain elusive.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Research documentation and data that support the findings of this study are openly available at the *PS: Political Science & Politics* Harvard Dataverse at https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/KZTMZL.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author declares that there are no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research. ■

NOTES

1. Other than a fraudulent election in 1967, the KNA generally has continued to be freely and fairly elected (see Al-Shayeji 1988 and Al-Saeedi 2003).
2. State of Kuwait Constitution, Articles 65, 71, 79, 80, 100, 102, and 107. See www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Kuwait_1992.
3. Government formation is governed by the two constitutional Articles 56 and 57; is dominated by the emir and his appointed prime minister; and only vaguely mentions "traditional consultations." Disputes about portfolio allocation evolve into interpellations and motions of confidence.
4. This is the post-Iraq invasion of Kuwait period.

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In the 1960s, Rokkan (1966) found that the central arena in Norwegian politics was the corporatist bargaining table, where government representatives met with trade unionists, farmers, fishermen, and representatives of employers' associations. Important decisions in economic policy rarely were made in the Storting. Elections and votes counted in the choice of governing personnel, but other resources decided when public policies were negotiated in the corporatist arena. For decades, most observers of Norwegian politics supported the "decline of legislature thesis." However, from the late 1970s onward, the Storting became more active and influential vis-à-vis the executive (Rommetvedt 2003, 2023a). The corporatist apparatus, composed of numerous public boards, councils, and committees with interest-group representation, was gradually downscaled, and interest groups increasingly lobbied Parliament (Rommetvedt et al. 2013). In 2014, in celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Norwegian Constitution and the Storting, historians and political scientists concluded that since the 150th anniversary, the Parliament had strengthened its position (Narud, Heidar, and Grønlie 2014).

The Norwegian political system is based on negative parliamentarism. There is no investiture vote in Parliament, but the government must resign in case of a vote of no confidence. Election periods are fixed for four years. From 1945 to 1961, five or six parties were represented in the Storting, but the Labor Party controlled the majority of seats. Consequently, Labor could form single-party majority governments. Since then, the number of parliamentary parties has increased, and the latest general election in 2021 ended with 10 parties in the Storting. Since the mid-1960s, most governments have been coalition and/or minority governments.

Minority coalition governments depend on complex negotiations, among the parties in government and with one or more opposition parties, to obtain the necessary support from a majority in Parliament. This could strengthen Parliament, but resources are

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