



Institutional Manipulation in Authoritarian Regimes: The Kuwaiti National Assembly

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Introduction

- Proliferation of regimes that integrate nominally democratic institutions (Elections, Legislature and Political Parties) into an otherwise authoritarian structures.
- Nominally Democratic Institutions in authoritarian regimes no longer seen as mere window dressing.
- More attention give to why these institutions are adopted (i.e. what purpose they serve), and what the consequences of adopting them are.

Nominally Democratic Institutions in Authoritarian Regimes

- Tension between two different strands of literature. Possibility Vs. Probabilistic (Schedler 2009)
- Probabilistic (Schedler 2009)
 - a. Institutions as constraints.
 - b. Generalization about their general consequences.
 - c. Focus on regime- supporting role of institutions (i.e. controlling and co-opting societal actors)
- Possibilistic (Schedler 2009)
 - a. View these institutions as enabling devices.
 - b. contingent generalizations about structural vulnerabilities.
 - c. focus on regime subverting features of institutions.
- Generally Probabilistic strand produced more systematic studies.

Institutions and Authoritarian Regime Survival

- Power sharing theories: Institutions solve “commitment and monitoring problems caused by the secrecy that pervades authoritarian governance” which in turn enhances “power sharing among the ruling elite” (Boix & Svolik 2007)
- Institutions enable constitutional transfers of power by institutionalizing and regulating succession (Ezrow & Frantz 2011).
- Institutions such as legislatures are used “to solicit cooperation and to neutralize the threat of rebellion from forces within society” by giving these forces a say in policy formation (Gandhi 2008).
- Dictators create legislatures for different purposes depending on regime type. Some create them to “constrain and split the opposition” and distribute patronage, while others create them to share power with a strong organized party which can constrain them (Wright 2008)(Wright 2012).

Problem with probabilistic studies

- Ignore the existence of “conflicting imperatives” of delegation and control (Schedler 2009).
- Paying attention only to Macro-Design decisions at the expense of Micro-Design and Micro-Management.
- How exactly are these institutions manipulated to contain and control any potential opposition? And when does that succeed and when does it fail? Moreover what are the consequences of failure to properly manipulate institutions?

Strategies of Manipulation and the “Conflicting Imperatives”

- Agenda control and control of nomination procedures in the Vietnamese National assembly. (Malesky and Schuler 2010) (Schuler Unpublished manuscript)
- “Representation within bounds” through the use of agent control and disempowerment in China’s National People Congress. (Truex Dissertation Unpublished)
- Determinants of opposition votes in the legislature against the military regime in Brazil and escaping attempts at agent control. (Desposato 2001)

Dissertation Plan

- Add to the theories which examine micro-strategies of manipulation in authoritarian legislature by utilizing in depth within case analysis of Kuwait's National Assembly.

- Case Justification:
 - a. Examine a legislative manipulation strategy that has not been covered by the literature: *Fragmentation or fostering division in the legislative assembly.*

 - b. While in the other two cases mentioned above (Vietnam and China) a reasonable balance was struck between delegation and control in Kuwait no such balance has been struck and terminal political instability persists. What are the factors that make striking the aforementioned balance hard?

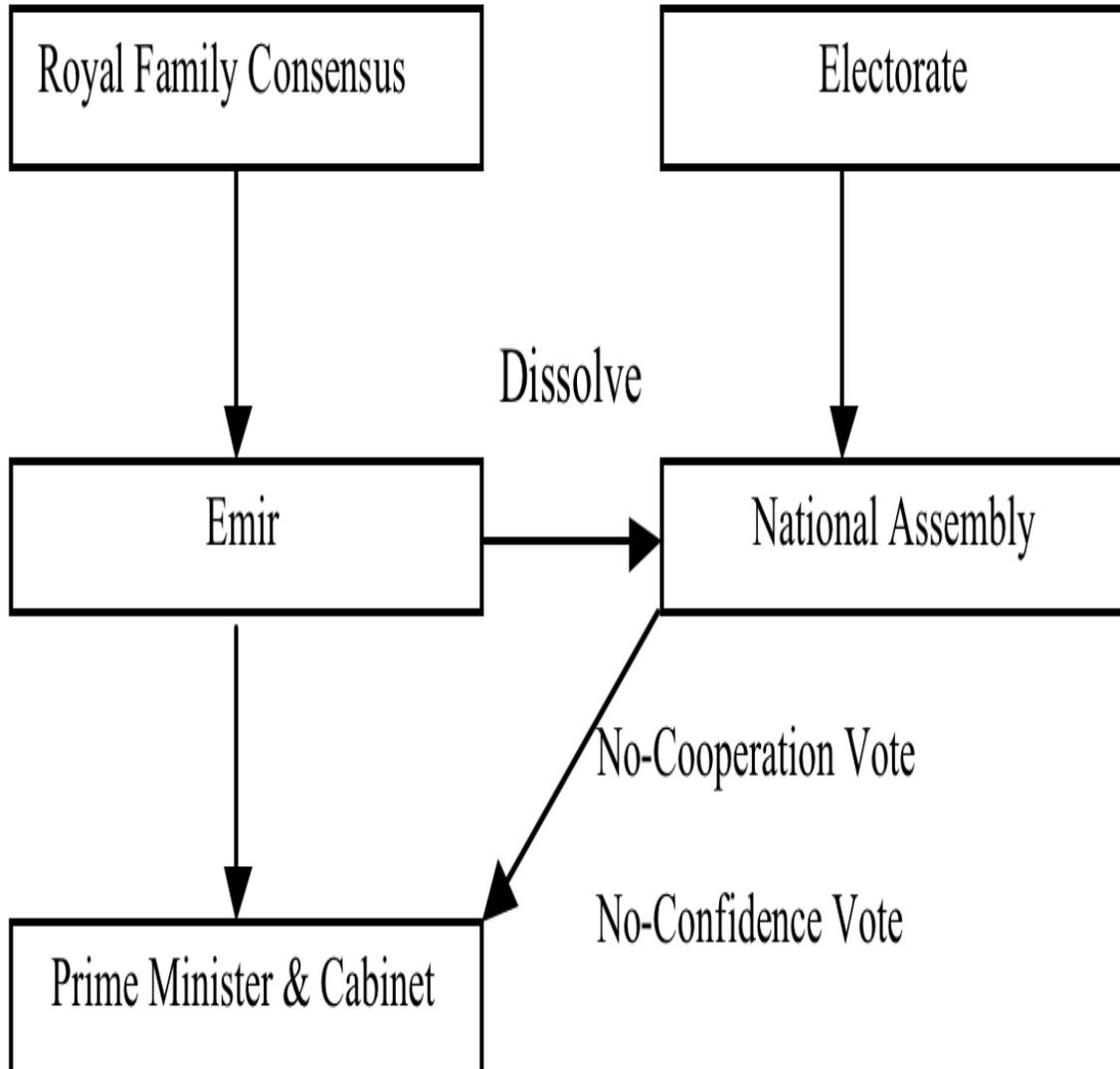
Determinants of Voting Against the Executive in the National Assembly

- Previous paper examined how gerrymandering in Kuwait ensures the fragmentation of political forces in the Kuwaiti assembly. Even after gerrymandering criticism of regime and instability in the form of executive legislative deadlock persists.
- The current project examines the determinants of voting against the executive in the Kuwaiti National Assembly between 1963-2012.
- The model that follows is an attempt to capture the overall instability and executive legislative deadlock.
- The next step is to link the first paper with the current project.

Kuwait's Political System

- Hereditary executive combined with a freely elected legislature.
- Three main social forces the Hadar (Urban), Tribes, Shiites.
- Intersection between political and social forces.
- Electoral districts drawn in a manner that reinforces division between the three groups. Almost all of the districts can be characterized by a dominant social group.

Graph: Structure of Executive Legislative Relations in Kuwait

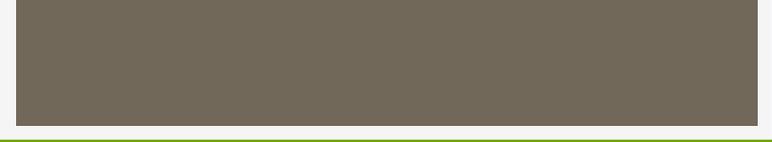


Definitions of Concepts

- No Confidence Vote: vote to remove a minister.
- District specific issues: Issues that pertain to services provided to the district. These range from housing, religious rights for minorities and any issues that pertain to the dominant group in the district.
- Political issues: Issues that pertain to human rights, freedoms and the electoral system.
- Political blocs: Parties are neither banned nor sanctioned in Kuwait. As a result there are political blocs in Kuwait that play the same role as parties but they are fluid, and generally with few exceptions lack discipline.

Main Arguments

- No-Confidence Vote Decision in Kuwaiti National Assembly (i.e. challenge the unelected executive) is subject to constituent pressure and the pressure associated with the losses incurred from the dissolution of the assembly by the executive.
- Pressure from constituents regarding district specific issues increases the likelihood of voting yes on a no-confidence vote to remove, as opposed to pressure from constituents regarding political issues. (a possible consequence of the way the electoral districts are drawn)
- Legislators will not vote to remove a minister when they fear that they will incur a cost - specifically that the executive reacts by dissolving the assembly.



EITM Framework

Step One

- Theoretical Concept: The decision to vote for removing the minister in question or not (i.e. *Decision Making*)
- Statistical Concept: Nominal Choice because the aforementioned decision is based on non-ordered categorical outcomes.

Step Two

- Behavioral Analogue: Utility maximization because legislators assess the utility of voting to remove the minister in terms of the effect of constituent pressure on their reelection prospects and the effect of assembly dissolution on their control of policy making avenues.
- Statistical Analogue: Discrete choice modeling.

Step Three: Unification of Theoretical and Statistical Analogues

- Model the utility of a no-confidence vote on a minister for legislator i based on each issue j .
- The basic form of the model is:

$$U_{ij} = \alpha + \alpha_1 C_j + \alpha_2 D_j + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

U_{ij} : Legislator i 's utility of voting no confidence on the minister on issue j .

C_j : Expected gain or loss in constituent support associated with voting on issue j .

D_j : Expected gain or loss from executive's decision to dissolve or keep the assembly intact.

- A Legislator will vote Yes to removing minister when:
$$U(\text{remove minister})_{ij} > U(\text{renewing confidence in minister})_{ij}$$
- A Legislator will vote No to removing minister when:
$$U(\text{remove minister})_{ij} < U(\text{renewing confidence in minister})_{ij}$$

Step Three: Unification of Theoretical and Statistical Analogues (Cont)

- The statistical model is a Logit model:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Issue Type} + \beta_2 \text{Opposition} + \beta_3 \text{Dissolution Cost}$$

Y: Decision to Vote yes or no or abstain on a motion of no confidence against a minister.

Issue Type: Dummy Variable for issue type. 1 if the issue is district specific 0 if the issue is political.

Opposition: Dummy Variable for whether the legislator belongs to a political bloc or an independent legislator who at the time of the vote was a considered an opposition bloc or figure by media accounts.

Dissolution Cost: Dummy Variable is 0 when the legislator has no loss associated with assembly dissolution 1 when there is a cost associated with dissolution.

Hypotheses

- Close reading of several opinion polls and analyses between 1996-2013 reveals that voters generally more concerned with issues pertaining to their districts as opposed to general political issues. Therefore I expect that:

H1: The likelihood of a legislator voting Yes on No-Confidence is higher for District Specific Issues than for Political Issues .

H2: If the cost incurred from dissolution is high for legislators they will not vote Yes on a no confidence vote.

Data

- Y: Roll Call Votes between 1963-2012. 14 motions of confidence voted on during this period.
- Issue type: careful examination of plenary sessions during which the No-Confidence vote was discussed. If legislator refers to district in the discussion I will code it as 1 issue specific. If the legislator
- Dissolution cost: if the legislator belongs to a political bloc that has a serving minister or has members in powerful legislative committees or has legislators with the same political persuasion holding the same positions the cost of dissolution is high and is coded as 1. Otherwise the cost is coded as 0.

The Way Forward

- Continue constructing the roll call vote dataset.
- Expand on model and test it.
- Connect the model to a theoretical argument on electoral manipulation in the Kuwait case.