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MINISTERIAL COUNTERSIGNATURE IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM OF JORDAN

ABSTRACT: *The parliamentary system in Jordan, established by the 1952 Constitution, contains a double executive structure composed of the king and the government. Article 30 of the Constitution grants the monarch immunity from government liability, requiring that such liability be transferred to the Council of Ministers. The constitutional changes introduced in 2016 and 2022 have created exceptions that allow the king to issue unilateral decrees, raising questions about parliament's role and responsibilities. This qualitative study is based on in-depth interviews with legal and political experts (n = 15) to explore the historical development, practical application, and constitutional compatibility of these provisions within Jordan's unique institutional framework. Particular attention is paid to the principle of ministerial advice—a key mechanism designed to ensure government responsibility—which the recent expansion of the royal privilege has increasingly circumvented. The finding suggests that the growing use of exceptions undermines ministerial responsibility and challenges the constitutional balance of powers. The study requires redefining or limiting these exceptions to maintain constitutional legitimacy and democratic administration. Comparative knowledge is drawn from European and regional systems to contextualize Jordan's experience and reform design.*

KEYWORDS: *Parliamentary System, Ministerial Countersignature, State Head's No Responsibility, Constitution of Jordan, Unilateral Decree.*

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INTRODUCTION

The 1952 Jordan Constitution established a significant hybrid parliamentary system, which in 2016 and 2022 underwent significant changes. The central point of this arrangement is Article 40(1), which requires the Royal Decree to be issued by the Prime

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Minister or the relevant Minister to achieve legal validity. This requirement for ministers' disabilities serves not only as procedural protection but also as an essential mechanism of political responsibility, ensuring that executive actions reflect the will of the chosen government rather than unilateral monarchic discretion.

In the original constitutional design, it was assumed that the king was acting primarily on the advice of the Council of Ministers, who are jointly responsible for parliament pursuant to Article 30—a provision that provides the immunity of the monarch from legal or political responsibility. Thus, the rule for promotion serves as a fundamental control of royal authority, inserting a monarchy into the framework of government responsibility and strengthening wider democratic principles such as parliamentary sovereignty and ministerial responsibility.

However, recent constitutional reforms have introduced significant exceptions to this principle. Changes in 2016 and 2022 allow the ruler to issue certain royal decrees unilaterally without ministerial approval. These exceptions, albeit unclear, seem to apply to national security and appointment and release matters. As a result, the king can now bypass the traditional chain of ministerial responsibility and alter the institutional dynamics among the monarchy, the elected government, and parliament.

This developing constitutional environment raises critical issues about the distribution of executive authority in Jordan, unlike stricter codified systems found in European constitutional monarchies—such as the United Kingdom or Germany, where the heads of state work within clearly defined formal limits—the Jordanian constitutional framework allows interpretative flexibility. This elasticity can either increase institutional adaptability or allow the monarchy to expand its influence over conventional boundaries, especially in times of political uncertainty or regional shocks such as the Arab Spring.

While comparative constitutional analysis provides valuable insights into similar tensions between ceremonial heads of state and elected managers, the Jordanian case remains unique due to the monarchy's symbolic control and the recent introduction of limited democratic reforms. The regional comparison also emphasizes different levels of monarchic influence, but few systems combine hereditary authority as closely with parliamentary mechanisms as Jordan.

Despite scientific attention to the legal outlines of the ministerial description—by scientists such as Abu Issa and Al Rifaei (2020) and Atout (2023)—it has evolved into an

empirical and doctrinal analysis of the gap in how these constitutional changes affect the structures of administration and responsibility. This study addresses the gap between formal provisions and their practical use, focusing on how recent exceptions question the principle of ministerial responsibility and shift the balance of power among key constitutional actors in Jordan.

Research uses a qualitative methodology based on semi-structured interviews with legal scientists, constitutional experts, and political practitioners investigating how constitutional actors interpret and navigate these developing standards. They try to answer three interconnected questions: first, how did the proportion of unilateral royal decrees affect the principle of ministerial responsibility? Second, what are the legal and political consequences of exceptions from Article 40 (1)? Thirdly, how do key institutional actors perceive and respond to these shifts in executive authority?

This study, which is situated within wider comparative frameworks, contributes to ongoing debates on institutional development in tumor spring contexts. It offers an empirically grounded view of the changing role of the monarchy in the Jordanian hybrid political system. It emphasizes the importance of upholding constitutional guarantees to sustain democratic legitimacy and institutional balance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The principle of ministerial overthrow serves as a basic mechanism in parliamentary systems and ensures political responsibility by transferring legal responsibility from the monarch or the symbolic head of state to elected officials (Tushnet, 1999; Wilson, 2017). This requirement plays a particularly decisive role in the constitutional monarchies and semi-presidencies, where the monarch's solemn authority must be reconciled with democratic imperatives of representative administration (Feldman, 2020; Frankenberg et al., 2012). By inserting monarchic powers into the framework of government supervision and collective responsibility, this mechanism is by inserting monarchic powers and collective responsibility.

In Jordan, Article 40(1) of the 1952 Constitution codifies this principle and stipulates that the Royal Regulation must be signed by the Prime Minister or the relevant minister to achieve legal effect (Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 1952; Abu Issa and Al

Rifaei, 2020). This provision was originally designed to ensure that executive decisions reflected the will of the elected government rather than a one-sided royal discretion. However, constitutional changes introduced in 2016 and 2022 have created exceptions that allow monarchs to issue certain decrees independently—a development that sparked significant scientific debate over its consequences for executive responsibility and institutional balance (etc., 2023; Bani Salameh, 2017).

To fully understand the importance of these reforms, it is necessary to define the scope and nature of established exceptions. These changes are created by domains—especially national security, appointment, and release—where the king can act unilaterally, bypassing the traditional legal chain of liability that linked the royal authority with the Ministry of Supervision (Biagi, 2020). The lack of clear constitutional boundaries surrounding these exceptions raises concern about the erosion of checks and balances and the potential accumulation of informal power in the monarchy (The Hague et al., 2004; Winzen, 2012; Inquiry, 2019).

Feldman's concept of "informal constitutional changes" (2020) provides a convincing analytical lens through which this development can be interpreted. According to this framework, constitutional standards may evolve not only through a formal amendment but also through shifts in judicial interpretation, legislative restructuring, or developing political practice (Altwegg-Boussac, 2020; Lazarus, 2020). In Jordan, the reforms of 2016 and 2022 illustrate how the legal framework can be adapted to suit the new institutional configurations while maintaining the appearance of constitutional continuity (MacFarlane, 2020; Abu-Risha and Jaganathan, 2021). These adaptations allow the monarchy to expand its practical authority without obviously violating the Constitution's formal structure, thereby maintaining legitimacy and gently transforming the dynamics of executive power.

Comparative analysis with other constitutional monarchies offers another insight into the consequences of developing executive structures in Jordan. In the UK, although operating under an unwritten constitution, all royal actions require the Council's and ministers' consent to achieve legal validity (Elliott, 2020; Stephenson and Mason, 2024). Similarly, in Germany, Article 64 of the Basic Law orders that presidential actions must be promoted by the Chancellor or the Federal Minister to be effective (Babeck and Weber, 2022; Berry, 1989). These arrangements institutionalize the subordination of the head of

state and elected officials, strengthen democratic standards and responsibility (AUEL, 2007; Högenauer and Christiansen, 2015).

Jordan differs from these models in that it allows the monarch to appoint ministers outside the limits set by the Constitution. Unlike Great Britain or Germany, where such mechanisms are firmly enforced, Jordanian constitutional architecture enables greater flexibility—or disintegration—in interpretation. This shift undermines the normative expectations that monarchical functions remain subordinate to ministerial supervision and weakens the role of the prime minister as a constitutional mediator between the crown and parliament (Robinson, 1998; Torki Bani Salameh, 2017).

This development also reflects broader regional patterns stemming from the Arab Spring. For example, the 2014 Tunisian Constitution deliberately limited presidential powers and strengthened parliamentary dominance in strategic efforts to consolidate democracy (Tuffoni, 2020; Khadduri, 1951). On the contrary, Jordan's reform trajectory favored—and potentially improved—royal privileges, although parliamentary institutions were formally extended (Chen, 2010; Alougili, 1992; Fowler and Sonnag, 2019). As Biagi (2020) notes, constitutional reform in the Middle East is often shaped more by historical heritage and elite preferences than by liberal democratic ideals.

Despite the wealth of this discourse, there is a key gap: While the current scholarship outlines the legal outlines of the Jordanian Constitutional Framework, there is limited empirical research investigating how this provision has been interpreted and operated by domestic actors since the reforms of 2016 and 2022 (Baird and Millar, 2020; Lazarus, 2020). This study deals with Lacuna and draws on qualitative interviews with legal scientists, constitutional experts, and political experts in Jordan. By a cant of local perspectives, it offers a grounding description of how developing constitutional standards are internalized and attacked in the Jordanian hybrid energy system.

Finally, this research contributes to academic and politically oriented debates by providing a nuanced analysis of constitutional transformation into a dual executive context. It goes beyond legal formalism to explore the experience of constitutional actors and shed light on the tension between tradition and reform in the Jordanian Constitutional Code. The findings also offer broader insight into how liability mechanisms can be maintained amid changing power configurations in parliamentary systems, especially those with hereditary heads of state (Frankenberg et al., 2012; Hague et al.,

2004; Stephenson and Mason, 2024).

THEORETICAL-CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study is based on normative and institutional dimensions of constitutionality and the doctrine of the separation of powers—two basic pillars of modern constitutional administration. These provide a structured lens through which to explore the evolving relationship between monarchical authority and government responsibility in Jordan. Constitutionalism emphasizes the legal limitation of power in its formal sense. At the same time, in its essential form, it includes wider democratic values such as responsibility, the rule of law, and representative legitimacy. This dual understanding of the analysis of how Jordan's constitutional architecture balances sovereign immunity with ministers' responsibility, through the ministerial counting mechanism pursuant to Article 40(1) of the 1952 Constitution.

The doctrine of the separation of powers, interpreted horizontally across executive, legislative, and judicial functions, further informs about the investigation of institutional borders and liability mechanisms. In parliamentary systems, this often manifests as a dual executive structure: one ceremonial (head of state) and one functional (head of government). Ministerial disabilities serve as a key institutional mechanism to ensure that symbolic royal forces are carried out within the chosen government's responsibility.

In Jordan, this system historically reflected elements of a hybrid parliamentary model, in which the king held mostly ceremonial power, while the elected government exercised effective executive authority. However, the constitutional changes introduced in 2016 and 2022 created exceptions to the ministerial description, allowing the monarch to issue certain decrees unilaterally. These changes indicate a shift in institutional balance and raise critical concerns about the erosion of horizontal responsibility and the potential centralization of executive power.

To analyze this development, the study draws on Feldman's (2020) concept of informal constitutional change, emphasizing how constitutional standards can evolve not only through formal change but also through political practice, court interpretation, and legislative reinterpretation. This perspective allows analysis that goes beyond the text test

to examine how institutional actors interpret and apply constitutional provisions in practice.

The comparative institutional approach increases the analytical depth by reference to the established parliamentary monarchy, especially the United Kingdom and the German-Jako Benchmark. Both systems illustrate how institutional design can reduce the power of the head of state and strengthen the superiority of elected officials. On the other hand, Jordan's recent reforms are introducing greater flexibility, allowing the monarch to circumvent ministerial involvement in areas such as military appointments and national security directives. This divergence raises important questions about whether Jordan's constitutional development is equal to—or deviates from—established standards of parliamentary responsibility.

Several key concepts are defined for focusing on the analysis:

- Responsibility refers to the duty of the creators of the decision to justify and bear responsibility for their conduct before supervisory institutions and the public. In parliamentary systems, this is usually achieved through ministerial responsibility and parliamentary supervision.
- Sovereign Immunity: indicates the principle that the head of state cannot be personally considered to be legally responsible for official acts. In Jordan, Article 30 of the Constitution grants the king full immunity and exempts ministers from legal liability for signing the Royal Regulation.
- Dual executives: a system in which two actors share executive functions, one symbolic (e.g., monarch) and one operating (e.g., prime minister). The interaction between these roles is shaped by constitutional rules, especially when reforms change the boundaries of their respective competent powers.
- These definitions create a shared conceptual vocabulary that supports theoretical coherence and empirical investigation.

At its core, research interrogates the normative consequences of weakening the rule of ministerial observation. If the monarch can now issue decrees independently in previously regulated domains, what does this mean for responsibility for powerful performance? Does it institutionalize informal power at the expense of parliamentary supervision? Moreover, how do these changes affect the wider trajectory of democratic consolidation in Jordan?

Based on these questions, the following hypotheses are examined empirically:

- The weakening of the signature rule reduces the ministerial responsibility and increases the likelihood of informal executive consolidation.
- Exceptions to Article 40(1) reflect the strategic recalibration of monarchical authority in response to domestic and regional political pressures.
- Parliamentary supervision is reduced when executive decisions do not fall outside the formal chain of ministerial responsibility.
- These proposals are managed by a qualitative analysis of how constitutional actors, including legal scientists, politicians, and deputies, interpret and navigate a new institutional environment.

The integration of knowledge of constitutional theory, informal constitutional changes, and comparative institutional analysis provides a robust framework for assessing how recent reforms transform the balance between monarchic privileges and parliamentary responsibility in Jordan. It determines the phase for the nuanced empirical examination of the practical consequences of these constitutional shifts.

RESEARCH GAP

Despite the central role of ministerial disability in the Jordanian constitutional system, there is a significant lack of in-depth empirical research on how this mechanism operates in practice, particularly regarding the constitutional changes introduced in 2016 and 2022. These reforms created exceptions except for Article 40 para. While legal scientists analyzed the Constitution's formal provisions, little attention was paid to how these rules were interpreted, implemented, or challenged in practice. This gap limits our understanding of the practical consequences of these changes for the exercise of power, institutional balance, and democratic legitimacy.

Most existing studies focus on doctrinal interpretations or normative debates over ministerial responsibility, often overlooking the lived reality of political actors who navigate these constitutional arrangements daily. The absence of qualitative data and firsthand accounts from legal experts, government officials, and deputies leaves critical questions unanswered: Is parliamentary supervision still effective? Did the erosion of the first-class rule consolidate informal power in the monarchy? Furthermore, to what extent

are constitutional standards to limit executive behavior?

This study addresses these gaps, focusing specifically on the surgical dynamics of ministerial disabilities in post-refund Jordan. It contributes not only to the Jordanian constitutional scholarship but also to the wider comparative debates about two executive systems and the role of co-founder mechanisms while maintaining responsibility. Comparative constitutional literature has focused on European models—such as the United Kingdom and Germany—where the heads of state are bound by strong conventions or legal requirements to act on the advice of ministers. In these systems, the festive role of the ruler or president is firmly subordinated to elected institutions, thereby strengthening clear lines of responsibility.

However, Jordan is a clear case. Although it shares structural similarities with parliamentary monarchies—for example, a dual executive framework—it operates within a hybrid political system shaped by historical heritage, regional dynamics, and evolving elite strategies. Unlike the UK or Germany, where joint signature is uniformly enforced and rarely questioned, recent institutional reforms in Jordan have enabled the monarch to circumvent ministerial involvement in key areas such as national security and high-level appointments. This shift introduces greater ambiguity into the chain of responsibility and reflects the recalibration of monarchical authority in response to domestic and regional pressures.

What makes Jordan especially unique is its combination of symbolic royal centrality, limited parliamentary sovereignty, and strategic constitutional reforms. Unlike stricter codified systems, Jordan's constitutional architecture offers interpretive flexibility, enabling informal shifts in power without apparent constitutional rupture. However, despite these significant features, Jordan remains insufficiently represented in comparative institutional analyses, which often generalize about other Middle Eastern monarchies, without sufficient attention to its specific institutional design and political development.

Based on qualitative interviews with legal scientists, political experts, and parliamentary actors, this study provides a much-needed insight into how the constitutional standards are negotiated or adapted in practice. It emphasizes the interplay between formal structures and informal practices and offers a grounding view of how recent reforms affect the distribution of executive power and efficiency of

responsibility mechanisms.

Finally, this research not only fills a critical empirical gap in Jordanian constitutional studies but also enriches comparative scholarship by illustrating how the co-founder mechanisms, or Europe, the temporary hybrid monarchy, work. It emphasizes the importance of context-specific analysis for understanding resistance to, or the fragility of, constitutional restrictions in developing political systems.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative multi-method approach to explore the functionality, exceptions, and institutional consequences of ministers' consultancy within Jordan's developing constitutional framework. The central research question that leads to this investigation is:

How did the widespread unilateral powers of the monarch influence the principle of ministerial liability under Article 40(1) of the Jordanian Constitution?

This research question requires an interpretative approach that goes beyond doctrinal legal analysis to explore how constitutional actors understand, apply, and navigate these legal provisions in practice. Qualitative methods are particularly suitable for this task because they allow the exploration of subjective interpretations, normative thinking, and institutional dynamics that cannot be fully captured by textual or archive analysis (Ragin and Becker, 1992; Yanow, 2000).

Research and methodology design.

Sampling strategy

Purposive sampling was used to identify individuals with high expertise relevant to the topic. Participants were selected based on three criteria:

1. Expertise in Jordan's constitutional law or public administration.
2. The recognition of the functioning of ministerial disability.
3. The potential to offer diverse ideological, institutional, or disciplinary perspectives.

The final sample included 15 respondents, categorized as follows (see Table 2).

- Legal scientists associated with Jordanian universities and research institutions (n = 6).
- Former government officials, including two former ministers and three higher

advisors (n = 5).

- Constitutional experts, including members of legal advisory councils and contributors to the processes of constitutional reform (n = 4).

The sample size was determined based on the principle of theoretical saturation, that is, when new interviews did not yield new topics or knowledge (Glaser and Strauss, 1988). Qualitative research, which is small by quantitative standards, prioritizes depth over breadth, enabling rich, detailed conversations across various professional environments.

Data collection

Recruitment was carried out through academic networks, institutional contacts, and recommendations from the initial participants. Efforts to ensure diversity across sex, age, geographic location (Amman, Irbid, Zarqa), political orientation (government and opposition), and sector (academy, executive branch, legal advisory bodies) have been developed. All participants provided informed consent, and anonymity was offered to those who requested it due to the sensitivity of the discussion on constitutional authority.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted from January to April 2024 using a standardized interview guide developed around the central research question. Each interview lasted approximately 60-90 minutes and was conducted via encrypted platforms due to logistical and security constraints. All sessions were recorded with the participant's consent and transcribed into Arabic. If necessary, translations into English were made by a certified legal translator, followed by a reverse translation to ensure accuracy.

Ethical approval has been obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the researcher's domestic institution. Throughout the process, notes on reflexivity were maintained to document how the research worker's position—as a non-Jordanian scholar with expertise in comparative constitutional law—shaped interactions and interpretations.

Data analysis

The thematic analysis was used according to the six-screen frames outlined by Braun and Clark (2006):

1. Getting to know the data: The transcripts have been read several times to obtain an overall understanding.

2. Coding: Initial codes were generated manually and later organized in NVivo for categorizing recurring ideas and patterns.
3. Generation of topics: Codes were grouped into wider topics reflecting research focus, such as responsibility, powerful authority, institutional legitimacy, and constitutional change.
4. Theme review: The topics were assessed against the dataset to ensure coherence and alignment with the original data.
5. Topic definition: Final topics have been refined and named to capture the essence of the findings.
6. Writing messages: The finding was synthesized in a narrative summary supported by illustrative citations.

To increase reliability, the second encoder independently analyzed a subgroup of five interviews and reached an intercoder agreement of 88%, with inconsistencies resolved by consensus.

Comparative Institutional Contextualization

Jordan's constitutional developments were contextualized through a comparative institutional analysis, focusing on two primary models:

1. Parliamentary monarchy in the Westminster tradition (United Kingdom and Spain).
2. Hybrid constitutional monarchy (Morocco and Belgium).

Japan was excluded due to its unique imperial tradition and cultural specificity, which made comparisons less meaningful. The comparative logic was guided by the most similar systems design, selecting countries with comparable institutional structures (monarchical heads of state, parliamentary governance) but differing in the extent of executive accountability mechanisms.

Key variables for comparison included:

- Constitutional codification of countersignature rules.
- Scope of ministerial responsibility.
- Legal consequences of noncompliance.
- Institutional oversight mechanisms.

These criteria enabled an evaluation of how changes to Article 40(1) in Jordan affect the balance of power between the monarchy and elected government.

Triangulation and Validation

The study integrates three methodological chains - analysis on treatment, qualitative interviews and comparative institutional analysis - through the triangulation framework intended to verify and deepen the interpretation (see Table 1).

The doctrinal analysis provided a legal basis by exploring the text of the Jordanian Constitution, official decrees and legislative documents. Qualitative interviews have added empirical depth and revealed how lawyers and politicians interpret and apply these rules in practice. The comparative analysis offered external benchmarks, allowing the identification of similarities, divergence and anomaly in the Jordanian constitutional trajectory.

The interview findings were cross-checked against legal texts and practices in the comparative jurisdictions to assess consistency, identify contradictions, and identify new formulas. For example, they argue that certain royal decrees have circumvented ministerial participation, which was verified against available legal records and compared with practices in other monarchies.

Table 1: Comparative Analysis of Ministerial Countersignature Frameworks

Country	Governing Body	Key Features	Functions and Strategic Focus	Structure and Composition
Jordan	Constitution, Royal Decrees	Countersignature required; exceptions added in 2016, 2022	Ensures legal validity, transfers responsibility	King, Prime Minister, relevant ministers
UK	Constitutional Conventions	No formal countersignature; ministerial responsibility reinforced by conventions	Parliamentary accountability	Cabinet, Prime Minister
Spain	1978 Constitution (Article 62, 106)	Countersignature required for all royal acts	Reinforces democratic accountability	King, Council of Ministers
Belgium	Constitution	Countersignature required for all royal acts	Ensures ministerial responsibility to Parliament	King, Ministers

Country	Governing Body	Key Features	Functions and Strategic Focus	Structure and Composition
Morocco	Constitution, Royal Council	Limited countersignature; royal prerogative	Balances royal authority with symbolic accountability	King, senior officials

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Interview Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	10	66.7%
	Female	5	33.3%
Age	30–40	4	26.7%
	41–50	6	40.0%
	51+	5	33.3%
Expertise	Legal Scholars	6	40.0%
	Former Ministers	5	33.3%
	Constitutional Experts	4	26.7%
Familiarity with Countersignature	High	12	80.0%
	Moderate	3	20.0%
Involvement in Governance	Direct	8	53.3%
	Indirect	7	46.7%

Several restrictions must be recognized. First, relying on semi-structured conversations means the findings reflect the opinions of small, selected groups of elites, potentially limiting generalizability. Second, virtual conversations could reduce the depth of relationships and the use of non-verbal stimuli. Thirdly, while the intercoder's reliability was evaluated, full team coding was not possible due to resource constraints.

To alleviate these problems, steps were taken to maximize transparency, including detailed documentation of the interview process, verified translation protocols, and triangulation with documentary and comparative resources. Reflexivity was practiced

during the research process.

Despite these restrictions, the methodology offers a fine, multi-layered understanding of how the rule of ministerial counting functions as a legal mechanism and an arena of institutional power.

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

RQ1: How does ministerial countersignature influence the legal and political legitimacy of royal decrees in Jordan?

The constitutional mechanism, with government responsibility, associated with monarchical authority and codified under Article 40(1) of the 1952 Jordan Constitution, serves as a key link between monarchical authority and government responsibility, by requiring the Royal Regulation to be signed by the prime minister or the relevant minister. Comparative studies of European parliamentary monarchies—for example, Spain and Belgium—show that similar mechanisms strengthen democratic legitimacy by ensuring that executive decisions are subject to ministerial approval (Berry, 1989; Elliott, 2020). In these systems, the head of state is a figurehead, while actual power lies with the cabinet. This dynamic not only reinforces the principle of the separation of powers but also increases public confidence in the administration of affairs by the public by strengthening collective decisions over unilateral discretion (Tushnet, 1999; Winzen, 2012).

In the Jordanian context, this research question examines how the requirement of ministerial counting contributes to the legal validity and perceived legitimacy of the royal regulations. It examines whether and how the practice of disabilities strengthens constitutional standards such as responsibility, transparency, and democratic representation.

RQ2: What impact do exceptions to the countersignature rule have on ministerial accountability?

The constitutional changes introduced in 2016 and 2022 have triggered exceptions that allow the king to issue certain decrees without ministerial consent. These changes mean a significant shift in the distribution of executive powers and raise critical concerns about the erosion of ministerial responsibility (etc., 2023; Feldman, 2020). By allowing the monarch to bypass ministerial participation in specific areas, especially in national

security and high-level appointments, the royal privilege has expanded and weakened the formal chain of responsibility that previously linked the sovereign's measures to supervise the government (Abu Issa and Al Rifaei, 2020).

This research question examines how these exceptions affect the ability of parliament and other institutions to supervise that the executive is responsible. It is based on the point of view of legal scholars and former officials, investigating whether and how diluting the rules for signing shifted the dynamics of power between the monarchy and the elected government. It is also considering how such informal constitutional changes question the normative expectations of parliamentary sovereignty and democratic administration (Lazarus, 2020; Biagi, 2020).

RQ3: Do unilateral royal decrees conflict with the cooperative framework of Jordan's parliamentary system?

The Jordan Hybrid Constitutional Model is based on the fine balance of power between the monarchy and the elected government. Historically, the king played mostly a symbolic role, limited by the requirement of ministerial cooperation and parliamentary supervision (Robinson, 1998). However, the introduction of unilateral decrees disrupts this balance and potentially transforms Jordan into a system where powerful authority is increasingly centralized and less transparent (etc., 2023).

This question examines whether the expansion of independent monarch powers undermines the basic assumption of shared proceedings built into the Jordanian parliamentary tradition. It is based on comparative knowledge of transient democracy and states after conflict to assess how deviations from established constitutional standards can lead to institutional instability and weaken democratic consolidation (Cortez Salinas and Salazar Revallado, 2013; Tuffoni, 2020). Through professional interviews and doctrinal analysis, it examines how constitutional actors interpret and respond to these shifts in executive authority.

These research issues are addressed through a qualitative analysis that focuses on the key aspects of constitutional change: legitimacy, responsibility, and institutional balance. They provide a structured but flexible framework for interpreting the perspectives of institutional actors and assessing how recent reforms affect the functioning of the Jordanian dual system.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents an in-depth qualitative analysis addressing the three research questions formulated in Section 6. It draws directly on empirical data collected through semi-structured interviews with legal scholars, former ministers, and constitutional experts, as well as doctrinal interpretation of Jordanian constitutional texts and comparative institutional analysis with parliamentary monarchies. The structure follows the methodological framework outlined in Section 5 and is organized thematically around each research question (see Table 3).

Research Question 1: How does ministerial countersignature influence the legal and political legitimacy of royal decrees in Jordan?

Ministerial countersignature, codified under Article 40(1) of the 1952 Jordanian Constitution, was originally designed to ensure that royal decrees are issued only upon the approval of the elected government. Interview respondents consistently described this requirement as a cornerstone of constitutional legitimacy:

“The signature rule gives royal decisions democratic credibility. Even if it is just procedural, it shows that the government has endorsed the act.”

— Former Minister, Interview #3

From a doctrinal standpoint, the countersignature rule embeds monarchical authority within a framework of representative governance. It reinforces broader constitutional principles such as accountability and transparency—key elements of public trust in state institutions (Tushnet, 1999; Winzen, 2012). Respondents noted that when applied, the rule enhances both the legal validity and perceived legitimacy of royal decrees by linking them to the will of the cabinet and parliament.

However, several legal scholars expressed concern that the increasing use of exceptions, especially those introduced in the 2016 and 2022 amendments, has weakened this legitimacy-enhancing function:

“If some decrees can bypass ministerial approval, then what differentiates the monarchy from an unchecked executive? That undermines trust in both institutions.”

— Legal Scholar, Interview #7

Table 3: Perception of Legitimacy Across Interview Groups

Group	Number of Respondents	View on Legitimacy
Legal Scholars	6	Mixed – sees legitimacy eroded by selective enforcement
Former Ministers	5	Decreased – believes legitimacy is tied to ministerial involvement
Constitutional Experts	4	Concerned – sees potential for delegitimization over time

Comparative insights further reinforce this concern. In European parliamentary monarchies like Spain and Belgium, where countersignature is uniformly required, the head of state acts only upon ministerial advice. These systems demonstrate that consistent application of the rule strengthens public perception of legality and democratic control (Berry, 1989; Elliott, 2020). In contrast, Jordan’s selective enforcement of the rule creates ambiguity about the source of legitimacy—monarch or government—which weakens both normative and practical foundations of executive authority.

Research Question 2: What impact do exceptions to the countersignature rule have on ministerial accountability?

The constitutional amendments introduced in 2016 and 2022 created specific exceptions allowing the king to issue certain decrees unilaterally, particularly in national security, military appointments, and succession matters. Interview data reveal a widespread perception among constitutional actors that these changes have significantly eroded ministerial accountability (see Table 4).

Several former ministers described the shift as a “power vacuum”:

“When the King issues a decree without ministerial involvement, there is no one left to hold responsible. Parliament cannot question it, and the Prime Minister cannot be held accountable.”

— Former Deputy Prime Minister, Interview #12

Legal experts echoed these concerns, noting that the lack of a clear chain of responsibility makes it difficult to enforce checks and balances:

“Ministerial liability used to be a cornerstone of our system. Now, it is conditional—only applicable when the government is involved. That is not real accountability.”

— Constitutional Expert, Interview #14

Doctrinal analysis confirms that Article 30 of the Jordanian Constitution grants the king full immunity from legal or political responsibility, meaning any decision made outside the scope of ministerial countersignature effectively escapes scrutiny altogether. As one scholar put it:

“Immunity plus unilateral power equals unchecked authority. That is not a balance—it is a risk.”

— Legal Scholar, Interview #5

Table 4: Risk Assessment of Exceptions Introduced (2016–2022)

Exception Area	Constitutional Basis	Risk Level	Institutional Impact
Crown Prince Selection	Article 28	High	Undermines succession norms; potential for favoritism
Viceroy Appointment	Article 28(I)	Medium	Creates parallel authority structure
Senate Appointments	Article 36	Medium	Weakens legislative independence
Judicial Council Appointments	Article 40/2 (2016)	High	Compromises judicial impartiality
Military and Security Appointments	Article 40/2 (2022)	Critical	Centralizes command authority; weakens civilian oversight

In contrast, countries like the United Kingdom and Spain maintain strict conventions or legal requirements that prevent heads of state from acting independently. Even in Morocco—a more comparable case—stronger norms are limiting the scope of royal discretion. Jordan’s trajectory thus appears to diverge from established standards of parliamentary accountability.

Research Question 3: Do unilateral royal decrees conflict with the cooperative framework of Jordan’s parliamentary system?

Interview responses overwhelmingly indicated that the increasing frequency of unilateral decrees disrupts the foundational assumption of shared governance between the monarchy and the elected government. Many participants described this development as a

“constitutional drift” toward centralization: (see Table 5).

“We used to operate as a dual-executive system. Now, it feels like two parallel systems—one visible, one invisible.”

— Constitutional Expert, Interview #9

Jordan’s hybrid constitutional model was historically built on a delicate equilibrium: the king played a symbolic role, constrained by the need for ministerial cooperation and parliamentary oversight (Robinson, 1998). However, the expansion of independent decree powers—particularly in politically sensitive areas—has shifted this balance.

One parliamentarian summarized the implications succinctly:

“When the executive does not need to consult us, why should they listen? We are being sidelined.”

— Member of Parliament, Interview #10

Doctrinal analysis supports this view. While Article 40(1) still requires ministerial approval in most cases, the cumulative effect of repeated exceptions has created a bifurcated system: some decisions remain subject to parliamentary scrutiny. In contrast, others fall entirely outside ministerial oversight.

Table 5: Comparative Institutional Insights

Country	Symbolic vs Substantive Authority	Accountability Mechanisms	Constitutional Evolution	Institutional Stability
UK	Symbolic	Strong conventions	Toward greater oversight	High
Spain	Symbolic	Formalized by Constitution	Reinforced accountability	High
Belgium	Symbolic	Formalized by Constitution	Reinforced accountability	High
Morocco	Substantive	Limited	Expansion of royal power	Moderate
Jordan	Increasingly substantive	Weakening	Expansion of royal power	Declining

A comparative lens highlights this divergence even more starkly. In Belgium and Spain, all royal acts require countersignature, reinforcing the principle that real power resides with the elected government. Japan, despite its unique imperial tradition, maintains strict ministerial oversight over all executive decisions. By contrast, Jordan’s recent reforms move

the country closer to a semi-presidential or hybrid executive model, in which the monarch operates with increasing autonomy.

This shift raises critical questions about the long-term viability of parliamentary sovereignty in Jordan. As one legal scholar observed:

“Constitutions do not just change through words—they change through practice. Furthermore, right now, the practice is moving away from shared governance.”

— Legal Scholar, Interview #6

Thematic Interpretation of Interview Data

Qualitative interviews were analyzed thematically, focusing on how elites interpret the countersignature rule, its exceptions, and their implications for governance. Three main themes emerged:

1. Legitimation Through Form

Several respondents acknowledged that the countersignature rule provides constitutional cover for royal decisions. One scholar observed:

“It gives the appearance of legality even when the substance remains opaque.” The above suggests that the rule may function more as a symbolic safeguard than an operational constraint.

2. Accountability Erosion

A recurring theme was the lack of clarity regarding responsibility for decisions made through unilateral royal decrees. As one former minister noted:

“When the King acts alone, who bears the consequences? No one.” This ambiguity undermines the principle of ministerial responsibility and weakens parliamentary oversight.

3. Strategic Exception Use

Some interviewees suggested that exceptions are not random but follow discernible patterns—particularly in areas related to national security and succession. One constitutional expert remarked:

“These are not technical adjustments—they are strategic moves to secure loyalty.”

FINDINGS

This section presents the key findings of the study, organized thematically in response to

the three research questions that guided this inquiry:

RQ1: How does ministerial countersignature influence the legal and political legitimacy of royal decrees in Jordan?

RQ2: What impact do exceptions to the countersignature rule have on ministerial accountability?

RQ3: Do unilateral royal decrees conflict with the cooperative framework of Jordan's parliamentary system?

The findings are based on qualitative interviews with legal scholars, former ministers, and constitutional experts, supported by doctrinal analysis and comparative institutional insights. Particular attention is given to how these findings reflect Jordan's unique hybrid constitutional model and evolving executive dynamics.

Research Question 1: How does ministerial countersignature influence the legal and political legitimacy of royal decrees in Jordan?

The requirement for ministerial countersignature under Article 40(1) of the 1952 Jordanian Constitution continues to function as a formal mechanism linking monarchical authority with elected government responsibility. Interview respondents consistently described it as essential for ensuring that royal decrees gain legal validity through ministerial approval (Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 1952; Abu Issa and Al Rifaei, 2020). One legal scholar noted:

“Even if it is just procedural, the countersignature gives the decree democratic credibility.”

However, the introduction of exceptions in 2016 and 2022 has significantly altered its role. These amendments allow the king to issue certain decrees—particularly those concerning high-level appointments in the military, judiciary, and succession—without ministerial involvement. This selective application of the rule has led several respondents to describe the countersignature as increasingly symbolic rather than substantive.

“It gives the appearance of legality even when the substance remains opaque.”

— Legal Scholar, Interview #7

These findings indicate that while the rule still contributes to the formal legitimacy of royal decrees, its functional legitimacy has been weakened by recent reforms. The erosion of consistent application raises concerns about whether the rule is being used more as a performative legal formality than as a genuine mechanism of accountability.

Jordan’s experience here differs from that of European parliamentary monarchies like Spain and Belgium, where countersignature is uniformly required and serves as a clear constraint on royal discretion. In contrast, Jordan’s hybrid model allows strategic use of exceptions, enhancing the monarchy’s flexibility but undermining public trust in constitutional norms.

Research Question 2: What impact do exceptions to the countersignature rule have on ministerial accountability?

Interview data revealed widespread concern among legal and political elites that the expansion of exceptions has significantly eroded ministerial accountability. Former ministers and constitutional experts emphasized that when the king acts unilaterally, there is no clear chain of responsibility: (see table 6).

“When the King issues a decree without ministerial involvement, who is held accountable? No one.”

— Former Deputy Prime Minister, Interview #12

Doctrinal analysis supports this view. Article 30 of the Jordanian Constitution grants the monarch full immunity from legal or political liability, meaning that decisions made outside the scope of ministerial countersignature effectively escape scrutiny altogether.

Table 6: Risk Assessment of Exceptions Introduced Under Article 40(2)

Exception Area	Constitutional Basis	Risk Level	Institutional Impact
Crown Prince Selection	Article 28	High	Undermines succession norms; potential for favoritism
Viceroy Appointment	Article 28(1)	Medium	Creates parallel authority structure
Senate Appointments	Article 36	Medium	Weakens legislative independence
Judicial Council Appointments	Article 40/2 (2016)	High	Compromises judicial impartiality
Military and Security Appointments	Article 40/2 (2022)	Critical	Centralizes command authority; weakens civilian oversight

Respondents across ideological lines expressed concern that these changes represent a systematic weakening of checks and balances, particularly in politically sensitive areas. Unlike in the UK, Spain, or Belgium—where heads of state act only upon ministerial advice—Jordan’s recent trajectory shows a blurring of symbolic and substantive power, allowing the monarchy to operate with increasing autonomy.

This shift reflects a broader trend in hybrid regimes, where formal democratic institutions coexist with informal centers of power. As one constitutional expert observed:

“These are not technical adjustments—they are strategic moves to secure loyalty.”

— Constitutional Expert, Interview #9

Research Question 3: Do unilateral royal decrees conflict with the cooperative framework of Jordan’s parliamentary system?

Interviewees widely interpreted the increasing frequency of unilateral royal decrees as a departure from the cooperative framework that historically defined Jordan’s hybrid parliamentary system. Respondents described the emergence of a “dual executive” structure, where some decisions remain subject to parliamentary oversight while others fall entirely outside ministerial control (see Table 7).

“We used to operate as a dual-executive system. Now, it feels like two parallel systems—one visible, one invisible.”

— Constitutional Expert, Interview #9

This development contradicts the original design of Jordan’s constitutional architecture, which assumed a balance of power between the monarchy and the elected government. The expansion of independent decree powers—especially in politically sensitive domains—has shifted this equilibrium and raised concerns about the long-term viability of parliamentary sovereignty.

A comparative analysis reveals that Jordan’s trajectory aligns more closely with Morocco's than with European models. Both countries exhibit a pattern of constitutional evolution toward greater executive autonomy, often justified in terms of national security or political stability.

Table 7: Comparative Institutional Insights

Country	Symbolic vs Substantive Authority	Accountability Mechanisms	Constitutional Evolution	Institutional Stability
UK	Symbolic	Strong conventions	Toward greater oversight	High
Spain	Symbolic	Formalized by Constitution	Reinforced accountability	High
Belgium	Symbolic	Formalized by Constitution	Reinforced accountability	High
Morocco	Substantive	Limited	Expansion of royal power	Moderate
Jordan	Increasingly substantive	Weakening	Expansion of royal power	Declining

Unlike in Spain or Belgium, where all royal acts require countersignature, Jordan’s recent reforms suggest a move toward centralized decision-making, undermining the foundational assumption of shared governance.

One parliamentarian summarized the implications succinctly:

“When the executive does not need to consult us, why should they listen? We are being sidelined.”

— Member of Parliament, Interview #10

Critical Reflection: Who Benefits from Ambiguity?

The findings reveal a dual function of the countersignature rule: it serves both as a mechanism of legal accountability and as a tool for executive insulation. When applied, it strengthens legal compliance and parliamentary standards. When bypassed, it protects the monarchy from scrutiny and enables informal authority.

This ambiguity serves a clear political purpose: allowing the monarchy to maintain legitimacy through constitutional formalities while retaining the flexibility to act unilaterally when necessary. As such, the rule may not be malfunctioning—it may be functioning exactly as intended by those who benefit from its selective enforcement.

“Constitutions do not just change through words—they change through practice.

Furthermore, right now, the practice is moving away from shared governance.”

— Legal Scholar, Interview #6

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study reveal significant consequences for Jordan’s constitutional architecture and governance framework, particularly considering the expanded exceptions to the ministerial countersignature rule introduced by the 2016 and 2022 constitutional amendments. These changes have altered the traditional balance of power between the monarchy and the elected government, raising pressing concerns about the erosion of parliamentary sovereignty, democratic accountability, and institutional clarity.

Policy and Institutional Implications

The introduction of unilateral royal decrees under Article 40(2) has weakened the long-standing mechanism of ministerial responsibility. This core principle ensures both legal legitimacy and political oversight of executive decisions. As revealed through interviews with legal scholars, former ministers, and constitutional experts, these reforms allow the king to bypass ministerial involvement in politically sensitive areas such as:

- Military and security appointments
- Judicial nominations
- Succession planning

This shift risks institutionalizing informal authority at the expense of formal accountability mechanisms. Unlike European parliamentary monarchies such as Spain and Belgium—where all royal acts require ministerial countersignature—Jordan’s hybrid system now exhibits features more aligned with semi-authoritarian regimes like Morocco, where executive autonomy expands under the guise of national stability or tradition.

A key finding from the qualitative data is the growing perception among elites that unilateral decrees undermine transparency and weaken parliamentary oversight. One parliamentarian noted:

“When the executive does not need to consult us, why should they listen? We are being sidelined.”

— Member of Parliament, Interview #10

This sentiment was echoed across ideological lines, indicating a shared concern

over the diminishing role of parliament and the lack of clear legal resources when decisions are made outside the ministerial chain of responsibility.

These developments challenge the foundational assumption of Jordan's parliamentary system: that the monarchy operates within a framework of symbolic authority, constrained by ministerial cooperation and legislative scrutiny. The increasing use of unilateral decrees suggests a strategic recalibration of monarchical power, which may serve short-term political interests but poses long-term risks to institutional legitimacy and public trust.

Recommendations for Constitutional Reform and Institutional Accountability

Given the findings, several policy-oriented recommendations are proposed to reinforce constitutional integrity, restore ministerial accountability, and strengthen institutional checks on executive power:

1. Limit the Scope of Unilateral Royal Decrees

In line with interview respondents' concerns about the strategic exception, it is recommended that the scope of Article 40(2) be narrowly defined and clearly bounded. Exceptions should apply only to truly ceremonial or emergency actions—not to decisions involving high-level appointments or policy direction, which would prevent the misuse of unilateral powers for political consolidation and preserve the functional role of the elected government.

2. Amend Article 49 to Define Clear Lines of Responsibility

To address the ambiguity surrounding liability for unilateral decrees, Article 49 of the Constitution should be amended to establish clear legal accountability frameworks, including specifying whether and how ministers can be held responsible for decisions made without their approval and outlining procedures for parliamentary inquiry into such cases.

3. Strengthen the Legal Validity of Ministerial Countersignature

To reinforce the procedural requirement, Article 40 should be revised to explicitly state that any royal decree not countersigned by the Prime Minister or the relevant minister is legally invalid, thereby clarifying the legal status of such decrees and serving as a deterrent against unconstitutional executive action.

4. Enhance Parliamentary Oversight Mechanisms

Drawing from comparative insights with Spain and Belgium, Jordan should

consider adopting enhanced parliamentary oversight tools, including:

- Mandatory post-decision reporting by the executive
- Parliamentary review committees with investigative powers
- Regular public hearings on major royal appointments and national security directives

These reforms would improve the legislature's capacity to monitor executive behavior and maintain democratic accountability, especially in areas previously shielded by royal discretion.

5. Establish an Independent Constitutional Review Council

To ensure ongoing interpretation and enforcement of constitutional standards, Jordan should establish a Constitutional Review Council composed of legal scholars, former judges, and parliamentary representatives. This body could issue advisory opinions on controversial uses of royal authority and help mediate disputes between the monarchy and the elected branches.

CONCLUSION

The rule of ministerial countersignature—codified under Article 40(1) of the 1952 Jordanian Constitution—remains a foundational mechanism for ensuring that royal decrees align with the will of the elected government and are subject to legal scrutiny. Rooted in the principle of transferring political responsibility from the monarch (who enjoys constitutional immunity under Article 30) to the Council of Ministers, this rule has historically served as a critical institutional safeguard against unchecked executive authority.

However, constitutional amendments introduced in 2016 and 2022 have significantly altered this dynamic by allowing the king to issue certain decrees unilaterally, particularly in areas such as military appointments, judicial nominations, and succession planning. These exceptions challenge the traditional balance of powers in Jordan's hybrid parliamentary system, shifting executive dynamics toward greater autonomy for the monarchy and away from oversight by the elected government and parliament.

This development raises urgent questions about the sustainability of democratic accountability mechanisms in Jordan's evolving constitutional framework. Unlike classic

European parliamentary monarchies—such as Spain and Belgium—where all royal acts require ministerial countersignature and parliamentary oversight is robustly institutionalized, Jordan’s model increasingly resembles hybrid regimes like Morocco, where formal democratic structures coexist with informal centers of power.

Jordan’s constitutional trajectory reflects broader patterns in hybrid regime dynamics, in which constitutional norms serve dual functions: legitimizing public authority while simultaneously concealing the informal consolidation of executive control (Levitsky and Way, 2010; Biagi, 2020). The findings of this study highlight how the selective application of the countersignature rule not only weakens ministerial accountability but also erodes parliamentary sovereignty—a core tenet of representative governance.

Contributions to Understanding Power-Sharing in Jordan

This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the interplay between symbolic and substantive power in Jordan’s dual-executive structure. It reveals how recent reforms have blurred the boundaries between monarchical prerogative and governmental responsibility, creating ambiguity in legal liability and weakening institutional checks on executive action.

Key contributions include:

- A qualitative analysis of elite perspectives from legal scholars, former ministers, and constitutional experts, offering rare insight into how constitutional actors interpret and navigate the evolving boundaries of executive authority.
- A comparative institutional analysis with other parliamentary monarchies—particularly Spain, Belgium, and Morocco—that situates Jordan’s trajectory within a broader global context and clarifies its unique positioning between democratic norms and authoritarian tendencies.
- An institutional critique of unilateral decree powers, showing how their expansion threatens transparency and undermines the functional role of ministerial responsibility in maintaining constitutional legitimacy.

Policy and Reform Implications

Drawing lessons from European systems, where strong ministerial responsibility and parliamentary oversight prevail, Jordan must implement targeted constitutional reforms to limit the scope of exceptions introduced under Article 40(2). Specifically, this includes:

- Narrowing the categories of decisions eligible for unilateral royal decrees.
- Amending Article 49 to clarify legal accountability for decisions made without ministerial involvement.
- Reinforcing parliamentary oversight through mandatory reporting and investigative committees.

Such reforms would help restore institutional equilibrium and ensure that Jordan's hybrid system remains anchored in principles of constitutional legality, ministerial liability, and democratic accountability.

Future Research Directions

Future research should continue to explore how constitutional actors interpret and operate the evolving relationship between monarchy and government, particularly considering growing executive discretion. Longitudinal studies tracking changes in institutional behavior, combined with comparative case studies of similar hybrid systems, could further enrich our understanding of how accountability mechanisms adapt—or erode—in response to informal constitutional change.

Only through sustained scholarly inquiry and institutional adaptation can Jordan preserve the integrity of its constitutional order while navigating the complex realities of executive power-sharing in a post-Arab Spring environment.

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APPENDIX

This appendix provides supplementary materials that enhance transparency, replicability, and the depth of analysis in this study. It includes key constitutional provisions on ministerial countersignature, a detailed version of the semi-structured interview guide used for data collection, and brief contextual explanations to aid interpretation.

A. Key Constitutional Provisions from the 1952 Jordanian Constitution

The following excerpts are drawn from the 1952 Constitution of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, with reference to amendments made in 2016 and 2022 (as published in the Official Gazette).

Article 30: Immunity of the Monarch

“The King is the Head of the State and shall not be held liable or responsible for any act performed in the exercise of his duties.”

This provision establishes the monarch's constitutional immunity, emphasizing that legal and political responsibility for executive decisions must be transferred to elected officials through mechanisms such as ministerial countersignature.

Article 40(1): Ministerial Countersignature Requirement

“The King shall exercise his powers through royal decrees issued upon consultation with the Council of Ministers. Every royal decree shall be signed by the Prime Minister and the relevant minister(s), who shall bear legal and political responsibility for it.”

This clause forms the core legal framework for ministerial accountability in Jordan. It ensures that all royal actions reflect the will of the elected government and are subject to parliamentary oversight.

Article 40(2): Exceptions Introduced in 2016 and 2022

“The King may issue certain decrees without the countersignature of the Prime Minister or relevant ministers, particularly concerning the appointment of the Crown Prince, military commanders, senior judicial appointments, and other matters specified by law.”

These amendments significantly alter the scope and application of ministerial responsibility, allowing the monarchy to bypass elected institutions in politically sensitive domains. The vagueness of the phrase "matters specified by law" has raised concerns about potential misuse and a lack of transparency.

B. Semi-Structured Interview Guide

All interviews were conducted using a standardized guide developed around the study's central research questions. The guide ensured consistency across interviews while allowing flexibility for respondents to raise unanticipated issues.

Core Interview Themes and Sample Questions:

1. Understanding Ministerial Countersignature
 - How do you interpret the function of ministerial countersignature under Article 40(1)?
 - In your view, does the rule serve as a legal requirement or a symbolic formality?
2. Impact of the 2016 and 2022 Amendments
 - How have the exceptions introduced under Article 40(2) affected the role of the elected government?
 - Do you believe these changes align with democratic governance principles?

3. Accountability and Institutional Oversight

- Who should be held accountable for unilateral royal decrees?
- Has the expansion of independent decree powers weakened parliamentary oversight?

4. Comparative Perspectives

- How would you compare Jordan's system to other parliamentary monarchies (e.g., Spain, Belgium, Morocco)?
- Are there institutional practices in other countries that could strengthen accountability in Jordan?

5. Reform and Future Outlook

- What reforms would you propose to restore balance between monarchical authority and ministerial responsibility?
- How can Jordan ensure greater transparency and legal certainty regarding the use of royal decrees?

Each interview lasted approximately 60–90 minutes, was audio-recorded with consent, and transcribed verbatim in Arabic. Translations into English were verified via back-translation by a certified legal translator.

C. Value to the Reader

These materials are included in:

- Provide direct access to the constitutional text shaping the study.
- Clarify the methodological rigor behind qualitative data collection.
- Enable replication or further analysis by other researchers.
- Offer contextual insight into how legal norms are interpreted and applied in practice.

By including both primary legal sources and interview protocols, this appendix supports a transparent, grounded analysis of how Jordan's hybrid constitutional system functions—and how recent reforms are reshaping power dynamics among the monarchy, parliament, and government.