

Examining the Kuwait Muslim Brotherhood: Ideological Trajectories, Radicalization Risks and the Prospects for Deradicalization

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Abstract

This research investigates the ideological transformation of the Kuwait Muslim Brotherhood (KMB) and its role in political Islam in Kuwait. Based on a qualitative, desk-based research approach, the research evaluates the impact of ideological inflexibility, fragmentation, and marginalization by the state on the evolution of the KMB through the analysis of various Arabic and English sources such as historical texts, political pronouncements, and scholarly works. Though the KMB neither advocates nor indulges in public violence, this paper contends that its waning political salience, combined with a lack of ideological rejuvenation and inter-generational strains within the movement, could breed an atmosphere wherein radical currents, specifically those within youth constituencies, would take root. The research argues that successful deradicalisation must be grounded in both context-sensitive and inclusive strategies. It advocates a multi-track approach in the form of political reintegration of non-violent Islamist players, community-based initiatives in addressing grievances and building resilience, and intra-Islamist dialogue in the interest of ideological reform. Placing the KMB in Kuwait's distinct political, religious, and social context, this paper adds to wider debates regarding Islamist movements, radicalization, and potential constructive engagement and deradicalisation in the Gulf.

Keywords: Kuwait Muslim Brotherhood (KMB), radicalization, deradicalisation, political Islam, ideology, Gulf politics

1. Introduction

Since its inception in the mid-20th century, the Kuwait Muslim Brotherhood (KMB), a local body of the transnational Muslim Brotherhood movement, has been an important and influential force behind Kuwait's religious, political, and social spheres. A group that was originally established to promote Islamic values and education has, over the decades, developed into a complex organization, involved in formal politics as well as operating a wide system of institutions for civil society and engaging in religious discourse. Though commonly presented as a framework of a "moderate" Islamist current in the region in comparison to more radical Islamism sources in the region, the KMB's ideological positions, strategic flexibility, and ambiguous relation to state structures have attracted significant interest and criticism – specifically after the process of Arab Spring, along with the escalation of regional campaigns against political Islam (Freer 2018; Ishiguro 2018; Ali A Alkandari 2014).

In the setting of a rather stable and rich Gulf monarchy, the continued existence and political role of the KMB can be stated to be noteworthy. While in countries in which the Islamist movements have been systematically repressed or violently repressed, Kuwait's semi-parliamentary system has allowed the Brotherhood and its affiliates to bring political legitimacy and institutional influence. The political arm of

the KMB is the Islamic Constitutional Movement (ICM), which has taken part in parliamentary elections and has been in public. Despite this incorporation, however, this has not sanitized the movement of suspicion. Over the last few years, some of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, especially Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, have assumed a hard stance against the Muslim Brotherhood, designating it as a terrorist entity and pressuring their allies, such as Kuwait, to do the same. These developments have rekindled debates about the ideological leanings of the KMB, the possibility that it could be used to cause radicalism, and the need for internal reform or deradicalization (Steinberg 2014; Dacrema 2013; Freer 2017).

The focus of this research is on the point of ideology and security: How much has the ideological development of KMB contributed to radicalization threats, and what are the viable prospects for ideological or structural deradicalization in the modern Kuwait political and social setting? This question is raised in the context of a larger debate in the Arab world regarding the threats of politicized Islam and the task of differentiating ideological non-violence and hidden encouragement of radicalism. Although the KMB has largely shunned violent jihad and run within legal frameworks, critics believe that while its ideological tenets – and in particular, its long-term vision of establishing an Islamic state governed by Sharia law – is fertile ground for radicalization, especially among disaffected or marginalized youth (Freer 2015; Extremism 2025; تغناع ٢٠١٨).

To know the ideological journey of the KMB, one has to study how the founding doctrines of the movement co-existed and evolved in such a way that they fitted the peculiar political and social environment of Kuwait (WP 2024; الكندري 2024). The comparatively liberal political climate in Kuwait that tolerates an amount of freedom of expression, assembly, and participation in parliamentary politics has allowed the KMB to develop differently from its equivalents in more authoritarian settings. Over the decades, the movement has been involved in a two-pronged dual approach of public moderation and internal ideological preservation. This contradiction has resulted in internal strains in the organization and between the state and KMB. Some former members have charged the group with ideological rigidity and covert indoctrination, while others stress its practical interaction with democratic mechanisms as a mark of the real moderation (Alkandari 2021; Ali A Alkandari 2014; Noh 2016).

One more aspect of this research is the concept and process of deradicalization. Unlike counterterrorism, which attempts to circumvent violent actions, deradicalization is a process of reform or change of ideological convictions and structural practices that possibly lead to extremism. Concerning the KMB, this creates complex questions: Is the movement capable of conducting a practical ideological remodel without losing its identity? What kind of incentives or pressures might drive this kind of reform? Can the state create deradicalization programs with success, provided the group continues to enjoy some political validity and street support? Furthermore, should the deradicalization process need to be defined differently in the case of movements that oppose violence but can still advocate an exclusionary or theocratic way of life? (Freer 2015, 2018; Ishiguro 2018).

The present work is timely and necessary for various reasons. One trend is that there is increasing consensus globally and regionally that there is a need to square off not only violent extremism but also the ideological ecosystems that fuel such extremism. Second, the number of academic studies on the Muslim Brotherhood in Kuwait is still not particularly extensive in comparison to research on the Egyptian branch, the Jordanian branch, or the Palestinian branch. Third, the recent fluidities of Kuwaiti domestic politics (definable by youth activism, parliamentary volatility, and the transforming regional alliances) provide an

opportune moment to reconsider the KMB's future course and the bigger issue of ideological reform in political Islam (Ishiguro 2018; Ali A Alkandari 2014).

Methodically, the research relies on academic literature, official statements, media analysis, and doctrinal materials devoted to such topics as political Islam, deradicalization theory, and the particular historical developments in Kuwait. The research takes a desk-based qualitative methodology, making use of Arabic and English. By marrying instances to theoretical frameworks, this study shall endeavor to provide an evaluation with simplistic binaries of moderation-extremism. It aims at throwing some light on the grey areas of ideological development, where religious belief, political aspiration, and social changes come together (Alkandari 2021).

The KMB is not a simple political actor, but as an ever-changing ideological force whose transformation affects national security, the social structure, and the future of political Islam in the Gulf. The following chapters will describe the historical evolution of the KMB, identify its ideological discourse, evaluate radicalization courses, and discuss the shape a feasible deradicalization strategy may take regarding Kuwait's specificity (Ali A. Alkandari 2023a; Alkandari 2021).

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The Muslim Brotherhood (MB) has been a long source of academic fascination due to its twofold character as a religious and political movement. Early research work, like Mitchell (1993) and Wickham (2015), sets the stage for exploring the history and ideological adaptability of the MB (Richard Paul Mitchell 1993b; Wickham 2015). The MB institutionalized itself in Kuwait in the 1950s in the Gulf, with the help of Egyptian expatriates and Arab sympathizers (Brown 2007).

Research on Gulf Islamist movements after 2011 identifies an intensifying gap between ideological moderation and underlying radicalism (Freer 2018; Al-Anani 2022). The securitization of political Islam after the Arab Spring, particularly in the UAE and Saudi Arabia, has had a dampening impact on movements such as the KMB, resulting in what some authors refer to as ideological retrenchment (Dacrema 2013; Albloshi, Freer, and Valbjørn 2025).

Theoretical contributions are derived from Wiktorowicz (2005), who highlights "cognitive openings" as an entry point into ideological change, and McCauley and Moskalenko (2008), who theorize individual, group, and mass radicalization mechanisms (Wiktorowicz 2005; McCauley, Moskalenko, and violence 2008). Neumann (2013) and Hoskins et al. (2011) also highlight the significance of digital ecosystems in shaping radical ideology in youth (Neumann 2013; Hoskins, Awan, and O'Loughlin 2011).

3. Methodology

The approach used in the study is qualitative, desk-based research that is based on a rich variety of publicly accessible sources. These consist of Arabic and English academic publications, media coverage, official communiques released by the KMB and its political arm, the ICM, government reports, NGO writings, and doctrinal texts. Using systematic content and discourse analysis, the study seeks to identify thematic trends concerning ideological extremism, signs of radicalization, and state response type. This approach provides a context-aware analysis of the KMB while avoiding direct fieldwork or interviewing, thus complying with ethical research principles while developing a theoretically well-informed and empirically sensitive analysis particular to the Kuwaiti political and social context.

4. Findings

4.1 *The Muslim Brotherhood: Global Roots and the Kuwaiti Context*

The Muslim Brotherhood (MB) was founded in Egypt in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna and has been researched in its ideological flexibility and transnational resiliency from long ago. Early foundational works packaged the Brotherhood as a combination of religious activism and political participation. More recent researches indicate a change of tone, especially after the Arab uprisings (Richard P Mitchell 1993a; Wickham 2015). Al Anani (2022) examines how the MB has been fragmented since the post-2011 period, undergone ideological adjustments, and suffered internal crises, debunking the previously existing perception of its organizational cohesiveness and durability (Al-Anani 2022).

In the Gulf, the force of regional exigencies has created the Brotherhood's presence. The Brotherhood institutionalized in Kuwait the Jam'iyyat al-Islah al-Ijtima'i in the 1950s, with the assistance of Egyptian exiles and Arab sympathizers. Unlike the MBs in Saudi Arabia or the UAE, Kuwaiti MBs were also semi-autonomous while operating in a relatively pluralistic environment. Kuwait's exceptionalism is brought forward by Brown (2023) and Khatib (2023): although the Gulf has witnessed enhanced securitization, the Kuwaiti Islamists continue having access to parliamentary politics and civil society objects. However, Albloshi warns that despite all this, as in Kuwait, the regional reaction against the Brotherhood after 2013 has resulted in more scrutiny, rhetorical demonization, and limitations on funding and mobilization (Brown 2007; Zahirovic 2023; Albloshi, Freer, and Valbjørn 2025).

However, not much attention from the scholarship has been given to the ideological placement of the Kuwaiti MB under such pressures. Although Hanieh (2013) and Herb (2014) have examined its influence in determining the social policy and electoral politics, fewer studies analyze its potential intervention, direct or indirect, in the process of radicalization (Herb 2014; Hanieh 2013). This research is an attempt to fill that gap as it queries if the MB in Kuwait has retained its ideological distinction from violent extremist trends and if its marginalization is allowing parts of it to be pulled towards more radical alternatives.

4.2 *Radicalization Theories in the Middle Eastern Context*

Radicalization research has moved away from the monolithic explanations but toward more multi-faceted and interdisciplinary ones. McCauley and Moskaleiko (2008) suggested the tripartite model of radicalization, i.e., individual, group, and mass radicalization, and Wiktorowicz's (2005) relied on the theory of social movement to outline how cognitive openings generate ideological affiliation to radical movements. These models are still popular, though, but the following research incorporated digital, psychological, and socio-political variables (Wiktorowicz 2005; McCauley, Moskaleiko, and violence 2008).

Neumann (2013) explains how radicalization becomes more and more influenced by online environments that skip the traditional ideological mediators. This is especially relevant in the Middle East, where the youth interact with global jihadist content through non-centralized digital networks (Neumann 2013). Hoskins, Awan, & O'Loughlin (2011) explain how algorithmic radicalization in such platforms as TikTok, Telegram, and YouTube leads to the formation of echo chambers, which move the pace of the creation of extremist identities faster. These findings are particularly applicable to Kuwait, which has a strong digital literacy and thriving, though under-regulated, online discourse on Islam (Hoskins, Awan, and O'Loughlin 2011).

Region-specific analyses Gerges (2009) and Hegghammer (2010) argue that grievances that are either foreign policy-based, sectarian-based based or internally repressive-based are key in forming

radicalization trajectories (Gerges 2009; Hegghammer 2010). Nevertheless, it is debatable if such movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, act as bastions against radicalization by becoming nonviolent activism or whether they act as ideological doorways. According to some critics, the rhetoric championed by the Brotherhood brings about a “us vs. them” mentality that is capable of being used as preparation for jihadist reasoning (Yefet 2025; Al-Anani 2015; Rubin 2010; Lorenzo Vidino 2011). On the contrary, Schwedler (2011) and Ayoob (2020) claim that political participation tends to moderate the Islamist actors over time (Ayoob and Lussier 2020; Schwedler 2011).

This research draws into this debate within the Kuwaiti framework to evaluate whether the present marginalization of the Brotherhood may provide cognitive openings that are fertile grounds for radicalization among their youth constituency, or should its political relevance continue, if this would be an effective mechanism of containment.

4.3 State-Islamist Relations in the Gulf

State-Islamist literature in the Gulf focuses on the co-option of the repression continuum. Gulf monarchies have a historical tendency to play the Islamists as a counter-weight to the leftist or nationalistic opposition (Al-Rasheed 2006; Lacroix 2014). However, political Islam was strongly securitized after 2011 in the regional landscape. As sources explain, the Brotherhood’s fleeting rise in Egypt prompted a GCC-wide backlash, with Saudi Arabia and the UAE further labelling the MB as terrorists (Ulrichsen 2014; KHATIB 2013).

More of an ambivalent stance has been taken by Kuwait. Although it has not banned the MB, the state rhetoric has taken a more hostile tone, and the key affiliates have been frozen out of ministerial appointments and top-level offices. This selective accommodation is rooted in the necessity of Kuwait to strike the domestic political pluralism the alignment with the exterior, including Saudi and Emirati security preferences (Al-Mekaimi 2024; Ali A. Alkandari 2023b).

Albloshi (2025) asserts that Gulf regimes are increasingly casting Islamists as internal security threats to sustain surveillance and the check against dissent. This is the case in Kuwait with stricter NGO laws, restrictions on media, and the enhanced use of sedition charges against Islamist figures. Set on this understanding, what this study does is add to these insights by assessing how such a shift impacts the Brotherhood’s ideological tone of voice, strategic calculations, and ability to influence trends of radicalization (Albloshi, Freer, and Valbjørn 2025).

4.4 Deradicalisation Models in Regional Contexts

Several MENA states have established deradicalisation initiatives with varying levels of institutionalization and success. Saudi Arabia's "Munasaha" program remains the most fully documented model, involving theological re-education, psychological counseling, and follow-up counseling (Boucek 2008). Morocco has adopted a "soft security" approach, including Sufi-influenced religious education and economic incentives (Zeghal 2008). Egypt's experience has been overshadowed more by containment than by rehabilitation, with periodic ideological regime changes by such former extremists as Gama'a al-Islamiyya (El-Ghobashy 2021, 2010).

Recent evaluations point to credibility, consistency, and long-term observation as success factors in deradicalization. Interestingly, more agreement has recently existed that prevention, rather than rehabilitation, must be incorporated into education, religious teaching, and civil society (Thornton and Bouhana 2019; Clemmow et al. 2024).

In Kuwait, deradicalisation has been less institutionalized. Al Abkal & Neumann (2024) discover that most efforts have been reactive, targeting returnees from conflict zones or those who have been flagged

by intelligence agencies. There is scant literature on applying preventive deradicalisation to peaceful Islamist movements like the Muslim Brotherhood (Al Abkal and Neumann 2024; 2018 طرف; KU 2025). In this research, then, the question is whether models can be transferred to counter vulnerable elements within or on the fringes of the Kuwaiti MB.

4.5 Evolution of the Kuwait Muslim Brotherhood (KMB) Ideology

The ideological path of the KMB illustrates a complex dynamic between indigenous socio-political forces and local ideological trends. Established in 1952 as the Kuwaiti branch of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, the KMB initially concentrated on religious education, social welfare activities, and da'wa (Islamic proselytization). In its initial period, the movement's agenda was predominantly non-violent and religiously instructive, and was aimed at youth and professionals through learning societies and charities (Ali A Alkandari 2014; Alkandari 2021).

But political abstinence began to break down in the 1970s and 1980s. Several factors supported these developments. Firstly, the importation of Egyptian Brotherhood ideology, particularly following the post-Nasser crackdown on Islamists in Egypt, brought a more formalized ideology dedicated to Islamic rule. Secondly, the Islamic revival (al-ṣaḥwa al-Islāmiyya) in the Gulf provided fertile ground for political activism expressed in religious language. The KMB increasingly politicized, culminating in the founding of its political wing, the or Ḥaraka, in 1991 (Pike 2025; Brown 2007).

4.5.1 Analysis of the 1990 Invasion of Kuwait and Allegations of KMB Opportunism

The Iraqi invasion in 1990 changed the political landscape in the Gulf and provided Kuwaiti political actors, especially the KMB, with a marked challenge regarding their beliefs. How the KMB acted during this period has been the subject of many historical and political reviews and accounts have often suggested that its behavior was mixed and sometimes raise concerns. This part examines how the incident changed the KMB's image, its popularity among the Kuwaiti people and its future political role.

1) Allegations of Strategic Opportunism and Political Bartering. Islamic groups in the Arab world reacted differently when Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990. Though nearly all the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt strongly opposed the invasion, certain groups associated with the movement (based abroad) appeared unsure or even friendly toward Saddam Hussein. According to some sources, the KMB is accused of planning talks with the occupying forces or using the national emergency to get concessions from the Kuwaiti government in exile.

The most mentioned accusation focuses on Youssef Nada, a main Muslim Brotherhood money arranger and negotiator, who is believed to have spoken with Saddam Hussein during the crisis. Though Nada claimed the purpose was simply to help and mediate, many regional commentators and analysts have stated that the Brotherhood aimed to get political leverage while Kuwait was especially vulnerable (Meijer 2008; Lorenzo Vidino 2010).

More reports by political insiders and Kuwait's postwar parliamentary sessions prove that Brotherhood actors wanted influence on the new government, including an opportunity to contribute, if they were guaranteed public loyalty during the crisis. Such events are often challenging to record, yet they reveal a deep sense of belief in ideological pragmatism that often seems like betrayal.

“When Kuwait was in its darkest hour, some organizations did not rush to defend its sovereignty but rather assessed how the crisis could realign the domestic political order in their favor.” — *Excerpt from post-war parliamentary debate, 1992* (Herb 2014).

2) Impact on Public Trust and National Legitimacy. The accusations, regardless of their full truth, caused great damage to the KMB's reputation among many Kuwaitis, particularly among those who

cherished national unity and patriotic struggle during the occupation. The discussion that followed liberation characterized the German invasion as a battle with consequences for national and ideological values as well as for Germany's standing as a nation. Movements and leaders seen as uncertain or hesitant during the occupation were questioned. This caused many Kuwaitis to see the KMB's position and the demands by those affiliated with it as being loyal to ideology instead of to Kuwait. This had a divide within the organization and likely played a part in the rise of those in later years urging for the Brotherhood's political activities to be examined or limited (Albloshi, Freer, and Valbjørn 2025).

3) ***Ideological Miscalculation or Strategic Adaptation?*** From this incident, an interesting theoretical point arises: did the KMB take advantage of the crisis as an opportunity to further its ideas, or did it make a wrong strategy at that moment?

Many scholars explained that Islamist groups aim to maintain their influence over time, especially when rules and laws break down or outside powers temporarily take control of the government (Wickham 2015; Schwedler 2011). However, when it comes to Kuwait, these strategies did not work out as expected. People felt that absolute loyalty to the state excluded any form of doubtfulness or opportunism. In addition, the crisis revealed that groups such as the Brotherhood had to choose between their international ideas and loyalty to the country. To sum up, the KMB's actions reflected the fact that it felt torn between being loyal to the nation-state and following Islamist strategies.

- Why has the KMB struggled to regain full political trust in the post-Gulf War era.
- How this crisis influenced its subsequent strategy of cautious participation and internal retrenchment.
- The roots of suspicion that persist around the Brotherhood's national loyalty and its potential as a radicalizing actor under certain pressures.

4.5.2 ***Foreign Alignment and the Role of Iran: Strategic Ambiguity or Ideological Compromise?***

Claims of strategic or ideological similarity between the KMB and the Islamic Republic of Iran make assessing the movement's loyalty to Kuwait, sectarian stance, and geopolitical significance a sensitive yet fundamental process. While the KMB comes from the Sunni Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, there have been times when its actions in the changing regional environment have been viewed as pragmatic cooperation with opponents of its main principles.

1) ***Historical Tensions and Sectarian Divide.*** The ideas guiding the Muslim Brotherhood and the Iranian regime are usually very distinct and sometimes conflict. The Brotherhood supports a politics based on Sunni Islam, which involves Shura, progressive change, and a future Islamic state ruled by Sharia law. Unlike the King and People, Iran's theocratic system grants power in Shi'a legal matters to a small group of religious leaders.

In earlier years, such ideological differences were mainly strengthened by Iran's tensions with Sunni-led countries and rulers of the Gulf region. Even so, developments in the region, such as the American invasion of Iraq (in 2003), the Arab Spring (which began in 2011), and the Syrian civil war, have sometimes made Sunni Islamist interests and Iran's objectives indistinguishable.

2) ***Accusations of Tactical Convergence.*** Occasionally, analysts and politicians in Kuwait accuse some factions within the KMB of not being as firm toward Iran or of secretly agreeing with Iran's wider idea of resisting foreigners (al-muqawama) in the area, mainly when opposing Western influence or conservative Gulf monarchies or authoritarian rulers in other countries. For example, when talks and discussions about the Arab Spring took place in parliament and the media, those affiliated with the Brotherhood in Kuwait were condemned for not clearly rejecting Iran's part in Syria's events and sometimes remaining vague about Iran's actions in Iraq and Bahrain. Some analysts explain this

confusion as being a wise avoidance of offending a strong neighbor or, in a more pessimistic perspective, as proof of compromise with neighboring countries' ideologies (Gause III 2014; Albloshi, Freer, and Valbjørn 2025). Importantly, the 2011–2012 Karamat Watan movement's public debates brought up concerns that the movement, despite pushing for changes at home, remained quiet about Iran's role in Arabian Gulf matters and this weakness was labeled hypocritical in relation to the broader pan-Islamic movement's priorities.

- 3) ***Ramifications for Domestic Legitimacy.*** Occasionally, analysts and politicians in Kuwait accuse some factions within the KMB of not being as firm toward Iran or of secretly agreeing with Iran's wider idea of resisting foreigners (*al-muqawama*) in the area, mainly when opposing Western influence or conservative Gulf monarchies or authoritarian rulers in other countries. For example, when talks and discussions about the Arab Spring took place in parliament and the media, those affiliated with the Brotherhood in Kuwait were condemned for not clearly rejecting Iran's part in Syria's events and sometimes remaining vague about Iran's actions in Iraq and Bahrain. Some analysts explain this confusion as being a wise avoidance of offending a strong neighbor or, in a more pessimistic perspective, as proof of compromise with neighboring countries' ideologies (Gause III 2014; Albloshi, Freer, and Valbjørn 2025). Importantly, the 2011–2012 Karamat Watan movement's public debates brought up concerns that the movement, despite pushing for changes at home, remained quiet about Iran's role in Arabian Gulf matters, and this weakness was labeled hypocritical about the broader pan-Islamic movement's priorities.

“Ideological ambiguity in the face of regional sectarian conflict not only erodes political credibility but invites suspicion of proxy behavior.”— *Gause III, F. Gregory (2014). “Beyond Sectarianism.” Brookings Doha Center.*

- 4) ***Ideological Authenticity and Transnational Pressures.*** The question of who or what KMB stands for is at its most important from the point of view of ideology: is it deeply rooted in Kuwaiti political values and agendas or is it exposed to the influence of Islamist groups from abroad?

Since the Brotherhood works across nations, supporting Islamic unity, it often clashes with foreign forces that try to influence groups by creating division. As a Shi'a theocracy, Iran is viewed as an enemy by Gulf states but also as a like-minded ally by anti-Western, anti-autocratic Islamists. Some nationalists and officials might wonder about the KMB's ability to clearly define its stance against Iranian ambitions.

According to Olivier Roy and Marc Lynch, political Islam needs to adapt locally to matter nationally (Roy 2017; Lynch 2013). Involvement—or at least tolerance—by the KMB of foreign ideological schemes may lead to losing domestic support and further increase how the state approaches political Islam.

4.5.3 Integration into the Ideological Trajectory Narrative: Historical Incidents as Catalysts for Ideological Recalibration

The Kuwait Muslim Brotherhood's (KMB) actions during and after the 1990 Iraqi invasion, together with the allegations of their foreign alignment (mainly with Iran), are not regarded as insignificant. Instead, they will be placed within the general development of the KMB's beliefs. Such episodes are important moments in the organization's growth and shed light on the friction between what it claims to support at home and what it values internationally.

- 1) ***Situating Critical Incidents within Kuwait's Post-Invasion Political Reconstruction.*** After the liberation of Kuwait in 1991, the country experienced strong political thoughts and reconstruction.

During the occupation of Kuwait, political legitimacy was transformed, and both the state and people demanded that their domestic political leaders stand by them fully. Because of this climate, the KMB's murky actions during the invasion, such as talking to the Iraqis and seeming to benefit from the situation, greatly affected how the movement was viewed.

There was increasing doubt about the KMB's true nationalist role particularly when put alongside others who were clearly standing up for Kuwait's independence. After the war, the Brotherhood was accused of using the nation's suffering to gain more seats in the parliament or jobs in the cabinet.

These events brought about a strong change in the way people see the KMB. Over time, many started to consider it not only an Islamist movement but also a political group that could choose foreign loyalties or political solutions ahead of what their own countries want.

- 2) ***Impact on Public Trust and Internal Legitimacy.*** The organization was deeply affected by the events. A group of younger cadres, most of whom had started in da'wa or activism on campuses, started to doubt the ideological and ethical reliability of the leaders. Some considered the senior leadership's conduct during the invasion a violation of Islamic principles, and others thought that political reasons caused the nation to be divided.

The conflict between adults and younger Tehranis caused inner division and increased a crisis of authority in the country. Among the earlier part of KMB, many became dissatisfied or changed sides, while critics within Islamist ranks described the group as becoming concerned more with politics among leaders and less with ordinary faith movements. In the opinion of Roy (2017) and Wiktorowicz (2005), these movements react to crises and outward pressures by adjusting their ideology to meet the new rules of power. Events after 1991, the KMB began to openly support parliamentary work, rose to the challenge of being more moderate, and worked at gaining back trust by helping with education and social programs—all this with the old doctrine still visible just below the surface (Roy 2017; Wiktorowicz 2005).

- 3) ***Security Sector Reconfiguration and Strategic Ambiguity.*** The way the KMB behaved both during and after the invasion shaped how Kuwait's security departments handled Islamist groups. Because the Muslim Brotherhood remained unclear as Kuwait faced a national crisis, it led to the idea that political Islam was a major security issue in the country, as was happening elsewhere close by (Al-Rasheed 2006; Gause and Sectarianism 2014).

After the early 1990s, the authorities in Kuwait began to keep an eye on, restrict, and put limits on Islamist groups, focusing mainly on those linked to the worldwide Muslim Brotherhood. While the government pursued both inclusion and exclusion, it let the KMB operate in official politics but still limited its opportunities for media airtime, school participation, and the granting of financial support. According to Lacroix (2014) and Schwedler (2011), certain states keep Islamist parties at the fringes to prevent extreme groups from forming, yet they still require these groups to follow national principles (Schwedler 2011; Lacroix 2014).

- 4) ***Theoretical Framing: Movement Theory and Political Islam Scholarship.*** To explain the lasting consequences of these critical incidents, this discussion will use social movement theory and political Islam as its main basis.

Quintan Wiktorowicz (2005) believes that when outside events upset prior beliefs, Islamist movements are more likely to realign their ideas. Because of the invasion in 1990, Islamists found it hard to defend their views about army service and secular authority (Wiktorowicz 2005). In Jillian Schwedler's (2011) analysis of the inclusion-moderation hypothesis, the author argues that how political integration

affects Islamist groups depends on how united the group is internally and how many external influences give its practices legitimacy. The KMB fell short of national interests in the invasion, which reduced the chance of its inclusion to promote moderation. Rather, it ended up in a middle place, without being completely radical or steadily moderate, and this has influenced its political makeup since then (Schwedler 2011). Furthermore, it becomes clearer from the research of Roy (2004) and Lynch (2012) how the importance given to national sovereignty can affect transnational groups. They argue that, should people see the KMB as a transnational force, its credibility and right to influence politics could be taken away, which would harm its efforts in the long run (Roy 2017; Lynch 2013).

4.5.4 Al-Suwaidan's Media Presence and Educational Programs

A Kuwaiti preacher, media personality, and distinguished Islamist scholar, Tariq Al-Suwaidan, has published many books and appears often on satellite media. He talks about forming an Islamic state, with Sharia as the law, though he believes this should take place slowly and peacefully. In his “The Future of Islam in Politics” speech, Al-Suwaidan praises Islamic rule, showing how it combines differently with Western, democratic models while hinting that pluralism will not last. The many times he stresses Ummah values and wants Islamic leadership training for young people hint at a blended theocracy which, it is claimed, eventually encourages exclusionism. Similarly, while Youssef Nada lives in another country, he has always been a key player in the Brotherhood's money and strategy matters. In 2002, Nada revealed in an interview with *The Guardian* that he worked quietly worldwide to support Islamic groups, using both money and by participating in key gatherings such as his dealings with Saddam Hussein. The KMB agrees with these important themes from Nada's memoirs and public talks, because they contribute to what the KMB believes in (Meijer 2008; Lorenzo Vidino 2010).

A closer look at Al-Suwaidan's talks finds that he often balances mainstream ideas with controversial aims, being particularly strict with youth audiences. His easily available YouTube lectures on Islamic leadership suggest members of the sovereign nation should rule, leading to the use of influential Islamic supremacy themes that may radicalize those who have little political experience.

During the Arab Spring (2011–2013), the KMB rode the wave of popularity once more temporarily, but this time due to calls for political change. But this period also marked the start of increased scrutiny (UNESCO 2013). Regional politics—most significantly, the failure of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the securitization of Islamist forces in the Gulf—initiated increasing state control in Kuwait. More recently, with increasing fear about ideological radicalization and political Islam activities, the KMB has been subjected to stricter constraints, with some of its components being driven towards ideological retrenchment and secrecy (Beck and Hüser 2012).

4.6 Indicators of Radicalization

While nominally dedicated to moderation, there are some signs of possible susceptibility to radicalization, particularly under state coercion and ideological contagion at the regional level. Based on primary interview material and analysis of KMB media coverage, four specific indicators emerge that could potentially result in an ideological hardening process within the movement (Rositsa Dzhekova 2025).

One of the earliest indicators is Doctrinal Rigidity. The KMB maintains the unity of Islam and state authority, with a propensity to adopt the idea of Sharia as an overall political system. Even when the doctrinal stance itself is not radical, it can become exclusive when confronted with secular resistance or repression. In a political culture where the concepts of the KMB are being marginalized or resisted, there

is a risk that the religious ideals of the group will become progressively rigid, with fewer channels for pragmatic engagement or accommodation (Aijaz 2014; Bashir 2025).

Another indicator is the Rhetoric on Governance and Sharia. Analysis of KMB-affiliated publications reveals that there are shared themes identifying the need for Islamic governance. Although overt demands for rule by theocracy are not voiced, the tone tends to tread the fine line between reformist critique and ideological absolutism, particularly during periods of heightened political exclusion. When there are times of political and social unrest, the rhetoric used may become more combative, invoking Islamic law as a foundation for rule in manners that exclude secular or pluralistic alternatives (Sumbal 2022).

Organizational Secrecy also takes the form of intra-movement dynamics within the KMB. Since there is no clear leadership in the movement and people join by supporting its cause, identifying or controlling the movement can be very tough. The Brotherhood being secretive detaches it from the wider society and may cause it to become more isolated in its beliefs. It is especially common when political repression forces them to become closed off from the community. Being isolated from the mainstream in subcultures based on youth may lead members to feel even farther apart and greatly influence their risk of accepting radical beliefs (Al-Khoury 2020).

Finally, the KMB's efforts to recruit young people may give another opportunity for radicalization. Traditionally, the movement has invested a lot in youth training and developing their leadership skills, mainly through student unions and university politics. Still, while it helps young people adjust to politics without violence, it may also lead to the growth of small, exclusive groups of people. When members of these youth groups believe their movement is unfairly singled out, they may look to extreme responses to stand up for what they feel is right. Being part of a particular group with certain views may encourage people to stick to an unchanging perspective. Members today and in the past from among the KMB have indicated that radicalization is not inherent in the movement, but does exist within groups of radical extremists, mainly disillusioned youth. When groups are continuously excluded or feel wronged politically, they might become more radical.

We examined the examples and types of radicalizations among disillusioned Kuwaiti youth, many of whom have worked with or been influenced by KMB university organizations. An important case includes youth activists who used to be part of Brotherhood groups at Egyptian universities, such as the student branches of the Islamic Constitutional Movement. According to the interviews and testimony used by researchers (Bizina and Gray 2014; CE 2025b; Pandit 2025). Several individuals switched from acting moderately to embracing conservative doctrines after facing stagnation and seeing hypocritical behaviors within the movement. Some turned to Salafi-jihadist groups because they became annoyed with the Brotherhood's approach of appearing moderate publicly but excluding others internally.

These transitions follow McCauley and Moskaleiko's (2008) theory of individual radicalization from moral rage and separation from society. Failure to respond to young people's demands or political concerns can result in people abandoning such rigid groups joining more dedicated and active types, often pan-Islamist or jihadist.

Three major types of radicalizations often happen in the Kuwaiti situation.

1. The Disillusioned Insider – Those who grew up in Brotherhood groups but left when they found the practices or views of the movement were unfit.
2. Those Who Deviate Isolate – Highly educated individuals who turn to a strict Salafi or Takfiri way after abandoning mainstream Islamism.

3. The Digital Convert – Individuals raised in Islamic groups discovered online after leaving the group, and who still choose to remain active in Islam (Hoskins, Awan, and O'Loughlin 2011; McCauley, Moskalenko, and violence 2008).

In certain situations of estrangement and repression, we see that strict but non-violent Islamism and more extreme ideologies mix their ideas. Because of this, when ideologies are rigid, their role is not just to direct ideas but to shape public energy toward more risky courses of action. Outside pressure, discussions on beliefs, and connections in youth groups create the environment that often helps radicalization when the group feels cut off from society (Pandit 2025).

4.7 State Responses

Kuwait's government has responded to the KMB in different ways depending on how its relations with the region and its domestic situation change. Such swings in support have played a big role in the way the movement is governed, which may have influenced its beliefs and caused it to become easier to radicalize. Engagement and restrictions placed by the state on the KMB have led to a tense environment that the movement needs to handle as it holds on to its beliefs (AGSI 2015; CE 2025a).

One of the main ways in which the state has interacted with the KMB has been through Legal and Political Restrictions. Although the KMB has never been formally outlawed, in recent years there have been closer legal restrictions placed on the movement by the state. These have been such things as public fund-raising limits, prohibition of front groups, and religious broadcasting limits in relation to the movement. These developments are reflective of a larger phenomenon of political Islam securitization in Kuwait, indicating that the state is viewing the KMB as a security threat. Legal restrictions like these, as intended to limit political Islam influence, carry the potential for having unwanted side effects of driving the movement into more hidden or isolated terrain (MEDC 2024a).

Surveillance and Intelligence Strategies also point to the state's policy of surveillance and containing Islamist activity. Intelligence operations against Islamist networks have reportedly increased, involving monitoring of electronic communication, social networking, and schools. Although nominally intended to serve national security, these activities have the collateral effect of forcing moderate voices underground. The policy of surveillance by the state therefore has the collateral effect of emboldening more hardline and less moderate elements of the KMB, as these elements will be pushed into more extreme positions by the surveillance and pressure (Liao, Sun, and Wang 2003).

4.8 Deradicalisation Prospects

Despite the difficulties created by radicalization, there is still a plausible deradicalisation and reintegration path in the Kuwaiti situation depending on policy reform, community outreach, and a measured state strategy. From comparative models and transposition into the Kuwaiti context, three main deradicalisation strategies present themselves with each holding a plausible avenue for social and political reintegration (Grip and Kotajoki 2019).

Among these is the application of Community-Based Reintegration Programs. Deradicalisation programs based on local religious groups and civic organizations can yield credible alternatives to clandestine activism. Such programs, well thought out, can lead to a feeling of belonging and significance in those who have been isolated or betrayed by state actions. Highlighting themes of national identity, religious pluralism, and civic responsibility, such initiatives can assist in reintegrating former extremists into the mainstream, providing them with a positive contribution to the community. The focus on local institutions

can also create a more inclusive environment, lessening the appeal of extremist ideologies that tend to flourish in secluded or underground environments (UN 2025; Nasution 2024).

Another potential approach is Engagement with Moderate Islamist Currents. The state should avoid treating all Islamist groups in the same way and choose to discuss with the more moderate parts within the KMB. Giving importance to the diversity of ideas within the movement allows the state to back those who are willing to negotiate and compromise. With this decision, the government would force the extreme leaders to become more moderate and encourage those who oppose more radical solutions in religion and politics. It would lead to a larger variety of viewpoints in politics and help the KMB become more flexible. It is also important to remove the direct tie between da'wa and political work as a main deradicalisation approach. Separating the objectives of preachers (da'wa) from political campaigning reduces the chance of any misuse. When churches do not interact politically, they are less likely to accept radical political views. In addition to this policy, reforms that require all religious organizations to be transparent and accountable, as well as aid for academic institutes that promote a moderate reading of Islam, could be introduced as well. They would not just point out the problem of politicizing religion (Sigillò 2022; Merone and McCarthy 2024; Malik 2018).

4.8.1 Weak Link Between Ideology and Radicalization Mechanism

A formal system for deradicalization has not been established by the government in Kuwait. It is mostly unofficial and semi-authorized actors who help to prevent radicalization and to promote detachment from radical ideologies. These actors in religious, educational, and charitable fields can be found generally under state supervision but not directed by a single policy. The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs (MoAIA) oversees sermons given in mosques, manages what is taught as part of religious education, and directs how public religious messages are handled. Recently, after movements such as ISIS appeared, the ministry has hosted youth lessons, given Friday sermons to warn against takfiri ideology, and recommended guidelines for imams to promote tolerance, being a good citizen, and having a moderate religion (Al Abkal and Neumann).

Ideological and deradicalization work happens through educational institutions as well. Kuwait University and the student unions connected to it hold unique importance because they have in the past formed both moderate and radical movements. Programs for civic education in colleges and universities focus on spreading values found in the Constitution, nonviolence, and ways of accepting pluralism in society. They strive to get young people who are losing interest in politics or are open to radical thinking involved in useful discussions and democratic actions, so they do not turn to extremist groups (Al-Mekaimi 2024). In times of political or ideological upheaval, student forums and campaigns by faculty gain even greater importance.

In addition, charitable groups like the Al-Najat Charity Society and the Society for the Revival of Islamic Heritage (Jamiya Ihya al-Turath al-Islami) have taken part, although there is some disagreement about this involvement. In the past, some organizations in this sector came under fire internationally over rumored links to extremist financing (Lorenzo Vidino 2010), but since the Kuwaiti government began supervising them more closely in 2013, these organizations shifted away from those things and focused instead on assisting youth, religious consultations and aid groups that focus on moderate preaching (CEP 2025a). The reforms are thoughtful attempts to stop some Islamic charities from being used for political purposes. To strengthen their effect, it is important to officially incorporate religious authorities, academic organizations, and NGOs into national deradicalization plans and back them with resources through state-funded forums uniting different groups. They might support complex discussions among different groups,

work on common faith-related topics, strengthen a sense of community and protect groups from becoming isolated. Unless agencies cooperate, it is unclear if Kuwait will continue to deal with radicalization in young people facing different political and religious problems.

1) *Examples of Deradicalization Successes and Failures in Kuwait* During the past decade, Kuwait has switched back and forth between dealing with radicalization by the state alone and through programs run by the community. Since there are different approaches to security strategies, comparisons between them reveal differences in outcomes, how well they work, and whether people accept them. A detailed review of the intelligence-led plan (2014–2018) and the youth engagement plan at mosques (2018–2021) points out how engagement by the public, accepted religious beliefs, and adequate follow-up strategies help fight extremist ideas.

- *For example, the “Reactive Intelligence” model from 2014 to 2018 did not meet its objectives.* After the Syrian civil war and ISIS movement, both regional and world threats brought radicalized individuals to Kuwait and other Gulf countries. Consequently, Kuwaiti security services decided to rely heavily on intelligence methods for their attempts at deradicalisation. US law enforcement was to detect, stop, and keep watch over suspected extremists, mainly those red-flagged by other countries or intelligence agencies. Nevertheless, this method tended to occur in reaction to crises and did not fully involve people from the community or civil society. Many youths in Kuwait were sometimes detained by the government for their digital activity or being present on informal groups, even if these were not violent, but most of them were then released without any formal support services.

Pairing punishment alone with no change in ideology or habits often resulted in many issues. At first, the system made people see arbitrary and obscure detentions, which weakened their trust in the state. Further, many ex-detainees returned to the community with unsolved issues, which frequently caused them to repeat crimes or increase their radical ideologies online. In the end, overlooking religious and civil actors removed their chances to support efforts to socially and educationally rehabilitate at-risk individuals.

The case demonstrates that only focusing on intelligence in deradicalization can halt radical attacks, but it is not enough to deal with the real causes of extremism, such as having no social contact, confusing a religion’s teachings, and feeling apart from politics. The process lacks genuinely trusted civic and religious actors. Adopting a strong security approach may encourage concepts that make it harder for vulnerable individuals to connect with their communities (CEP 2025a).

- *A Successful Case: The Mosque and Youth Dialogue Initiative (2018–2021).* In comparison, from 2018 to 2021, the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs (MoAIA), together with local mosques and youth groups, introduced a more promising method. Seeing that intelligence-led methods were not enough, Kuwaiti authorities moved towards early intervention and inclusive communication. Young Sunni clerics were prepared through this project to promote counter-extremist ideas guided by Islamic terms as well as the principles defining Kuwaiti identity (Kuwaitiyat). On Friday, youth and clerics gathered for halaqat (open discussion circles) to engage in talks about religious pluralism, being involved in society, and avoiding sectarian issues.

Developed mainly for university and secondary school students, the program linked religion and being a citizen of the country, helping them develop both a religious and a national identity. Thanks to trusting religious figures and using peer groups, these sessions gave young people a secure place to share their anger, ask theological questions, and learn how to resist extremist beliefs.

MEDC’s (2024) review of the programs found that those involved in mosque learning showed:

- Greater security against ideas that promote civil war.
- Greater participation by young people from both Sunni and Shi'a Islamic communities in inter-community dialogues.
- People are more involved in student unions and find other ways to take part in communities.
- An increased attachment to Kuwait rather than to international Muslim extremist movements (MEDC 2024b).

4.8.2 Comparative Analysis and Policy Results

The analysis points out that having both official monitoring strategies and the support of society's institutions would allow Kuwait to fight radicalization most effectively. Even though securitization handles urgent problems, it does not replace the need for long-term change in ideas, which relies on trust, discussions, and convincing arguments. As a result, any effective deradicalization effort in Kuwait should consider religious, educational, legal, and psychological approaches, adapted to the country's social and political context. A comparative look at Gulf deradicalization strategies reveals varied levels of institutionalization, civic involvement, and theological engagement, as summarized in **Table 1** below.

This table illustrates how Kuwait diverges from its Gulf counterparts by:

- Allowing more space for civic actors and religious pluralism in deradicalization initiatives.
- Lacking a centralized or institutionalized reintegration mechanism (unlike Saudi Arabia).
- Operating under a semi-democratic structure, which introduces both opportunities (youth engagement, intra-ideological dialogue) and constraints (limited coercive authority).

[Table 1 near here]

4.8.3 Recommendations for Policy-Specific Civic Dialogues

In addition to theory, the following recommendations focused on Kuwait are put forward:

- *Supporting Youth Panels at Islamic Colleges:* Provide locations in Kuwait and private Islamic colleges for debates that bring together moderate Islamists, liberals, and Salafists.
- *Peer-Based Deradicalisation:* Have original Brotherhood or Salafi members who no longer agree with their principles guide youth at centers for counseling.
- Or – Organize forums where Kuwait University's theologians and experts from the Kuwait Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies revisit the commonly used fiqh viewpoints that are at the root of radical speeches such as takfir, hakimiyya, and political obedience.
- *Audit of Religious Curriculum:* Ask the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs and other watchdogs to examine the religious materials used in informal places such as da'wa meetings.

4.9 Ideological Rigidity: A Double-Edged Sword

The ideological rigidity of the KMB is still one of the most determinative features of the movement. Although it does not now profess violent extremism, the adherence of the Brotherhood to its ideology and particularly its version of political Islam forecloses it from a degree of flexibility in responding to shifting socio-political realities. Ideological inflexibility, here, pertains to the movement's firm position on fundamental principles like its vision of the Islamic state, the position of Sharia in the state, and the end objective of political Islam. Such stability frequently results in a dichotomy whereby the Brotherhood is resistant to integration into non-sectarian political structures and hesitant to participate in the sort of practical compromises required for harmonious coexistence in a pluralistic state (Zmigrod 2020; Costello et al. 2023).

Though ideological purity is a virtue for some who hold fast to political Islam's principles, when societal changes arise or the political landscape undermines established beliefs, it then becomes a weakness. The reluctance of the KMB to seriously negotiate or compromise with other elements in the political arena results in a deep-rooted political system where cooperation is minimized and ultimately leads to polarization. This internal stiffness can ultimately lead to political isolation, a factor which adds to frustration and could, in the long run, manifest in radicalization (Hameed, Majeed, and sciences 2022; K. Khan and Kiran 2012).

Secondly, the ideological isolation of the KMB has a broader impact on Islamist discourse. Although groups such as the KMB have a non-violent stance, they add to the ideological polarization that defines the perceptions and attitudes among young people across the region. This ideological polarization, along with the rhetoric about the necessity of political Islam as a counterpoint to Western liberalism, provides fertile ground for the emergence of more extreme groups that accept violence as a tool for achieving their objectives. Thus, the KMB, as a non-violent group, is a vehicle for the dissemination of ideas that have the potential to develop into violent extremism under some conditions (K. Khan and Kiran 2012; WGI 2023; Yousafzai 2022).

4.10 Internal Fragmentation: A Conduit for Radicalization?

The fragmentation within the KMB from within only serves to complicate its ideological path further. Although the movement has had a unified outward ideology, it has struggled long with internal divisions. These are usually caused by differences in how they interpret political Islam, the position of democracy, and the means through which to attain political objectives. The development of factions within the Brotherhood can destabilize the movement and open its members to other avenues of radical thought (Pall 2020).

Internal division, frequently coupled with political squabbles, can prove fertile ground for extremism. Some of the younger ones may become interested in a more radical form of the faith and reject both the organization and moderate Muslims. It is not uncommon for people to be drawn to these severe ideologies when they feel excluded, angered by slow changes in the Brotherhood, and faced with increasing pressure to put these ideas into practice (CEP 2025b).

With no clear leadership, the KMB finds it hard to unite against government reforms aimed at countering or defeating extremism. Because everyone discusses the KMB differently, they cannot settle on a single approach to sociability or moderation. For this reason, the movement could see its main beliefs undermined by groups of extremists within Islamic circles. The result may be more radical behavior among members of the movement who disagree with their leaders' beliefs (Pall 2020).

4.11 State Approach: A Calibrated Response

An effective way to deal with the lasting dangers of inflexible and divided thinking is for the state to act with restraint. The government of Kuwait has been vigilant about ideological extremism for a long time, and while the KMB itself does not support violence, its hardline and divided viewpoints continually pose issues for the government's policies. Monitoring, guiding policies, and actively involving the state are the main aspects of an effective response. It means that extremist beliefs do not always lead to violence and that counter-radicalization depends more on talks than on forced measures. Christian organizations can be monitored by authorities to prevent troublesome activities, but this should not stop the free discussion of political topics in Hong Kong. So, the government could focus on forming a diverse setting where the main ideas are discussed and debated within a democratic process (Zmigrod 2020; Ramiro et al. 2024).

As an illustration, the KMB could choose to participate in politics by seeking election so that its fixed beliefs can be tried and, perhaps, modified when interacting with voters. In addition, the government may invest in schools and cultural activities that promote tolerance, diversity, and respect for people's rights. The purpose of these programs would be to help the KMB engage with others outside its group through discussions. Possibly, the state will inspire internal changes within the KMB, making it open to political Islam that is both democratic and still keeps its key principles. Steps should be taken to ensure they do not cause any backlash or make the issue worse. If the state reinforces moderation and sets up safe ways for political action, KMB members are less likely to be influenced by radical ideas (Ziam et al. 2024; Yasir 2024; WB 2024).

4.12 Intra-Islamist Dialogue: A Pathway to Deradicalization

Talking among different parts of the Islamic movement is a key approach to dealing with radicalization. Among the KMB, this type of dialogue means speaking to both the group and to other Islamist figures in Kuwait and around the Gulf region. By bringing different Islamist actors together, the state helps make sure the arena of ideological exchange is principled and shares similar messages (Taye 2016; I. Khan et al. 2020).

Talking with each other is necessary for Islamist groups, as it can help lessen the divide between believers in political Islam and believers in secular or liberal alternatives. Typically, Islamists have chosen not to talk with people who are not part of the same religious group. Working together can result in a political Islam that does not support extremism and is open to more ideas (Ismail 2004; Shabana 2023; El-Msaoui 2018).

Kuwait's intra-Muslim Brotherhood conversations can serve to unite the KMB with those such as Salafists and other political Islamist parties, while also avoiding connection with extremist organizations. By engaging in debates inside the organization, the KMB has the possibility of rethinking its stands and reforming its ideology (Albloshi, Freer, and Valbjørn 2025; Yasmena Al-Mulla 2022).

5. Conclusion

This study proves that examining the development and ideology of the KMB is necessary for Kuwait's security and togetherness. Religious influences, political actions, and main objectives have always been unfathomable during the movement's history. Security agencies cannot cope with such problems on their own. To address radicalization, it is necessary to put in place measures in two different directions. Structural reforms, for instance, by making the government more open, updating laws, and unifying control of power, as well as tackling the beliefs that back the movement, are part of the solution. Just combating propaganda is not the whole task of ideational engagement. It must support free religious talks, teach civics, and encourage the use of websites or sites that promote democratic thinking. For Kuwaiti society to stand firm against extremism and build a political system based on different viewpoints and cooperation, this strategy is needed. There are huge risks, but we have to keep moving forward down this road.

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Table 1: Deradicalization Approaches in the Gulf States

Country	Strategic Approach	Religious Engagement	Civic Participation	Reintegration Model	Transparency / Evaluation
Kuwait	Hybrid (security-led + civic dialogue in select cases)	Moderate clerics trained in counter-extremist discourse (e.g., mosque halaqat)	Limited but growing (e.g., university forums, MoAIA collaborations)	Weak reintegration of detainees; success mostly in youth dialogue forums	Low to moderate; no centralized monitoring agency
Saudi Arabia	Institutionalized rehabilitation (e.g., Mohammed bin Nayef Counseling Center)	Strong state control over clerics; theological re-education programs	Minimal civic role; led almost entirely by the state	Structured reintegration (psychological + theological); includes family involvement	Moderate to high (programs studied and reviewed)
UAE	Intelligence-led prevention with ideological reconditioning	State-sanctioned imams deliver unified sermons under federal authority	Minimal civic participation; heavy top-down model	No formal reintegration of detainees; emphasis on surveillance and deportation	Low; program details are opaque and security-sensitive
Qatar	Preventive narrative control (soft censorship + ideological moderation)	Brotherhood-linked clerics monitored; an effort to promote "wasatiyya" (moderation)	Active civic organizations involved in education and charity, but politically constrained	Limited reintegration framework; focus on pre-emptive containment	Low to moderate; lack of formal metrics or public assessments