

CHAPTER IV

THE FACTORS OF SAUDI ARABIA'S INVOLVEMENT IN YEMENI CONFLICT

In the previous chapter, the writer has already explained about Yemeni conflict and the contribution of Iran as the external factors which support the rebellion movement in Yemen. In this chapter, the author will be explaining the reason why Saudi Arabia involved in the conflict. By using the theory of William D. Coplin, the writer will analyze the problem based on three categories namely domestic politics, economy and military capabilities, and international context.

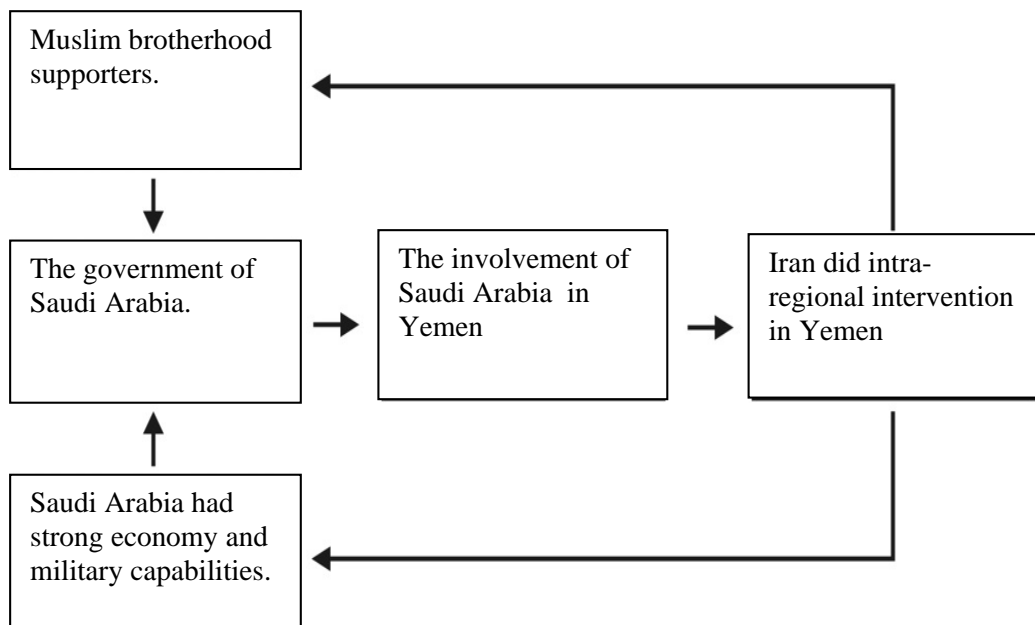


Figure 4.1 The Implementation of Decicion-making theory

A. Domestic Politic

Before this part of undergraduate thesis discusses the domestic politics of Saudi Arabia and Iran, the author would start this sub chapter with the definition of the domestic politics by Coplin. In his book, 'The Introduction of International Politics', Coplin emphasized his analysis by assuming some of the elements that influence the decision maker in deciding policy, called as the policy influencer. There are some differences in one another of the policy influences. Therefore, Coplin divided it into four policy influencers, which are bureaucratic influencer, party influencer, interest influencer, and mass influencer. The decision maker need to elaborate from all those influencers above which some of them may dominate each other depending on their interest (2003).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is an absolute monarchy, ruled by King of the house of Saud along the traditional Islamic line. As an Islamic state, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's constitution is based on the Holy Quran and Prophet's Sunnah. Islamic law, the Shari'ah, is the primary source of legislation. However the actual promulgation of legislation and implementation of policy is often mitigated by more mundane factors, such as political expediency, the inner politics of the ruling family, and the influence of intertribal politics, which remain strong in the modern kingdom.

The Kingdom has never had a composed constitution, in spite of the fact that in 1992, the King issued a document known as the Basic Law of Government (Al-

Nizam Al-Asasi li Al-Hukm), which provides rules for how the government is to be run and sets forth the rights and responsibilities of citizens. The King combines legislative, executive, and judicial function. As a Prime Minister, he manages over the Council of Ministers (Majlis al-Wuzara). The council is responsible for such executive and administrative matters in foreign and domestic policy, defense, finance, health, and education. The appointment and dismissal of the council is the king's privilege.

Based on the Basic Law of Governance of Saudi Arabia Section Five: Rights and Duties Article 25:

The state shall be keen to realize the aspirations of the Arab and Muslim nations with regard to solidarity and unity while enhancing its relations with friendly states (2011).

B. Economy and Military Capabilities

The economic and military capacity of a state is also one of the three determinants according to Coplin. There were some standard in order to measure the economic capacity of a state. According to Coplin, the criteria to measure is for example the capacity of the welfare of a state in fulfilling the needs of their society,

such as the path of their economic growth (can be analyzed by the absolute number of production of goods and services; the relative number of the economic demand), and the prospect of the state future economic growth. In order to measure the goods and services production, in economic studies, it is commonly analyzed from the Gross National Products (GNP) and income per-capita (2003).

Based on the Basic Law of Governance of Saudi Arabia Section Four: Economic Principles, Article 14:

All natural resources bestowed by god, both under or above ground, of the country or in its territorial waters, or within its terrestrial and maritime limits, as well as the revenues of these resources shall be owned by the state as specified by the law. The law, also, shall specify the means to be employed for the utilization, protection and development of these resources in a manner conducive to the promotion of the state's interest, security and economy (2011).

Table 4. 1 List of Gross National Income 2015

Ranking	Economy	U.S Dollar
1	United States	17,663,587
2	China	10,723,960
3	Japan	4,656,384
4	Germany	3,727,756
5	United Kingdom	2,823,301
6	France	2,711,408
7	India	2,084,448
8	Brazil	2,047,110
9	Italy	1,993,904

10	Canada	1,702,895
11	Russian Federation	1,668,650
12	Australia	1,428,650
13	Korea, Rep	1,388,988
14	Spain	1,324,057
15	Mexico	1,233,658
16	Indonesia	887,028
17	Netherlands	828,796
18	Turkey	782,998
19	Saudi Arabia	742,707
20	Switzerland	697,627

Source: World Bank

Saudi Arabia's economy is overwhelmingly oil-based. Hydrocarbons account for 85 per cent of export earnings as well as the vast majority of government revenue. While oil typically accounts for only 30–40 per cent of real GDP, the near-total reliance of public finances on oil revenue means that a far larger proportion of the economy is indirectly dependent on oil. The public sector – including the state-controlled oil sector – accounts for two-thirds of GDP, while the private sector is heavily dependent on government contracts. During the recent oil boom the private sector grew, as did spending on infrastructure and education, both crucial to underpinning growth. But these improvements were largely underwritten by continuous fiscal expansion, with government expenditure rising every year from 2003 until 2015. The share of oil revenue and public spending in the economy rose significantly during this decade. For instance, state-funded investment accounted for nearly half of all capital investment in 2009–14, compared with one-third of all investment over the previous five years, according to UNCTAD data. (Kinninmont, 2017).

Saudi Arabia's GDP reached almost 800 billion dollars in 2014 with a military budget of more than 60 billion dollars. The country that has a population of less than 30 million people and an army of 233,500 units is ranked fourth in the

world in military spending after United States of America, China, and Russia (Pejic, 2016).

Beside the economic capacity of state, Coplin also explained the military capacity of the state as the determinant of the foreign policy. In order to have a clear standard to analyze the military capacity of a state, Coplin divided it into three criteria, such as (1) the number of the trained manpower, (2) the degree of the capability, and (3) the military equipment. The number of the soldier or the trained manpower and the degree of capability could not be equated. The numerous of soldier would be nothing if they did not have advanced military technology. Moreover, if the advanced military technology was transferred to the untrained soldier, it would be useless (2003).

Therefore, Coplin attempts to emphasize the number of the trained soldier trained with the advanced military technology as well. In the aspect of military equipment, Coplin also mentioned about the nuclear energy as the huge asset of a state. Coplin attempted to give some hypothesis. If the war happened, the number of the trained both the soldier and the advanced military technology would be nothing if the states were attacked by nuclear bombs. That statement reflected the dilemma of the state. As the cost to advance the military technology and training for the soldier was impressively high compared to the condition when developing nuclear bombs to strike the states (2003).

However, advancing military capability by the soldiers and its equipments are actually the deterrence for one another state. By seeing the advancement of the military aspects, some points of view would analyze it to secure the state and its citizen from any outside attacks. However, from other points of view, it would be said that it was filled of speculations. The speculations tend to consider if other states attack or threat their existence. However it was mostly speculation. After the discussion on this issue, the author will continue by explaining about the economy and military capabilities.

Table 4. 2 Military Arsenal of Saudi Arabia 2014

	Units	2014
Man Power		
Total Population	Person	27,345,986
Available Manpower	Person	15,246,507
Fit for Service	Person	13,967,609
Active Military personel	Person	233,500
Active Reserve Military Personel	Person	25,000
Land System		
Tanks	Number	1,210
Armored Fighting Vehicles (AFVs)	Number	5,472
Self-propelled Guns (SPGs)	Number	524
Towed Artillery Pieces	Number	432
Multiple-launch Rocket System (MLRs)	Number	322

Air Power		
Total Aircraft	Number	675
Fighter/Interceptors	Number	155
Fixed-wing Attack Aircraft	Number	236
Transport Aircraft	Number	187
Helicopters	Number	182
Attack Helicopters	Number	18
Naval Power		
Total Naval Strength	Number	55
Frigates	Number	7
Corvettes	Number	4
Coastal Defense Craft	Number	39
Resources(Petroleum)		
Oil Production	bbl/day	9,900,000
Oil Consumption	bbl/day	2,820,000
Proven Oil Reserves	bbl/day	267,900,000,000
Financial		
Annual Defense Budget	USD	56,725,000,000
External Debt	USD	149,400,000,000
Reserves of Foreign Exchange and Gold	USD	739,500,000,000
Purchasing Power Parity	USD	927,800,000,000

Source:< <https://knoema.com/ssmsxvd/global-firepower-2015> >

C. International Context

See from the international context, the situation in the country becomes the consideration of action would be taken by a state in response to the emerging issues. International context tells about the position of the relations with other states in international system. In his book, Coplin discussed three basic elements in explaining the impact of the international context on the foreign policy in a country, they are geographical, economic and political impacts (2003).

Geographically, the location of one to another state, the close border, the similarity of culture, and organization might affect the international context of a state. The economic aspect in the state relation such as trade, interdependency, the flow of goods and services, and the investment or foreign aid were able to be the part of the international context of a state. Lastly, the politics relation of one another state in the international community such as the political interest, alliance, or the special support from the states might be the biggest considerations in the international context of a state (Coplin, 2003).

The political identity here refers to the elements that surround ethnic, racial, or religious identity that can be used as a claim that legitimizes the power holder in deciding the direction of state policy. These elements can change the identity of the state, especially in foreign policy, as well as the shifting pattern of friendship between the two countries. Political identity in the Middle East differs from most other regions. In the Middle East, in addition to tribal factors, political identity is influenced by sectarian issues or what is called Ashabiyah. In this case, Saudi Arabia bases its country on Sunni Islam, while Iran is a representative country of Shia Islam (Jatmika, 2014).

To understand the extent to which the Ashabiyah factor that became the political identity of these two countries underlie and influence the conflict of both, we need to trace back the historical context of the Sunni-Shiite relationship.

There are many observers who see violent conflict marked by deep divisions and classical clashes between Sunni and Shi'a. This can be traced by looking at the very beginning of Islam itself. The Sunni-Shi'a conflict is a political and religious after Prophet Muhammad SAW died in 632 AD. The death of a religious and political leader without leaving the testament will provoke a debate about the legitimate heirs of the Islamic throne. After long and deep friction since the Chaliphate, two major conflicts in Islam are now most visible in the form of competition between two Islamic countries, Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Saudis Sunni and Iranians Shiite are the latest representatives of this two-fold struggle. Both consciously and decisively claim themselves and their policies as "the true Islamic state." Saudi Arabia and Iran argue that their society and system of governance are based on the embodiment of Islamic normative values and that their regimes rule the people on the basis of divine law and Sharia, the principle of law derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah, the tradition of Muhammad and the Early Muslims generation.

Chapter IV explains the considerations of the influencing factors of Saudi Arabia to take an action toward Yemen Conflict. The domestic politics of Saudi Arabia under the administration of King Salman is more supported by the good economy and enough military capabilities. The contribution of Iran resulting the intra-regional intervention in Yemen, adds to Saudi Arabia's belief in getting its involvement in the conflict.