CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OPENNESS POLITICAL SYSTEMS IN THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

In this chapter, the author will make a proof of hypothesis which contains an analysis of the application of open political system policies in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. By using the conceptual framework of political system theory by David Easton, the author will explain the structure/units of Input and Output that support the creation of such an open political system policy.

Simply put, David Easton observes political life as a fabric of human behavior interactions as a system. The units in the political system are actions that have to do with the making and implementation of policies. Input in the political system can be in the form of demands and support which after going through the conversion process will turn into output (decision or policy). The output generated after going through the conversion process after there is to the environment can produce new inputs.

The *first* Input unit of the policy of an open political system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the Input Demand Unit which is the guidance of the people of Saudi Arabia who have been wanting change in a more modern direction as other countries that have experienced globalization. The *second* Input unit is the Input Support from the King and the Crown Prince. The policy of King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud who continued the previous policy of King Abdullah who had

already carried out political reforms in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Also, the support of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman also had a significant influence on the implementation of the open political system in the country.

The Output unit of the implementation of the open political system of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the birth of Saudi Vision 2030 and also various open policies that change the face of Saudi Arabia. Various policies have been realized in order to support the implementation of the open political system, for example carrying out various reforms in the cultural and social fields as well as gender equality.

A. Input Demand: Community Demand of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The Input Unit is no less critical in the application of an open political system that the policy was born because of demands from the public. Gabriel A. Almond views that the political system is necessarily a mechanism for changing demands from the community (input) to policy (output) through the feedback channel which will become a new input candidate. According to him, in the process of being modern, a political society experiences a process of political secularization, namely the process of changing the attitude of members of society so that in understanding the world of life around them they are more based on critical thinking about causation. Secular cultured societies tend to believe in their ability to influence and shape their environment and to make changes.

The more capable a political system responds to input that comes from its environment, the more developed and advanced the political system is. The factors that influence the ability of the political system according to Gabriel Almond, among others:[53]

1) Responses or responses from elites to inputs coming from their community are from the international community. This response can be in the form of emphasis, neglect, replacement, or form of adjustment.

2) Availability of material resources needs to run the political system. More and more material resources are available, increasingly enabling the development of political system capabilities.

3) It is Organizational officers from the political system or what is known as bureaucracy. The better and more powerful this bureaucracy carries out its functions, the more likely the political system to develop.

4) The level of support for the political system. Because, of course, the political system needs support to be able to carry out its activities. The high and low level of community support is directly proportional to the development of the ability of the political system.

The people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have long wanted more significant change, especially in the social and cultural fields. So far, the people of Saudi Arabia

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[53] *Ibid.*

can be called a society that is far from freedom, because of the strict rules of the kingdom. They seemed to imprisoned in their own country, and it was difficult to make demands.

However, along with the development of globalization that hit the Middle East region, the people of Saudi Arabia began to be confronted with the current development and stronger modernization. Especially after the Arab Spring which hit the Middle East region. Saudi Arabia certainly has seen the condition of society which is increasingly influenced by western culture, especially democracy. Community demands are the essential ingredients used to make the final product. David Easton explained that the demands could be overt actions. A supportive atmosphere is a collection of strong attitudes or tendencies, or a willingness to act for others. A supportive atmosphere of thought is a vital input for the operation and maintenance of a political system.[54]

As a diversion from the oil sector, attention given to the more important quality of Human Resources (HR). The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is working hard to welcome the post-oil era and prepare a clearer roadmap for the country's future. Preparations to reduce dependence on oil it accompanied by Saudi efforts to increase the diversification of state revenues. The new command map is believed to have a

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[54] *Ibid.*

significant impact on the changes in Saudi Arabia's society in the modern era, including social, political and military changes.

Saudi society must now prepare for a transformation that will reduce their comfort rations. Many facilities from the country cut due to falling world oil prices. Although it has the largest oil reserves in the world of up to 267 billion barrels, the situation of declining oil prices due to the weakening world economy has made the Saudi budget deficit.[55]

To anticipate the emergence of popular movements that oppose the kingdom, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia should have made various efforts to overcome them. One of them is by implementing an open political system that will not only have an impact on political life but also will reform the social life of the people in Saudi Arabia. So the writer found the fact that one of the input units that led to the emergence of an open political system policy was the demand of the people seen by the Royal Government, especially by King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

B. Input Support

1. The policy of King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud

The author analyzes that the first input support in the implementation of an open political system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the role and authority of the

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[55] Suryo Ediyono. *Reformasi Sistem Kebudayaan di Arab Saudi Masa Pemerintahan Raja Abdullah*. Jurnal dalam http://millati.iainsalatiga.ac.id/index.php/millati/article/download/1084/738 Diakses pada tanggal 1 January 2018, Pukul 21.54 WIB.

central leader, King Salman, as the leading actor of policymakers. The policy of King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud concerning realizing an open political system in his country is indeed inseparable from the policies of the previous king, King Abdullah who had previously carried out political reforms in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. However, King Salman was the king who began with a real process of change in Saudi Arabia, namely by giving birth to clear policies.

Easton states that political systems can recognize as a set of abstracted interactions from all social behaviors, in which values are allocated authoritatively to the community. Another opinion from Dahl that the political system is a permanent pattern of relations between humans that involves up to a certain level, namely: control, influence, power and authority. The political system has a large share because it is authoritative in using the nature of coercion over the authority of the power that the government has to the people.[56]

With the understanding of David Easton and Dahl above, it can conclude that the application of an open political system policy cannot separate from the role of the ruler, namely the government. In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the role of the ruler is indeed a King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. The high power and authority possessed by a King in Saudi Arabia will be able to realize a policy even if the people

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[56] Suryo Ediyono. *Reformasi Sistem Kebudayaan di Arab Saudi Masa Pemerintahan Raja Abdullah*. Jurnal dalam http://millati.iainsalatiga.ac.id/index.php/millati/article/download/1084/738 Diakses pada tanggal 1 January 2018, Pukul 21.54 WIB.

do not agree. However, in the case of the implementation of an open political system, both the Government and the People in Saudi Arabia both supported the implementation of the policy.

Leaders in the Middle East are still happy to inherit the history of the Islamic world, which the Kings have full authority, as happened in some of the Kings in the Islamic world during the Umayyad and Abbasid years. Therefore, in this connection, Samuel Huntington and Fukuyama give their opinion that Islam is not in line with democracy. This opinion based on the empirical reality that some of the Kings in the Islamic world during the Umayyad and Abbasid years still showed an authoritarian attitude. No exception in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as we know that until now Saudi Arabia still adheres to an authoritarian culture in the government.

However, in an authoritarian system, changes cannot be made? The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia proves that they can initiate change by slowly realizing policies that are accepted both by the Royal Family and by the people of Saudi Arabia themselves. The policy is an open political system policy. In the Arab world where Muslims dominate countries with people, if they hope that democracy can be applied and sustainable in the country, then according to Bernard Lewis it needs to be carried out by means of gradual and non-coercive changes that take place in slow stages through reform from the autocracy become a more open and competitive political system.[57]

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[57] *Ibid.*

This method, which was then carried out by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, was to begin changes slowly but surely.

The launch of the Saudi 2030 Vision is an ambitious royal plan to change the economy from the oil dependency enjoyed by the people so far. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) considers this plan an ambitious effort and is not easy to achieve. Therefore, the IMF also warns Saudi Arabia of the various challenges that will be faced. As a diversion from the oil sector, attention giving to the more important quality of Human Resources (HR).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is working hard to welcome the post-oil era and prepare a clearer roadmap for the country's future. Preparations to reduce dependence on oil accompanied by Saudi efforts to boost national income diversification. This new roadmap is believed to have a significant impact on the changes in Saudi Arabia's society in the modern era, including social, political and military changes. Saudi society must now prepare for a transformation that will reduce their comfort rations. Many facilities from the country cut due to falling world oil prices.

The author can conclude that the first Input Unit in the implementation of an open political system policy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the policy was born from the role of the current Saudi ruler, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. As for some conditions seen by King Salman, among others:

1) The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia needs a change that can adapt to globalization and the international world, in order to maintain the existence of the kingdom.

2) The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia began to realize that Oil could not rely on for a long time. What needs to prepared are advanced and competitive Human Resources.

3) The government must start planning a new program that can guarantee the continuity of the kingdom in the future.

4) The government must anticipate other Arab Spring, that the process of democratization must not avoid, but needs to be anticipated and faced.

5) The government must realize the demands of the people in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia who have been wanting change.

Thus, it is clear that the first Input Unit, namely the policy, was born from King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. King Salman's mission is to continue the previous King's policy, King Abdullah, who had first realized the importance of reformation and change to a more advanced and modern Saudi Arabia.

2. The Influence of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud (MBS) in policymaking in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The author analyzes that the second Input support in implementing open political system policies is the role and influence of Crown Prince Prince Mohammed

bin Salman Al Saud (MBS) in policymaking. Since being appointed as crown prince on June 21, 2017, SBM has attracted international attention because of its enormous role in the dynamics of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He is trusted to hold strategic positions in his father's government, including the Minister of Defense, Chair of the Council for Economic and Development Affairs, and Deputy Prime Minister.[58]

The emergence of MBS as the crown prince of Saudi Arabia has brought so many changes in the Saud family environment. Even though he is still a crown prince, he has led Saudi Arabia like a king. On April 25, 2016, he sparked Saudi Arabian economic reforms called Vision 2030. By Western media, because the power of MBS rule in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia included so many things, he was dubbed as "Mr. Everything." Thus, even though MBS is still a crown prince, he is very capable of influencing the King in various policies issued by King Salman.[59]

Some controversial actions carried out by SBM included holding eleven princes, four ministers, and dozens of former ministers on corruption charges. They were not only arrested, but also their assets were frozen, removed from their positions, and publicly humiliated.[60] This case is the first such controversial case

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[58] Panji Haryadi. Peran Muhammad Bin Salman Terhadap Perubahan Pilar Kenegaraan Arab Saudi. Jurnal Dalam https://ic-mes.org/jurnal/index.php/jurnalICMES/article/download/16/20/ Diakses pada tanggal 1 January 2019, Pukul 17.08 WIB.

[59] *Ibid.*

[60] *Ibid.*

raised by MBS. The case proves that MBS has almost full strength and power in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Prince MBS anti-corruption campaign is quite popular among Saudis, especially the lower middle class who are fed up with elites who abuse their power and enrich themselves. MBS has used an anti-corruption campaign to lift its position in the community of Saudi Arabia. However, at the same time, MBS shows a luxurious lifestyle and is not in line with the corruption eradication actions that it does.

Also, MBS once ordered Saudi Arabians to arrest more than 20 priests and intellectuals, including Salman Al Oudah and Oudh Al Qarni, Sahwa figures. MBS is not only targeting the Wahhabi Political realm, but MBS also attacks Wahhabi Social through a series of policies that can revolutionize the social order of the Saudi Arabian society. Previously, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was known to have an ultra-conservative interpretation of Islamic teachings about women, including the obligation to wear long and loose robes when in public; prohibition on associating with men who have no relationship; and the prohibition on driving a car. From some of these cases, the author considered that Prince Mohammed Bin Salman had a considerable influence on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Concerning the implementation of open political system policies, the second Input Unit is the role of SBM in the policy. The MBS Prince was well aware of the importance of bringing the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to an advanced and modern Kingdom.