

## **Facilitating Conditions of Saudi Arabia – Israel Normalization in 2015-2018**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Since 2017, there have been several events that indicate the closeness of relations between the Saudi Arabia and Israel. One of the most significant proof was a statement from Muhammad bin Salam in an interview in The Atlantic stating that Israel had rights to their land. The improvement in relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia has come under fire from many parties such as Hezbollah and Palestine. This research aims to analyze the conditions that facilitate Saudi Arabia's normalization toward Israel in 2015-2018 with desecuritisation theory based on Bezer Coskun observations of Copenhagen School security analysis. This research is a qualitative research using secondary data as its sources. Researcher used desecuritisation variables that were used by Bezer Coskun on his previous research regarding Palestine and Israel in 2009. Those four variables are, 1) The change in the language to define previously securitized issue, 2) Position of the desecuritising actor and the relation between desecuritising actor and audience, 3) Conditions that point out the necessity for desecuritisation. Researcher found that condition that facilitates Saudi-Israel normalization are Muhammad bin Salam as desecuritisation actor and necessity of Israel's assistances in realization of Saudi Vision 2030 and Iran power raising in Middle East region after Arab Spring 2011.

**Keywords:** *Normalisation, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Desecuritisation*

## **A. Introduction**

In the case of peace between the Arab world and Israel, Saudi Arabia tends to support Palestine since the establishment of Israel in 1948. But a few years later Saudi Arabia entered a new phase where Saudi Arabia itself showed activities that indicated Palestine was no longer relevant as their foreign policy priority. The process of normalization through the API is still ongoing, especially when API re-appears in the Amman 2017 Declaration.(Khader Bichara, 2017).

However, the intensified efforts from Saudi Arabia can be seen especially when Muhammad bin Salman (MBS) issued a statement regarding Israeli water rights along with Palestine in 2018. (TIME, April 2018). In addition, in an interview with The Atlantic, the crown prince Muhammad bin Salman stated that he believed in the existence of Israeli rights to Palestinian land while there were provisions for fair distribution between Palestine and Israel (Marcus, 2018).

Efforts to normalize have been seen starting from the unofficial visit of former Saudi Arabian general Anwar Eshki to Israel in July 2016 by bringing delegations, namely a number of scholars and businessmen to discuss normalization and allowing the use of Saudi Arabian airlines to be crossed by Indian airlines, India Airlines , which aims to Israel in 2018.(Cohean, Rabinovitch, 2018).

The normalization between these two entities brought a lot of negative responses from various parties, one of

them from the Hizbullah leadership named Hassan Nasrallah. He stated that "it seems that the future of Palestine and the fate of children have become a trivial matter for some Arab states recently" and he doubts that the normalization of this relationship is solely to create peace between Arabs and Israel and there is no advantage behind it (The Time of Israel, 2016). Palestinian activist Kamel Hawwash also expressed a similar response "Our Arabs have stabbed us in the front and the back, by abusing us politically while embracing Israel" (Ian Black, 2019). In recent years criticism from Palestinians towards Saudi Arabia has increased. Many accused the royal family of treason, they burned photos and pictures of the King's crown prince during the demonstration. Besides that, in the virtual world there is a virtual war between Saudis and Palestinians which is mounting when the Saudi government visits Israel (Edy Cohen, 2019)

Previously there were a number of writings that had analyzed this relationship between Arab and Israel, such as Itamar Rabinovich's article "Israel and The Changing Middle East". This paper finds that under an ever changing and unstable regional system, especially after the Arab Spring, Israel's foreign policy was in the focus of a dilemma between increasing economic cooperation or seeking regional security stability. This paper explains some economic cooperation relations between Israel and other Arab neighboring countries such as Egypt, Jordan and other Gulf countries (Rabinovich, 2015). But this research has not focused on

bilateral relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel.

Oded Eran's research entitled "Normalization between Israel and Arab States: Is the Idea still Viable?" Explained the normalization process carried out by Egypt and Jordan against Israel from 1979 (Eran, 2011). In addition, the writings of Gadi Hitman and Chen Kertcher entitled "The Case for Arab-Israeli Normalization during Conflict ". This paper describes the normalization between the countries of Saudi Arabia and Qatar against the state of Israel (Hitman, Kertcher, 2018). Even though Hitman and Kertcher showed a pattern of relations that had previously been established between the two countries, the reasons for the two countries to normalize Israel still could not be seen in more detail, especially when looking at relations between Saudi Arabia and other countries in the Middle East.

From the previous research it can be concluded that research that focuses on analyzing conditions that facilitate normalization of relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel has never been analyzed primarily by using the desecuritisation theoretical framework. Therefore, this study aims to explain the conditions that facilitate the improvement of relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel from 2015 to 2018.

## **B. Method**

In conducting this explanatory research, researchers tried to analyze the data in accordance with the steps that have been described by the qualitative research approach from Miles and Huberman.

### **1) Data Reduction**

After getting related data, the researcher then reduces the data by focusing on the main data in accordance with the frame of mind used to facilitate the analysis process. The reduction process needs to be done so that data or sources that are not related to research do not make this research difficult to understand because it is not to-the-point. In the case of this research, analyzing Saudi Arabia's normalization efforts against Israel in 2015-2018 began with a discussion of the history of efforts to normalize Saudi Arabia for the first time until the relevant parties responded to the normalization.

### **2) Presentation of data**

Along with the reduction of the data, the researcher tried to analyze the data according to the research theory used. Analysis efforts are the most important stages of research before presenting the final results or conclusions of the study. Explanation of structured analysis of the data used is the obligation of researchers to present the data model. In this study, analysis of normalization efforts will use elements of the theory of desecuritisation in order to get a picture of the conditions of Saudi Arabia that made the country normalize. By knowing the components and facilitating conditions of a securitization, there are several variables that are used as a tool to determine conditions that facilitate the normalization of Saudi Arabia. The first, discusses how the speech act change became a desecuritising language carried out by a desecuritising actor namely Muhammad bin Salman. Secondly, the authority and relation of the MBS as desecuritisation actor with the Saudi public. And finally, conditions that make the need for desecuritisation based on the situation in the Middle East.

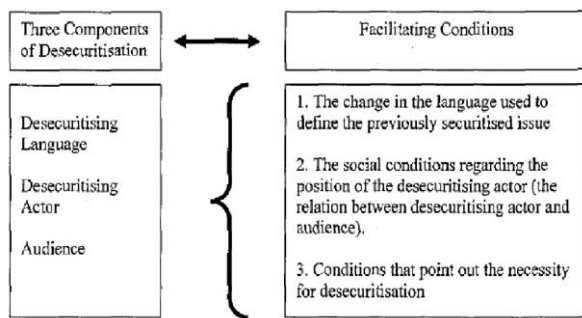


Fig.1.1 Desecuritisation Theory  
 Source: Besen Coskun (2009) page.24

### 3) Conclusion Withdrawal

The presentation of the results of this study concludes with conclusion.

## C. Result and Discussion

### Muhammad bin Salman's position In the Saudi Arabian Community

As a country that holds an absolute monarchical system in the Middle East, al-Saud's extended family has always been at the forefront in formulating policies both domestically and abroad in Saudi Arabia. Since it was built by Saudi Arabia's first king, Abdulaziz bin Saud in 1932, all important positions of the royal government have come from the blood of his family until now. Noteworthy from the kingdom of Saudi Arabia are two important positions, namely a king (who also holds the position of prime minister, then a crown prince (who also holds the position of first deputy prime minister). Both are active in the formulation of Saudi Arabian policy because they are members of the Ministry of the Ministry of the Ministry Saudi Arabia, the body that compiles and supervises the implementation of internal, external, financial, economic, education and security policy in Saudi Arabia, especially from security issues, MBS as the minister of security is the main actor involved especially in the issue of securitization

and desecuritisation issues affecting the country.

MBS is an important figure in the formulation of security policies within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, especially after he was appointed as the crown prince on June 21, 2017 (after the removal of Muhammad bin Nayef) (Sudarsan, Kareem, 2017). Before being inaugurated, he has held the position of Minister of Defense of Saudi Arabia since January 23, 2015. MBS also holds the position of chairman of the Council for Economic Affairs and Development of Saudi Arabia. The role that was obtained by Muhammad bin Salman in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia made the authority of a crown prince have a strong influence in the policy making process. Although the modernization of Saudi Arabia has been the agenda of the government of Saudi Arabia for a long time (Since King Salman is still the crown prince of Saudi Arabia), MBS is an actor who still continues the appeal. MBS has ambitions to build Saudi Arabia into a moderate and modern Islamic country to control all deficiencies in the country's economy. This ambition is contained in the Saudi Vision 2030 proposal, a blueprint that he developed as a mission for Saudi Arabia in the next few years (Rashad, 2016).

By promising the state of Saudi Arabia as a modern moderate Islamic state, MBS did not even hesitate to crackdown against corrupt practices by the royal elite, and chase down Saudi public figures who had a "radical" understanding and who could threaten the royal constitution. The policy often causes MBS to become involved in accusations of being oppressive in the Saudi public and internationally. Examples include the case of the arrest of public figures such as Safar al-Hawali and the murder of the media figure Jamal

Khashoggi (BBC, 2018). But this did not stop MBS as the crown prince in setting state policy. With this role in the security sector and the economy, it cannot be denied that the direction of Saudi Arabia's foreign policy will undergo several changes in the next few years so that it also changes their approach to normalization efforts that they have done for a long time.

The relationship between MBS and the Saudi Arabian public is a very complex relationship. This is due to the existence of former Sahwa groups who were imprisoned earlier, starting to form a new activist group in Saudi Arabia starting in early 2000. Although some people support the modernization efforts of the royal family, some of them criticize the consequences of the modernization process on society in Saudi Arabia. There are activists who oppose the liberal trend in Saudi Arabia, there are activists who glorify true Islamic state in Saudi Arabia, and there are activists who advocate "civil jihad" (the use of the path of peace) in supporting Saudi Arabia to become a constitutional monarchy aware of the rights of its people (Islamoliberals) (Lacroix, 2014). The existence of this group can be seen during the period of the Arab Spring in the Middle East.

The role of Saudi Arabian activists can be seen at the time of the Arab Spring in the Middle East. Although the royal mufti, Abdul Aziz Al-Shaykh (Minister and Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) considered the revolution in Tunisia and Egypt as a plan to attack the umma, Islamist activist groups were enthusiastic about the revolution in both countries. This led to a disagreement between the kingdom and some Islamic activists in Saudi Arabia. The enthusiasm of Islamic activists can be seen in the case of giving donations to Syria. A number of

Shiites from *Sahwa* were involved in giving donations to the Syrian government opposition groups (mostly *salafi* conservative jihadi groups who are members of the Syrian Islamic Liberation Front) so that it became a major donation channel from Saudi Arabia. This triggered a decisive action from the kingdom of Saudi Arabia for not using the official donation line in accordance with the kingdom. The decisive action was the arrest of several well-known Shi'ites such as Muhammad al-Arifi (founder of the ulama committee to help Syria), Ali Badahdah and Abdul al-Aziz al-Turayfi (Lacroix, 2014).

With the emergence of the Arab Spring in 2011, there were differences and debates between activists and the kingdom as well as activists with other activists in Saudi Arabia bringing back the efforts to reform the constitutional monarchy in Saudi Arabia. The kingdom was not only criticized by conservatives, but also from civil jihadists in Saudi Arabia. If conservatives try to resist the moral trends of liberalism or the west that have entered Saudi Arabia since the advent of Sahwa, those who include democratic values in the kingdom begin to emerge, especially with the establishment of the Saudi Civil and Political Rights Association (SCPRA) in 2009 (Lacroix, 2014). At the inception of SCPRA in 2009, the kingdom tolerated the group's existence because it did not endanger the kingdom. The group began to pressure the kingdom during the Arab Spring by criticizing human rights violations committed by the kingdom and defending the prisoners of reformist activists who were captured by the kingdom. As a result of attacks from various sides, the kingdom began to hunt down all parties involved in the reformist actions of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia including SCPRA leaders in 2013,

Muhammad al-Qahtani and Abdallah al-Hamid, and resulted in the dissolution of SCPRA (Lacroix, 2014).

On the conservative side, the existence of Sahwa's understanding in Saudi Arabia is one of the targets of annihilation of the kingdom. The recapture of former Sahwa members, Safar al-Hawali in 2018 is one example of the eradication of MBS "radicalism" to realize moderate Islam in Saudi Arabia (Chulov, 2017). Sahwa was targeted by Saudi Arabia because the group was inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood, a group that has been considered a terrorist group by the kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

*"We are simply reverting to what we followed - a moderate Islam open to the world and all religions. 70% of the Saudis are Younger than 30, honestly we won't waste 30 years of our life combating extremist thoughts, we will destroy them now and immediately"* (Chulov, 2017)

Pressure exerted by various parties makes the kingdom must be prepared with efforts to re-emerge the reform agenda as it did decades ago. During the three years MBS became the crown prince, MBS was an actor who sought to get rid of those who could interfere with royal sovereignty. This makes the relationship between MBS and the public confined because there is no formal support for MBS. Although conservatives as well as civil-jihadis in Saudi Arabia morally support the normalization between Saudi Arabia and Israel, criticism of the absolute monarchical policy of the kingdom always arises from among these two activist parties. As a result, both King Abdullah and MBS often take action to detain activists or advocates (both civil-jihadis and conservative groups) who are not pleased with their modernization

efforts and also with their leadership style.

In the theory of desecuritisation explained how authority can influence the strength of the audience's support. Audience can provide support between moral and formal (if both aspects are met, the desecuritisation process can run smoothly) to their desecuritisation actors. In the case of the normalization efforts of Saudi Arabia this time, MBS actually does not need these two supports if it sees the authority it receives in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (the Crown Prince, the Minister of Security, and the Head of the Council on Economic Relations and Development). Although it can slow down the path of desecuritisation if it does not get both forms of support, the authority possessed by MBS does not have much effect on the audience's decision. Even by only getting moral support, MBS can carry out its normalization policy with the perception that it has in Saudi economic and social problems, conservative in politics, and nationalist and populist as its vision.

### **Change of language used to define Israel**

During the course of the conflict in the Middle East in 2015-2018, Saudi Arabia was the party who did not stop expressing the possibility of the realization of the normalization of relations between the Arab world and Israel. Through interviews conducted by the crown prince Muhammad bin Salman (MBS), he expressed his desire to establish harmonious state relations in the Middle East and resolve conflicts between Palestinians and Israel by recognizing the rights of their respective homelands.

*"---- and it seems that we have a lot of potential areas to have economic*

*cooperation. And we cannot have a relation with Israel before solving the peace issue, the Palestinians, because both of them they have the right to live and coexist. And since that day happened, we will watch. We will try to support a peace solution. And when it happens, of course next day we'll have good and normal relations with Israel and it will be the best for everyone."* (Time, 2018)

This statement from MBS is a reaffirmation of the position of Saudi Arabia that they have maintained since the birth of normalization efforts with Israel from 1981 to 2018. But amidst all that, there is an internal demand that can smooth the normalization efforts between Saudi Arabia and Israel from 2015- 2018, which is a potential area in realizing economic cooperation. Development stagnation due to the transfer of development funds to the security sector and increasingly stringent regulations in Saudi Arabia, according to MBS, is a barrier to modernization in the current era. For him, the approach by forming a moderate Islamic state is a necessary step in the process of modernizing Saudi Arabia besides eliminating the idea of radicalism in Saudi Arabia.

This thought give Israel chance to rethink its relationship with Saudi Arabia. A moderate Islamic approach and increasingly modernization towards a liberal economy create a warm chance for relations between the two countries. Even MBS did not hesitate to meet with rabbi Richard Jacobs (President of the Union for Reform Judaism), and rabbi Steven Wernick (Head of United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism) when he visited New York last March 2018 (Alaraby, 2018).

*"There is a lot of interest we share with Israel and if there is peace, there would be a lot of interest between Israel and the*

*Gulf Cooperations Council countries"* (Aljazeera, 2018)

When compared with Saudi Arabia's security journey, Israel's resistance to Iran that emerged since the Arab Spring made Saudi Arabia's security interests have similarities with Israel. As well as having a dispute with Israel, Saudi Arabia is in the midst of an economic transition under MBS guidelines to realize a modern Saudi Arabia that is not dependent on state revenues for oil commodities (Saudi Vision 2030). MBS recognizes Israel even though it is a small country, it is a country that has a developed and prosperous economy in the Middle East.

In Saudi Vision 2030, MBS is trying to do a restructuring economy of Saudi to improve the effectiveness of the government structure, and carry out social reforms that are appropriate for the people in Saudi Arabia. Examples such as: in improving the quality of education, Saudi Arabia has allocated \$ 53 trillion in state education investment to invest in research and development of quality universities with world-class technology. In addition, the Kingdom is trying to increase the contribution of modern commerce and e-commerce to 80% into the retail sector by 2020 (Saudi Vision 2030). To get it Saudi Arabia seeks to attract the attention of regional and international retail investors and relax the restrictions on foreign ownership and investment (Saudi Vision 2030).

*"---We have many programs to do this. We have privatization. At the top of the pyramid we have the IPO of Aramco, pushing this money, pushing other government assets, pushing other assets, and other cash reserves into the public investment fund, and pushing it to be the biggest fund in the whole world, above \$2 trillion. Two years ago, the size of public investment fund was \$150 billion US.*

*Today it's \$300 billion US.----- We will invest half of this money to empower Saudi Arabia, and the other 50 percent we will invest it abroad to be sure that we are part of the emerging sectors around the world."(TIME, 2018)*

MBS also places importance on the continuation of strategic cooperation with the U.S., which has always been a partner of Israel in matters of state foreign policy. Diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and the U.S. were indeed preceded by international security cooperation in 1933. The cooperation was even stronger when the oil boom began from the 1970s to the present (Chugtai Alia, 2018). With these developments, the era of modernization that was pursued in the 2000s did not release the involvement of the U.S. as a collaborative partner of Saudi Arabia in the Middle East. Although in Saudi Vision 2030 MBS is trying to cut the state budget used for the military, MBS is still trying to cooperate with the U.S. in the military sector in addition to other economic cooperation (Chugtai Alia, 208)

Saudi Arabia is increasingly opening up investment paths for the U.S. to several non-holding and mining companies in Saudi Arabia (USTR, 2018). Not only the U.S., as the first country to have diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia, Russia is also an increasingly close party, especially in forming an arms agreement in line with Saudi Vision 2030 (weapons manufacturing localization) (Catherine Hardy, 2017). With these various policies, Saudi Arabia began to aim to become an independent country in their foreign policy matters.

Openness of Saudi Arabia with liberal market practices makes the close relations between Saudi Arabia and other developed countries can affect the perception of Saudi Arabia and Israel in

the Middle East. With Saudi Arabia's economy opening up to the international market and recognition of Israel as a developed country in the Middle East, normalizing relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel is not impossible.

## **The Political and Economic Conditions of Saudi Arabia Needing Israel's Existence**

### **- Iran Influence after the Arab Spring**

Saudi Arabia's hostile position with Iran has never been extinguished since the 1979 Iranian revolution. Saddam Hussein's decline in Iraq, and the occurrence of the Arab Spring in the 2010s (with the collapse of some Middle Eastern authoritarianism) have added to the polemic between the two countries. On the other hand, Israel's enmity with Iran was caused by its involvement in the Israeli war in Lebanon. But both Saudi Arabia and Israel, they both have a goal to suppress Iran's influence in the Middle East which is increasingly siding with him. Thus, the security threat that Saudi Arabia and Israel want to anticipate is a security threat due to Iran's geopolitical influence.

Learn to pronounce

Besides that, the existence of the development of weapons of mass destruction in Iran gets the full attention of Saudi Arabia with Israel in security politics in the Middle East. For Saudi Arabia, the existence of such weapons could endanger the country that has signed the Non-Proliferaton of Nuclear Weapon agreement. But Israel is the only Middle Eastern country that does not sign a nuclear anti-weapons agreement is a question for Iran and the unfair treatment of the international community. (Tehran Times, 2015)



This Israeli action raised allegations that Israel possessed nuclear weapons (both the results of the alliance and the results of secret development). As a result, Iran's response to the development of its nuclear weapons is not something strange if they look in the mirror at Israel. In the end, Iran signed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (Iran Nuclear Deal) to minimize nuclear abuse by Iran. Israel did not approve the Iran nuclear agreement and asked the U.S. to replace the agreement. Donald Trump's rise as US President became Israel's tool to divert the Iranian nuclear agreement on May 8, 2018 (NTI, 2018). All efforts made by Israel to ensure the end of Iran's nuclear development illustrates how Israel is trying to maintain the balance of power they have in the Middle East. Not only military power, but the influence of Iran's ideology which is getting stronger after the Arab Spring is something negative to the influence of Saudi Arabia and Israel in the Middle East. With the collapse of several authoritarian countries and the increasingly rapid development of revolutionary influence in the Middle East, GCC member countries formed a block of monarchic power to counter the tide of revolution in the Gulf Arab states (Gause, 2011).

Since the normalization trip from 2002, the issue of security threats received by the kingdom of Saudi Arabia has always been a matter of traditional security in the Middle East. Counter-terrorism and counter-radicalism activities are Saudi Arabia's main national security priorities. In addition to fighting the terrorism network in Saudi Arabia, the kingdom also tried to suppress the rate of influence from ideologies outside the country.

*"What happened in the last 30 years is not Saudi Arabia. What happened in the*

*region in the last 30 years is not Middle East. After Iranian revolution in 1979, people wanted to copy this model in different countries, one of them is Saudi Arabia. We didn't know how to deal with it. And the problem spread all over the world. Now is the time to get rid of it"* (The Guardian, 2017)

The royal vigilance of the rebellion and terrorism movement is not without cause. Major events such as the 1979 attack on the Haram Mosque by the al-Ikhwan group (the hanbali rebel group of King Khalid's kingdom) and accompanied by the 1979 Iranian Revolution (the starting point of Iran's hatred of the Saudi monarchy system) became the reason for Saudi Arabia not to play with ideological factors. To deal with this, SBM tried a different path from the previous King of Saudi Arabia (After the Meccan and Revolutionary attacks, King Khalid and King Fahd saw giving more power to Saudi religious figures and increasing the security budget as the best way to fight radicalism). The hunt for opponents of the kingdom labeled "radical" groups is an attempt by SBM to realize a moderate Islamic state in Saudi Arabia.

As for Iran, the Arab Spring event in the Middle East is an event that is the direction of their international politics in the Middle East. This is stated in Article 154 of the Republic of Iran's constitution after the 1979 Iranian Revolution:

*"the Islamic Republic of Iran has as its ideal human felicity throughout human society, and considers the attainment of independence, freedom, and rule of justice and truth to be the right of all people of the world. Accordingly, while scrupulously refraining from all forms of interference in the internal affairs of other nations, it supports the just struggles of the freedom fighters against the oppressors in every*

*corner of the globe*" (Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 1979)

From this article, Iran supports efforts to oppose oppressive governments in the world while trying not to get involved in any form of intervention in the domestic politics of other countries. At present, the direction of international politics can be seen in the case of the Palestinian and Israeli conflicts and how their activities during the Arab Spring took place. The Palestinian-Israeli case is Iran's top priority in their international politics until now, along with Iran's support for the Yemeni rebels (Shia Houthi) to oppose the Yemeni oppressive government (a party backed by Saudi Arabia). Exceptions were only obtained by the Syrian government of Bashar al-Assad because it is the only bloc against Israel in the Middle East and has connections with Iran and Hezbollah in Lebanon (Zahn, 2015).

If the next bloc is supported by the U.S., Iran and Syria get support from Russia in various conflicts involving them. Even though it is still influenced by the ideology held by the state, the existence of blocs formed in the Middle East makes the proxy war in the Middle East not only a matter of Sunni sectarianism with Shi'a, but more about the security and interests of their respective countries. This is illustrated by Saudi Arabia's cooperation with Russia in the matter of weapons, although not as intensive as the U.S. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia uses its diplomatic relations with other countries to be superior in disputes with Iran. Thus, good relations within the bloc between the Gulf Arab states and Israel are also likely to continue to warm as long as they have common ground security priorities the same, although it

does not produce the desired normalization as before.

- Arab Vision 2030

The main project of MBS is the Saudi Vision 2030, this is due to the dependence of the economy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia which is very high on oil. Oil revenues are needed for the kingdom to provide free services to the Saudis. (Ely Karmon, 2018)

So that the Saudis no longer depend on oil, the MBS is targeting a diversification of the economic sector which basically depends on the success of the NEOM project. This project is the construction of a carbon-free metropolitan area chain established in the desert and understood as the embodiment of all technological innovations. (Chara, 2018).

The idea of developing the NEOM project was announced at the Future Investment Initiative Conference in Riyadh in October 2017. NEOM is a term that is combined from the word neo and the letter m which stands for Arabic *Mustaqbal* which means the future, means NEOM is the New Future. The design of this city is a place with the development of biotechnology, entertainment and advanced manufacturing industries. According to MBS this city will rely a lot on robots (Wald, 2019). Here is a picture showing the NEOM project construction site.



Fig. 1 NEOM Project  
Source: Andrew Korybko, 2017

This ambitious \$ 500 billion project aims to build cities between the borders of Saudi, Egypt and Jordan in the Gulf of Aqaba demanding that the Saudis recognize Israel's existence and integrate Israel into this project due to Israel's geographical position adjacent to Israel (Andrew Korybko, 2017).

The Aqaba Bay area was chosen not only by aiming to expand NEOM to Egypt and Jordan, but also because it was close to Israel to promote proposals to make the Red-Med railroad a component of the New Silk Road (Korybko, 2017).

Some Israeli companies also began to show a desire to invest in Saudi Arabia's NEOM project. Based on reports, Russia and China, which are also involved in this project, want to invite Israel, thereby facilitating access to the

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Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea and saving costs (Neom News, 2018).

The Saudis cannot deny the huge contribution of superior Israeli involvement in the advancement of cyberspace and internet technology. These two things are needed by the Saudis to realize the NEOM project (Neom News, 2018). This shows that to realize the NEOM Saudi project requires a good relationship with Israel due to the geographical location of the project and also due to Saudi needs for technology owned by Israel.

## D. Conclusion

Based on the results of the research analysis, the conditions that facilitated Saudi Arabia's normalization efforts in 2015-2018 with the theory of desecuritisation were caused by the desecuritising language of Muhammad bin Salman (MBS) as a desecuritisation actor, and the presence of Iran which made the conditions needed for normalization to be very significant. Although normalization seems to be going smoothly, the reality is not because it still hasn't received full support from the Saudi Arabian public.

MBS tries to realize Saudi Arabia as a modern moderate Islamic state by carrying out a number of liberalization practices on economic and social issues in Saudi Arabia. The effort is illustrated by some of the transition plans contained in Saudi Vision 2030. In addition, after the Arab Spring made SBM more ready to be alert to the emergence of "radical" groups that could threaten the kingdom, especially as a result of Iranian influence. Alaraby," Mohammad bin Salman meets with rabbis in New York," (30 Maret 2018)  
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