

# AN EMPIRICAL CRITIQUE OF AMERICAN LIBERAL DEMOCRACY IN GLOBAL ERA AFTERMATH 9/11: AN AMERICAN STUDIES APPROACH

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## Abstract

This paper is by no means a comprehensive account of liberal democracy or more accurately, American liberal democracy in global era aftermath 9/11. In fact, it is intended to be more suggestive than comprehensive in getting any deep meaning of American Studies approach though it is characterized by more American Studies framework than controversy issues in details. In short, it is a brief note on American Studies, mainly on the subject of democracy, one of the American traits and values. American Studies itself is an international studies in studying America and its people with typical canon of interdisciplinary discipline and synthesis of knowledge

**Key words:** *American Studies, interdisciplinary approach, synthesis of knowledge, international studies*

## INTRODUCTION

This subject of democracy ought to interest us, even a new democracy was born as a new religion, with its challenges and hopes. Most people admire and wish it very much to improve their lives. This democracy is like a fresh cake taken from the oven. People have smelled the aroma (because they knew from media that democracy could bring peace and prosperity). But smelling is not enough. They want to get a piece of the cake and taste it. Can democracy bring about peace and prosperity? It is still questionable until now.

In the eighteenth century, America adopted democracy and made revolution by and for democracy. At that time, a popular revolution slogan was “no tax without representation”. After getting its independence from Westerns which were fully dictator and anarchy, America made a new theory of government based on its experiences. As in the opening lines of the second paragraph, Thomas Jefferson clearly and simply stated the basic principles of what today we call democracy “... all men are created equal,” he wrote “... they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; ... among these are life, liberty, and the pursuits of happiness.” “Unalienable rights” are rights which can not be taken away from the people—not by any government, nor even by the people themselves (Todd and Curti, 1972: 123).

Democracy as a practical possibility of individualism is also linked with the rights of the people pertaining the government. Democracy refers not only to the rights of life, liberty and happiness individually or personally, but also to the rights of people in determining their own government. People have a central and strong position and right in establishing their own government systems. They have rights to abolish the government if the government is corrupt or weak and institute again a new government that can secure and save their lives and freedom.

I disagree with the concept that there can exist various forms of democracy, but each of which may vary with the historical, social, cultural and psychological conditions of the times such as Athenian democracy, classical democracy, liberal democracy, or even *Pancasila* Democracy in Indonesia. Here, *Pancasila* is an philosophical basis of the state. China tends to equality-oriented democracy that adopted communism as the philosophical basis of the state. Meanwhile a term of liberal democracy is associated with Western democracy.

As mentioned above, there is no single definition of democracy, much less in a liberal democracy. It means that democracy is always followed by local values. Democracy has no end. On the other hand, democracy cannot be taken for granted as something established once and for all, nor can it be viewed as a single static model applicable work. On the contrary, democracy is an evolving system that is gradually enriched and fine-tuned in each country that adopts it in response to the socioeconomic, technological, and cultural changes to which today's open and dynamic societies are exposed.

For these reasons, no single definition of democracy is entirely satisfactory since this term is the paradigm case of the essentially contested concept, or one about which there is no agreed meaning. This is not to say, however, that the word lacks contents; in fact it is one of the richest concepts in heritage of political thought. Each of the elements within this and most other definitions will require further specification. In the course of such elaboration most theories go beyond description and definition to some statement of democratic ideals.

The global spread of democracy over the last generation or so has been accompanied by the global spread of criticism of democracy. Even, in America itself, Thomas R. Dye and L. Harmon Zeigler observed that "*Elites, not masses, govern America. In an industrial, scientific, and nuclear age, life in a democracy, just as in a totalitarian society, is shaped by handful of people. This the irony of democracy*" (1984:3-4). I am also afraid of the words liberty, freedoms, equality, security, and justice are descriptive than the word of democracy of the nature of societies and of by standards by which individuals live in these societies. Some forms of government provide security, others give liberty or even, they guarantee prosperity and peace. Democracy may provide all these social economic and spiritual needs if it is allowed to function. In fact, democracy has in time been captured liberalism, nationalism, and capitalism.

Moreover, by borrowing the thought of Bruce Gilley (2009:114-116), other critics are the personal dissatisfaction of with democratic outcomes. Democracy is not desirable because it causes mob rule, inequality, instability, inefficiency, repression, and Westernization. Democracy is not possible because of aggregation problems, power differences, propaganda, and citizen stupidity and ignorance. It is also reflected in the unwillingness or inability of citizens to take up the heavy burdens of self-rule, or the logical problems of translating individualism preferences into public choice. Ideally, democracy could bring individual participation in the decisions that affect one's life. As John Dewey wrote: "*The keynote of democracy as a way of life may be expressed as the necessity for the participation of every mature human being in formation of the values that regulate the living of men together.*"

In the late twentieth century, the number of nations adopting new democratic constitutions increased dramatically during the 20th century. Samuel Huntington, in '*The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*' (1991), argued that "there were 59 democracies worldwide" (13). Meanwhile Francis Fukuyama (1992:12), in '*The End of History and the Last Man*', counted 61 democratic nations. How have some nations made the transition from monarchy, colonial government, or dictatorship to a democratic form of government? And how is about Middle East or any country which is as home to more Muslims than others. Why do some of them take it and the others do not. See Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Turkey, Qatar and Yemen that they adopt it, in the contrary, Iran, or even communism country, for an example, China rejects it. They have got peace, prosperity, and global security without democracy. It is also an interesting issue to be explored here. Even, democratization is rapidly becoming the United States policy of choice to meet the challenge of anti-Americanism and the radicalization of Muslims, mainly in the Middle East.

The relationship between the US and the Islamic world is to be the most interesting issue recently because of two points. Firstly, the concentrated contact between the US and the Islamic world, mainly in the Middle East, actually it started freshly around 1970's when there was oil crisis. In contrast to European countries such as Spain, British, or France which had contacted with the Islamic world since hundreds years ago. It can be said that the relationship between the US and the Islamic world is still any exploratory stage. Secondly, After the collapse of Uni Soviet, most political commentators and international politic figures positioned the Islamic world as the next enemy facing with the Western world mainly the US. One of the most quoted work is Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilization" (1993, 1996). According to Huntington, International political mapping aftermath the Cold War is marked by conflict between inter-religions and culture, mainly "Western" and "Islam" (KOMPAS, April 15, 2006).

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks against the United States, there are two points of discourse both international relations and global politics which have been transformed. The dominant issues

were geo-economics prior to Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>. Globalization and humanitarian issues occupied the agendas of international summits and international organizations. But now geopolitics and security concerns have once again become shaping our thinking about global politics.

Due to the changes and values, I focuses on historical reviews which biographies from two outstanding American presidents are going to be traced as well as their great policies. They are George W. Bush (2000 to 2008) and Barrack Obama (2009 to present). But other outstanding American presidents will be used as references dealing with the issue of the democracy roots such as Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln. According to Joyce Appleby (2003:ii) "Biography offers an essay education in American history, rendering the past more human, more vivid, more intimate, more accessible, more connected to ourselves". Therefore it can illuminate the real situation and condition at the time. To get better understanding about the roots of American democracy, Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln will be explored firstly. Then two prominent American presidents, George W. Bush and Barrack Obama will be studied in details in line with their administrations dealing with democracy and foreign policy.

One of the great aspects of Jefferson thought is that it is relevant with era. It is not only the age when he gave his ideas but also the age which passed through that era. According to a great historian from America, Daniel J. Boorstin (1981:ix), "Thomas Jefferson always had something to give to America". Compared with the other great figures such as Benjamin Franklin or George Washington who look monumental, however Jefferson was more relevant with the crises or great stories happened in America.

What, then, is the meaning of democracy? "To Jefferson the core of democracy was the idea of liberty" (Padover, 1939: 2). It should remember that he was a product of his age. In line with the changing of era, the meaning of democracy itself has broadened meaning. But principally democracy is institutionalized freedom, that is human rights and egalitarianism before the law are stressed.

I also tries to find Jefferson's monumental writings such as Bill of Rights and Constitution. The Bill of Rights consists of the first ten amendments to the constitution. The traditionalists that gave shape and substance to the Bill of Rights had English roots, but a unique American experience colored that shape and substance. Jefferson wrote to Madison: "Let me add that a bill of rights is what the people are entitled to against every government on earth, general or particular, and what no been against should refuse, or rest on inference." (Peterson 1632). For over 200 hundred years, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights have guided America. They embody the spirit of America. In that same period, more than 10.000 amendments have been proposed in Congress, but only twenty seven have become part of the Constitution. The Bill of Rights limited the power of that endowed Americans with an unprecedented level of personal and political freedom (Hatch 11).

To give distinctive illumination about American democracy, I will reveal another prominent figure shaping democracy in America. He is Alexis de Tocqueville. Even though he is Frenchman not American, his great contributions towards the development of American democracy is very significant mainly both politics and social. He took journeys dealt with his study around America in Jacksonian era, after the France revolution and during the industrial revolution. Absolutely, those foremost issues will influence his ideas. After his return to France, he published a report embodying his observations and recommendations for the reform of the penal system of France. And, in the retirement which followed, Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859) wrote Democracy in America.

In his great work, Democracy in America, published in 1835, Tocqueville wrote of America at the time and its burgeoning democratic order. The writer believe that Tocqueville's perspectives was greatly influenced by the social changes in American society, therefore, he is also well known as social scientist. He wrote of his travels through America in the early 19th's when the industrial revolution, Western expansion, and Jacksonian democracy were radically transforming the fabric of American life. Democracy in America as he saw was an equation that balanced liberty and equality, be about the individual as well as the community.

The uniqueness of Alexis de Tocqueville is he still keeps his ideas without following the spirit of eras in 19th's, Hegelian, for an example. When he talked about social class and explained France Revolution, there was no any reference from Marx. Even, he lived in the same era with Karl Marx. As Tocqueville said in the second volume

"No communities have ever yet existed in which social conditions have been so equal that there were neither rich nor poor, and consequently neither masters nor servants. Democracy does not prevent the existence of these two classes, but it changes their dispositions and modifies their mutual relations." (Reeve, 2000:710)

He was rather realist than idealist as Hegelian. And his thoughts about social classes was not based on exploitation and alienation as Karl Marx's work but he stressed society in "order". In reversing that era, he no back to the former era but he makes new tradition in social study followed some socialist figures such as Weber and Durkheim in the late of 19th and 20th .

George W. Bush born July 6, 1946 as the 43rd President of the United States from 2001 to 2009. Eight months into Bush's first term as president, terrorist attacks, the September 11, 2001, occurred and killed nearly 3.000 people. In response, he announced a Global War on terrorism, ordered an invasion of Afghanistan that same year and an invasion of Iraq in 2003. The uniqueness of his administration was some controversial policies, mainly, his foreign policy towards Iraq and Afghanistan. Nowadays, the concept of democracy connected with terrorism is very interesting in global era. Declaration on "war on terrorism" by President George W. Bush, following the September 11 terrorist attack (2001), has not yet made the world more secured from terrorist attack

## **Problem Formulation**

This paper propose to identify, analyze, interpret and evaluate American liberal democracy in global relationship after 9/11 through American Studies approach. It means that this paper only is stressed on American Studies framework. It is no for discussing the issue in details. The following sub- problems will be described as supporting data in exploring American Studies:

1. How is to identify the existence of American liberal democracy in globalization era? And what are the impacts by spreading American liberal democracy out over the world towards peace and prosperity or even, global security or global insecurity through American Studies?
2. How is the best way to examine the linkage between democracy and terrorism in the global era? By how globalization and democracy have facilitated and even produced the acts of global terrorism, how terrorism threats American global interests over the world and how to exterminate of terrorists' violence dealing with American Studies' theory, approach, and method.

## **Objectives of the Study**

Based on the problem formulation above, I highlight on the objectives dealing with American Studies approach as follows:

1. To identify the penetrating of American liberal democracy in global era and the impacts of spreading democracy out over the world towards peace and prosperity or even global insecurity.
2. To scrutinize the linkage between democracy and terrorism in global era, to study how globalization and democracy have facilitated and even produced the acts of global terrorism, and to analyze how terrorism threats American global interests over the world and how to exterminate of terrorists' violence

## **Reviews of the Related Literature**

In library research, there are some indispensable issues dealing with accumulating data in order to get the authenticity of this paper. The prominent item is no plagiarism. I always keep my research problem foremost in my thinking. Any question that is frequently asked by myself as how does this item of literature relate to my problem? Everything that I do serves only one purpose: to contribute to the solution of the problem.

I have looked for articles, journals and books due to the title of *An Empirical Critique of American Liberal Democracy in Global Era After 9/11: An American Studies Approach* in some libraries. Moreover, I have also browsed internet to find the same title above, but not a single of

the sources is about the same with the title. But some titles discussed several issues such as George W. Bush administration, 9/11 terrorist attack, globalization, democracy, public policy, Barack Obama, and American Government that they are very useful as references.

To get comprehensible illumination, I am going to compare and contrast those issues dealing with the title. The first is Bush War on Terrorism and its Impact on the Principles of American Dreams (2009) by M.E. Elsa Haristrianti. Her thesis points out George Bush policies aftermath 9/11 terrorist attack toward the values of American dreams. She highlights on terrorist attacks on September 11th, 2001 bringing some changes in both the social and political life in the United States under George W Bush administration. As his administration issued USA Patriot Act and Homeland Security Act as an outline of domestic policies in fighting terrorism. Some believe that the implementation of those acts brought negative impact on the preservation of American Dreams. George W. Bush spoke before a joint Session of Congress and his speech was televised around the United States and the world that "Our war begins with Al-Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stooped, and defeated." (<http://www.whitehouse.gov>)

By borrowing the writing of M.E. Elsa Haristrianti (2009:69), The law's name, USA Patriot Act, stands for Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act. It was enacted on October 26, 2001 as an anticrime and anti terrorist legislation which was designed as a political response to the terrorist attack and as a way of strengthening the powers of police agencies and prosecutors in preventing future terrorist attacks.

The USA Patriot Act launched legislative changes which extensively increased the surveillance and investigative powers of law enforcement agencies in the United States. It basically increases the ability of law enforcement agencies to search telephone, e-mail communication, medical, financial and other records. Some claimed that those assertions are rather inexplicit thus can violate the rights of speech. Meanwhile Homeland Security Act of 2002 is dedicated to prevent terrorist attacks within the United States, to reduce the vulnerability of the United States to terrorism at home, to minimize the damage and to assist in the recovery from any attacks that may occur in the future. USA Patriot Act and Homeland Security Act as an outline of domestic policies in fighting terrorism also brings negative impacts on the preservation of American Dreams.

The second thesis is Multikulturalisme dalam Kebijakan Luar Negeri Era Presiden George Bush: Studi Kasus Kebijakan Anti Terorisme Paska 11 September 2001 by Eris Herayani (2009). She was one of American Studies alumni in UGM whose thesis focused on the ideas of multiculturalism after math 9/11 under George W. Bush's policies. She asserted three crucial issues such as American Congress, Military Industrial Complex, and Foreign Policy. Still by borrowing the thought of Eris Herayani, American Congress has significant roles in making domestic and foreign

policies. It can be reflected, one of them, in making PATRIOT ACT to counter international terrorism. In formulating Foreign policy, there are three important components, “lobbyist”, “elite groups”, and “interest group” that they are in correlated –partnership. Eris also concluded that American Foreign policy due to terrorism does not highlight on multiculturalism concept, it only focuses on the Patriot Act for the whole American citizens without mentioning any religion, for an example. Democracy will be spread out into Middle East through America’s hegemony as a super power country.

From the above description, I see that Eris’s thesis only emphasizes on multiculturalism concept in George W Bush’s Foreign Policies. It is very different with my background of paper. I see that nowadays, America faces a world more complicated than ever before. Both American political parties have failed to envision a foreign policy. As a result, the United States risks lurching from crisis to crisis. Even, not only the cases of international terrorism, but also the issues of China economy will dominate the world market in the future. I am going to assert a mixture of American power and the transformative effects of democracy. I use also the Realism approach to Foreign policy. It calls for a foreign policy that recognizes America’s real strengths and weaknesses, and those of other nations. Some of the great figures of the American intellectual tradition, including Reinhold Niebuhr, Hans Morgenthau, and George Kennan are going to be discussed in this writing.

### **American Studies Approach**

By borrowing the writing of Djuheritati Imam Muhni (2010,2) that American Studies according to Bruce A. Lohof (1978) is any discipline focusing on America and its people. Furthermore, Bruce Lohof in *Through Eyes of the World* gives the specific principles as follows: (1). American Studies is holistic in its approach to the culture of the United States, and (2). Such attribute of American Studies is its interdisciplinary approach to the culture of the United States (1978,3-4). It means that any issue in American Studies is about America by its self. Liberal democracy, global era, American presidents, American foreign policy, and global insecurity are issues in line with the development of America.

Since this paper is a product of American Studies’ discipline, it will follow the characteristics of American Studies which has the main stream as interdisciplinary studies It means that interdisciplinary studies combine several different fields of learning and academic perspectives to study and to get in deep meanings what a particular phenomenon or theme is. Shortly, American Studies highlight on one particular subject but require knowledge of a variety of academic perspective. Moreover, it will embrace theories, approaches, and methods proposed by the scholars of American Studies as well as the scholars of other related disciplines.

This paper highlights on the ‘Synthesis of Knowledge’ theory which is the first time manifested by Tremaine McDowell’s *American Studies* (1948), employs the interdisciplinary



analysis of Henry Nash Smith, and focuses on Tremain McDowell's past, present, future approach and region, nation, world approach. Other approaches from American Studies scholars are used to give the clear description and to support the main issue in the above title. American Studies as the interdisciplinary studies is strengthened by some scholars, such as the founder of American Studies, Vernon Louise Parrington with his idea in *Intellectual History Synthesis* that American Studies covers past, present and future. Parrington uses the idea to relate the usable past to the present and to reveal a new way for future as a unity of American experience. It was well known as **ACT I or Pre-Institutional Stage** because he did it almost all alone as reflected in his work "*Main Current in American Thought*" (1927) which reflected his dissatisfaction with old academic formalism (Wise,300). Parrington is eager to cluster together to form a kind of paradigm. In short, its primary aim is to probe for the fundamental meaning of America by way of a holistic approach.

This era around 1930s – 1940s gave great influences toward other scholars such as Perry Miller and F.O. Matthiessen. The era was well known as the era early growth experimentation in the movement or **ACT II of "The Jungle Epiphany Stage"**. As Gene Wise (1979,302) in *Paradigm Dramas* stated that "Miller then described how this '*jungle epiphany*' was to seize his imagination, setting him on a quest to consume a lifetime." Both of them were an ardent advocate for integrated wholeness approach in American Studies. Perry Miller had obsession to create order and offer explanation to American experience. Meanwhile F.O. Mathiesen, focused on the history approach of American civilization and integrated wholeness approach in American Studies. The development of democracy in America is a part of American experience. It is like an organism which exhibits identifiable continuities. Some issues in American Mind are such as Puritanism, Individualism, Transcendentalism, and Liberalism, actually those minds are more or less homogeneous. They are be complex in many different layers, but in fact, they are a single. As Cecil F. Tate in *Holism and Myth in American Studies* states that "if a culture is a whole, like organism it is unique. By the very complexity of its history, it is absolutely single" (1973:14). Marxism, for an example of my approach, one form of holism, emphasizes economic forces as the sole dynamic of change.

Still by borrowing the thought of Cecil F. Tate (1973,15), In relating the topic, Henry Nash Smith in *Virgin Land* believes that an analysis of a given work of art or literary work can explain the nature of society at the time. In *Virgin Land*, for instance, Smith devoted that

"I use the words (myth and symbol) to designate larger or smaller units of the same kind of thing, namely an intellectual construction that fuses concept and emotion into an image. The Myths and symbols with which I deal have the further characteristic of being collective representations rather than the work of a single mind." (1950,p.vii).

The symbolic of George W. Bush and Barack Obama are the creation of their time. Through the age's leading figures were projected the age's leading ideas like their foreign policies in relationship among nations in the world. Their ideas and will are organically inter-related, they possess a logical coherence which makes a whole. George W. Bush biography can explain how his foreign policy like cowboy at the time dealing with the issue of 'war of terrorism'. The changing of his public policy from geo-economics to geopolitics describes any hegemony of America toward other nations, mainly in the Middle East like Iraq's war. Seemingly, Barack Obama tends to the former democrat presidents like Bill Clinton who highlights on geo-economics.

From 1950s to the mid-60s was an era of rapid expansion, corporate organization, and productive scholarship in the field. By borrowing the thought of Djuherati Imam Muhni (2010,168), I try answering the question "What is the capacity of American Studies to the realities?" To answer the question, firstly we must know that American Studies is an academic which is opened-subject in accepting critics. As we know that American Studies approach is an interdisciplinary approach that can be combined with other subjects as synthesis of knowledge. Now, we back to the historical background of it. American Studies grew up within two orbits of two traditional academic fields, English and History. They might be joined together as a single scholarly method as a new movement—"literary history and intellectual history"—. The fusion of them can be called 'high cultural history'. It covers the study of the arts, the artists, the intellectuals and the ideas.

High cultural history flourished in the late 1960s. It asserted the primacy of mind as the central factor in culture and the autonomy of the individual work of art. America's culture was peculiarly shaped by the system of myths and symbols that most expressed and explored in writings of novels, poets and intellectuals. In other words, the nature of American society could be discovered by studying its reflection in the imaginations and intellectuals of men and women who stood both within and outside their culture. In short, I absolutely agree with the writing of Djuherati Imam Muhni

By the sixties, some scholars began to believe that the analysis of one work such as Moby Dick did not always give an interpretation of the nature of the whole American society. American Studies had failed to incorporate minority cultures, and that the use of the adjective "American" to cover the whole culture or society in the United States was regarded as presumptive. This new wave was the result of the social changes that happened dramatically in the U.S. in 1960s. (2010,168).

This era according to Gene Wise (1979,308) is distinguished by its 'Corporate Nature' with the familiar scholar of American Studies of Robert Spiller and Thomas Cochran. It is also called **ACT III or American Cultural Values** which tends to in the culture at large. The Spiller-Cochran act was firmly nestled inside the culture's supporting institutions, its express purpose was to articulate that culture, not basically to criticize it (312).

After the sixties, this decade saw a drastic change in American Studies methodology. The intellectual history synthesis approach which had dominated for decades, crumbled down. Gene Wise (1979,312) predicted that “many saw American Studies not as a vanguard movement on the frontiers of scholarship—the movement’s prior to image of itself—but as an overly timid and elitist white Protestant male enterprise which tended to reinforce the dominant culture rather than critically analyzing it”. This movement is **‘Culture Therapy 202’ or ACT IV** of Paradigm Dramas Act. Robert Meredith represents the era of “Cultural Theraphy” when most Americanists were not satisfied with merely studying and discovering the American culture, but they strove to remedy the corruptive society. For this particular generation of Americanist it was more important to “do” than “theorize”. ....

In 1970s, significantly there was social changes in America such as Woman and Black Movements striving for acknowledgement and equality which gave great influences to American Studies scholars. Hence, there was different methodology in American Studies at that time. Scholars such as Cawelti, Lawrence Levine, Liebow, and Nancy Colt as quoted by Djuheratati Imam Muhni (2010,168) urged that “American Studies should apply an interdisciplinary approach in a way that in dealing with one subculture such as Women Studies or Black Studies, an Americanist can reached an interpretation of American culture in the broader sense.” The interdisciplinary approach can also depict about discourse of American democracy at a given time, for instance classical liberal around the seventeenth century, could illuminate what is happening at the present time, or even will give alternative democracy in the future with different characteristics. As Cott (1977) confirmed that “we can recognize the outlines of our time.” Still by borrowing the writing of Djuheratati Imam Muhni (169), in the Black Studies, Redding Saunders suggested that Afro-American studies is basically American Studies, an interdisciplinary major that must draw upon relevant knowledge and experience outside the U.S. that is, the African Culture root. It is similar to the democracy root from Greek, then it is adopted and developed into American liberal democracy through experiences and cultural values at the given time to present, or may be still exist in the future.

The notion of employing an interdisciplinary approach in American Studies is also suggested by Tremaine McDowell (1948:73) “American civilization must be studied both in the past and in the present, and it can be understood only from the interdisciplinary point of view”. These approaches are to depict the cultural identity in America like democracy. The growth and the development of democracy as an American mind in the society can not be separated from phenomenon living in the society at a particular time. Democracy as a living concept has its connection with history, politics, economics, sociology, and culture of the society where it is nurtured. To get the best understanding of the issue is through interconnection among those disciplines. In this studies, in American Culture, Henry Nash Smith (1980:14) suggested that

“ The best thing we can do is to conceive American Studies as collaboration among men working from within existing academic disciplines but attempting to widen boundaries impasse by conventional methods of inquiry. This implied a sustained effort of the student of literature to take into account sociological, historical and anthropological data and methods”.

Meanwhile, Tremain McDowell not only suggests the interdisciplinary study, but also recommends that American Studies scholars reconcile the past, present and future. He points out that American Studies are designed to modify a persistent characteristics of mankind and to advance a contemporary movement in education. The characteristic is tendency of men to live predominantly in one of three tenses, past, present, or future (McDowell, 1948:v). He assumes that if one applies the interdisciplinary approach, he can bridge past, present, and future. Democracy itself can not be separated from the concept of tenses. Since it was rooted in Greek some time in the past, and it still exists in the present time and has been developed into its various variations but limited by some characteristics in the future. By looking at the progress of democracy and its spread, it can be assumed that democracy might exist in the future. As simple, those tenses are interrelated.

McDowell also stressed on three concepts; region, nation, and world. He argues that

“The study of national culture may therefore very properly be supported on the one hand by regionalism and on the other by internationalism. Thus American Studies move toward the reconciliation of the tenses, the reconciliation of the academic disciplines, and a third long-range goal, namely, a reconciliation of region, nation, and world.” (1948:82).

This approach is to reveal the big picture of America from small identity like democracy. In short, it starts small and moves outward. So in American Studies one small aspect can be elaborated by various angles, that is why it is called a process from micro to macro means that in a single aspect can be viewed by globally. For instance, the aspect symbol, the biography of American presidents as the intrinsic element (micro) but one can elaborated in various aspect or macro.

## Conclusion

American Studies is one of the popular studies over the world. By the mainstream of synthesis of knowledge and interdisciplinary approach, it will be suitable with the phenomena happened lately. In short, one case can not only be solved by one discipline as American democracy issue connected with the latest phenomenon like global insecurity has correlation with some other disciplines as follows: politics, economics, history, social and culture. Changing is needed by knowledge. It is dynamic like culture. Geography, for an example, is not only merely

focused on any area or place, but also it can embrace to be the deep meaning of geo-economics or geopolitics as two prominent issues dealing with American presidents' policy.

I will give an example how to see the interrelated among disciplines based on the title above shortly. **Firstly**, Politics is used to explore issue of American political and military power since the end of the Second World War. Part of my focus will be trying to understand America by itself and how it is viewed and understood by others; how America was influenced during, or even aftermath the course of the Cold War till the 9/11 terrorist attacks; how American foreign policy showed the changes under George W. Bush like 'war of terrorism' and Iraq invasion toward global insecurity. **Secondly**, sociology method. Since the object of study is American democracy in global relation among nations through some American presidents' policies aftermath 9/11, absolutely there are some social changes dealing with the issues like democracy and capitalism in global era. Social change could be meant as simply the process of being difference in any sense. But the changes of society could involve many aspects of life such as social values and norms, pattern of organization behavior, structure of social organization, strata, power and authority social interaction, etc (Sukanto, 1984:56). Paul Scott borrowed the writing of Gillin & Gillin defining the social change as a variation of way in living that has been accepted. Furthermore he points these changes are not only as a consequence of geographical condition, material culture, citizen composition, and ideology, but also because of diffusion and innovation (1971:15). The above description is very interesting to be discussed, mainly, the change of American geopolitics toward both globalization era and after 9/11 attacks. Conflict Theory by Karl Marx and Neo-Marxism after Marx, they are very significant to discuss those changes in society.

**The third**, historical method can help us to get the deep meaning of some historical events in details and in order. By borrowing the writing of Teuku Ibrahim Alfian, one aspect that must be considered in the historical method is time element. The interrelated categories in this method are diversity, change, and continuity. Study in historical method is analysis on what anyone's thought is, what he mumbled something, and what he did which can give changing through time dimension. History itself is a phenomenon. It is a transcript of the relentless surge of events, the sequential and meaningful record of human activity. Therefore, the historical method aims to access the meaning and to read the message of the happenings in which men and events relate meaningfully to each other.

**The fourth**, literary method. Expressive approach is more suitable than others in describing any literary work from someone, mainly biography. Biography itself is also any literary work. Hence two biographies of American Presidents both George W. Bush and Barack Obama will be analyzed by using this approach. Experiences from both American presidents illuminate us to get comprehensible description of policies during their presidencies. Joyce Appleby (2003,ii)

added that biography offers an easy education in American History, rendering the past more human, more vivid, more intimate, more accessible, more connected to ourselves. Biography reminds us that president not supermen. They are human beings too, worrying about decisions, attending to wives and children, juggling balls in the air, and putting on their pants one leg at a time. Indeed, "There is properly no history; only biography" as Emerson contended. I also use Reader-Response criticism to give any interpretation toward their American Presidents' policies. Like most approaches to literary analysis, Reader-Response criticism does not provide us with unified body of theory or a single methodological approach for textual analysis. But believing that a literary work's interpretation is created when a reader and a text interact or transact, these critics assert that the proper study of textual analysis must consider both the reader and the text, not simply a text in isolation. For the critics, the reader + the text = meaning. Only in context with a reader actively involved in the reading process with the text, they decree, can meaning emerge (Bressler, 1999:67-68).

All of those theories, approaches and methods are used to analyze and resolve the problems. Even though every approach has different point of views, but they support each other in line with their own relevancies to comprehend the problems as a whole. To strengthen the analysis of this study, other perspectives, namely movies and literary work will be made as sources of mental evidences.

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