

RELIGION AND DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA

A Study of Kevin Phillips' Views on his Book "American Theocracy"



A THESIS

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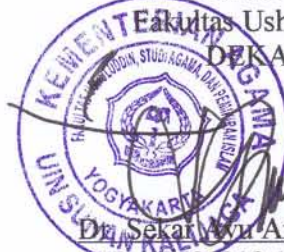
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MOTTO

*“Science Without Religion Is Lame And Religion Without
Science Is Blind”*

(A. Einstein)

DEDICATION

to:

Parents of mine

To father, my beloved teacher
who has implanted in me a disciplined way of life, an
ever generous hand and a moral conduct

To mother, my guardian angel
Who has brought me up a compassionate heart and a
good mind

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I still have much hope this undergraduate thesis will be some of contribution to the reader. I confess that this thesis is far from being perfect, even though it is the result of hard work. I, somehow, request a constructive criticism, suggestions, and opinion from the reader.

Yogyakarta, August 30th 2010

The Writer

Fikry

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
TITTLE PAGE	i
NOTA DINAS	ii
SURAT PERNYATAAN	iii
RATIFICATION PAGE	iv
MOTTO	v
DEDICATION PAGE	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ix
ABSTRACT PAGE	xiii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
A. Background of Study	1
B. The Problem Academic Questions	6
C. The Objective and Significance Study	6
D. Review on Related Studies	7
E. Theoretical Framework	9

F. Methods of the Study	13
1. Type of Study	13
2. Study Approach	13
3. Data Collection	14
4. Data Analyzing Method	15
G. Chapter Plan	15
CHAPTER II THE PROFILE OF KEVIN PHILLIPS	18
A. Biography of Kevin Phillips	18
B. Kevin Phillips Works	21
CHAPTER III THE PROLIFERATION OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS IN THE UNITED STATES	26
A. The Religious Perspective of The Sectarian Quality of The United States Protestantism	27
1. The Roman Chatolic Church	28
2. Presbyterian	31
3. Anglican	36
4. Pantecostal	39
5. Baptist	44
6. Mormon	49
7. Jehovah's Witnesses	55
8. Methodist	60

B. Civil Religion in the United States	64
CHAPTER IV RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE OF AMERICAN POLITICS IN THE UNITED STATES REFLECTED IN AMERICAN THEOCRACY	69
A. Religion, States, and Secularization in the United States	71
1. Secularization in the United States	73
2. Republican Party, Conservatism, and American Politics	74
3. Secular States and Religious States	77
B. Religious Influences Through Public Policy in the United States	79
1. Religious Influences in Whitehouse Public	79
2. Religion and prayer in United States Public School ...	80
3. Religious Influences on Lifestyle Issues	81
4. Religious Influences on the Issues of Social and National life in the United States	82
5. Religious Influences in the Republican Party	83
CHAPTER V A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF KEVIN PHILLIPS' VIEWS ON RELIGION AND DEMOCRACY IN HIS BOOK AMERICAN THEOCRACY.....	89

A. Kevin Phillips Views on Religion and Democracy in His Book <i>American Theocracy</i>	91
1. Religion and Legitimation of Power.....	91
2. Religion is a Threat to Democracy	94
3. Civil Religion, Culture, and Nationalism in the United State	98
B. Some Critiques Toward Kevin Phillips' Views on Religion and Democracy in the United States	100
1. Private Sphere Vs Public Sphere	100
2. Mutual Critiques between Religion and Democracy...	105
 CHAPTER VI CONCLUSION	108
A. Conclusion	108
B. Suggestion	111
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	113
 APPENDIX	

ABSTRACT

Kevin Phillips' *American Theocracy* that was published in 2006, has succeeded proving his criticism toward the government of the United States. These book describes in details how religion (a radical strongly Christian fundamentalist) influences in American politics particularly in Bush administration. Kevin Phillips is indeed known as one of the American writers whose most of his works are related to his criticism toward the portray of American society. And here, he tries to explore the condition of the United States caused by religion, government, society and other aspects during Bush administration. He also performed an amazing description covering this book through empirical data he made. So in that case, I would like to find out the relation between religion and democracy as reflected in his book *American Theocracy*.

In doing the research, this study applies content analysis in finding the data inside the book. The writer also analyzes collected data by analysing and interpreting from a statement and message in passage so that a clear meaning and in-depth comprehension can be acquired. The data is analyzed by analytical discourse method. The study is library research and the main source of this study, however, is the book of Kevin Phillips *American Theocracy*. Thus, the study employs sociology of religion approach which is used to understand the relation between religion and democracy.

Based on the study, some significant findings were obtained. In his book *American Theocracy*, Phillips' views on religion and democracy are that religion will no longer be an inspiring factor. Religion merely is damaging democracy and is a threat to democracy. Democracy sphere was expressed politically by the religious right as a powerful vehicle for public policy-making in the United States. However, his works also leave critics. Anyway, religion is important to build up for ethical systems of ongoing social transformation. Religion ought to make the social order much better. Religion should have an inspiring in democratic space. Democracy needs also religion role in which it will exist. Somehow, conflict among groups in the United States is basically the sign of the democracy change.

Key words: religion, democracy, public policy.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the study

Nowdays, democracy is praised and adored as the best governmental system in the world. The democracy of United States is considered as a primary model of democracy on the international stage. It has spread up in the world and most of country uplift democracy as a symbol of modern civilization. Most countries has adopted these democracy to attach it. Although some claim that the United States has practiced democracy in appearance only and has conduct a double standard, it has succeeded in promoting democracy around the world. It points out that though American has a good democracy, however democracy of the United States is also recognized as a destructive one. It is proven that the United States very often fights any countries which are assumed as opposing to them. Invading Iraq is one of concrete evidence that how Iraq does not concern for democracy.

Even though many nations view that the United States' foreign policy frequently tends to be more less democratic, it is undeniable that life of democracy in the United States is running well. That is because the factors such as sosio-politic, economics, culture, and tradition in the United States sustaining condition for democracy run also smoothly. However, politics , economics, culture, and tradition factors on the other side can also be a barrier of democracy.

Samuel P. Huntington remarks that in addition to economic and politics, cultural factor and tradition can be the most important barrier of democracy in a state. Cultural and public tradition concerning on position, value, trust and behavior pattern, would have an effect on development of democracy. An undemocratic public culture, either coming from culture or religious understanding, would hamper the spreading of democratic norms in public, it does not give a legitimation at democracy institutions so that democracy does not come into function.¹

Meanwhile, in the case of United States' successfulness becoming super power state and any progress in many areas basically is caused by culture-ethic or religion. Paul Tillich, an American theologian affirms that religion is the soul of culture and culture is a form of religion². Religion in national life of the United States is very important. Americans claim that their nation are religious. They view that religion is useful and meaningful to build up culture and nation character. Private sector have also showed an appreciation to religion in the United States. It can be seen from policy expressing that establishment of new settlement region need to build not merely schools but also many churches such as Catholic, Methodist, and others. Religion nuance is more emphasized.³

¹ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster), 3-7.

² Luther S. Luedtke (Edt.), *Making America: The Society and Culture of the United States* (Washington D.C: United States Information Agency, 1988), 189.

³ Luther S. Luedtke (Edt.), *Making America: The Society and Culture of the United States*, 190-191.

It is important to note that the democracy in America is giving a space for religious people's endeavor to live properly with their faith and belief. In the United States, people are free to express their religious doctrines. Religion in the United States is remarkable both in its high adherence level and also its diversity. The First Amendment⁴ to the country's Constitution prevents the government from having any authority in religion, and guarantees the free exercise of religion. In other word, religious freedom is protected by law.

The United States emerged as a world power in the twentieth century, its economic, political, and military invasions of the world were often accompanied by the church, although perhaps more subtly than in the colonial period. The United States might have been known as religious nation. Religion factor in American politics negates the statement that claimed religion is not important in rational life notably in politics. Religion is still important factor in shaping political behavior and political process in American society which is recognized as more modern than other nations. Somehow, this nation also is known as a state that promotes secularism.⁵ In one sense, one thing to observe is that secularism is

⁴ "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances". See Philip Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State* (London: Harvard University Press, 2002), 2.

⁵ Secularism is a concept suggesting that government or other entities should establish separately from religion or religious beliefs. In one sense, secularism may assert the right to be free from religious rule and teachings, and freedom from the government imposition of religion upon the people, within a state that is neutral on matters of belief, and gives no state privileges or subsidies to religions. In another sense, it refers to the human activities likes, especially political ones, should be based on evidence and fact. It is not influenced by religious perspective. In Europe, it has been argued that secularism is a movement toward modernization, and away from

considered as a prerequisite for the success of democratization. Secularization is recognized as a good idea to reduce a tense relation between religion and social problem notably in politics⁶. In other senses, secularization is the separation of church and states which leads religion to be more weakly or unproductive.

The issue of religion and democracy is important to discuss in this era. This issue is debatable and complicated particularly for those who try to implemented democracy in a religious country. Kevin Phillips investigates the contemporary issue of religion and democracy in *American Theocracy* book (2006). He has a view that religion can be a threat to democracy when religion is dominating in public area. The concern on his book is that there is a tension between religious group and secular group in secular states. It tells how protestant fundamentalists influence a public policy decision in the United States. This book

traditional religious values. This type of secularism, on a social or philosophical level, has often occurred while maintaining an official state church or other state support of religion. In the united states, some argue that state secularism has served to a greater extent to protect religion from governmental interference, while secularism on a social level is less prevalent. In political terms, secularism is a movement towards the separation of religion and government. This can refer to reducing ties between a government and a state religion, replacing laws based on scripture such as the Torah and Sharia law with civil laws, and eliminating discrimination on the basis of religion. This is said to add to democracy by protecting the rights of religious minorities. Due in part to the belief in the separation of church and state, secularists tend to prefer that politicians make decisions for secular rather than religious reasons. In this respect, policy decisions pertaining to topics like abortion, contraception, embryonic stem cell research, same-sex marriage, and sex education are prominently focused upon by American secularist organizations such as the Center for Inquiry. Most major religions accept the primacy of the rules of secular, democratic society but may still seek to influence political decisions or achieve specific privileges or influence through church-state agreements such as a concord. Many Christians support a secular state, and may acknowledge that the conception has support in Biblical teachings, particularly Jesus' statement, "Then give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's" (Matt. 22: 21). See "secularism" available from wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/secularism.htm>. Accessed 26 November 2009.

⁶Bachtiar effendy, *Masyarakat Agama dan Pluralisme Keagamaan (Perbincangan Mengenai Islam, Masyarakat Madani, dan Etos Kewirausahaan)* (Yogyakarta: Galang Press, 2001), 12.

is relevant and interesting book to study. Some evaluate that this is a controversy book and makes many political observers discuss it.

Kevin Phillips concerns on three points ⁷. His experience as political strategist of Republican Party for more than two decade, added a widely knowledge about history of religion in America makes it possible to describe many things related to Bush Administration particularly Protestant fundamentalist influence to foreign policy the United States in Mid-East.

First, it relates to the United States position as *petro imperialism* which is giving a worse impact not only for world peace but also for the United States society. To rescue world oil, the United States sends a thousand of soldiers in any parts of the world viewed strategy. This is absolutely costing a lot of money. *Second*, Phillips describes in details how a radical strongly Christian fundamentalist influences in Bush administration. He also explains occupying in Afghanistan and Iraq, gives full support to Israel, and gives menaces to Iran. *Third*, the facility applying credit card for a number of years has caused a worse situation of the United States finance.

⁷ See Kevin Phillips, *American Theocracy: The Peril and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil, and Borrowed Money in the 21st Century* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2006), vii-xvi.

B. The Problem Academic Questions

Based on the background of the study, the main problems are formulated as follows:

1. How is the proliferation of religious groups in the United States Protestantism?
2. What are the religious influences of American Politics in the United States reflected in his book *American Theocracy*?
3. What are Kevin Phillips' views on Religion and democracy in his book *American Theocracy*?

C. The Objective and Significance of the Study

1. The objectives of the study appear in answering the question above. They are:
 - a. To briefly discuss the proliferation of religious group in the United States.
 - b. To highlight the religious influences of American Politics in the United States.
 - c. To explore Kevin Phillips' views on religion and democracy in the United States.
2. All study activities should possess clear purpose. In the end of this study, the researcher is hopefully that this study gives great advantages for several components. Some expected advantages that could be acquired from the study are as follows:

a. For the researcher

This study is hopefully to enrich understanding on the role of religion and its significance to the life of democracy in the United States.

b. For the development of religion's study and other field of studies

This study is to contribute to the reserach development on religious studies in general and the study of religion and democracy in particular.

D. Review on Related Studies

Regarding the issue of religion and politics, many researcher and expert have investigated it. There are some thesis in Islamic State University of Sunan Kalijaga examining the issue of religion and politics, they are as follows:

Mohammmad Amin, the student of Aqidah Filsafat study program, Ushuluddin Faculty of Islamic State of Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, wrote *Hubungan Agama dan Politik Menurut Abdul Karim Soroush*. In his paper, Mohammad Amin explores that relationship between religious value and democracy is running respectively. In the case, the writer is trying to distinguish a Soroush's thought on the meaning of religion and democracy. Religion is so different from the knowledge of religion. *First*, religion is a constant, a stagnation, and holy. *Second*, religion is dynamic. The human's knowledge of religion is always developing and tends to be rational. Rationalitation of this would be no longer with religion's thought and help its develop including democracy.

Hartiningsih, student of comparative religion study program, Ushuluddin Faculty, Islamic State of Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, wrote *Agama dan Politik Perspektif Y. B. Mangunwijaya*. In her thesis, the writer examines politics according to Romo Mangunwijaya's perspective. A good politic in Romo Mangun's perspective is so called as heart politics which is concerning on morality and basically on religion's values in the right track for the society's prosperity.

Choirul Anam, a student of Comparative religion study program, Ushuluddin Faculty of Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, wrote *Relasi Agama dan Politik dalam Perspektif Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*. The paper elucidates an analysis of Islamic universality and suggest that religion and politics can not be separated. It means that religion presents at most of life including politics. In short, religion is not only concerning on private but also public space. Politics is meant as a part of mission (*dakwah*) in order to change society or country better.

Bachtiar Dwi Kurniawan, a student of Aqidah Filsafat study program, Ushuluddin Faculty of Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, wrote *Teologi Politik (Studi Terhadap Pemikiran Politik Amien)*. This paper explores Amien Rais' thought on politics. In Amien Rais' view, the society should not keep religion out of politics.

In addition, there are some books concerning on religion, politics, and the united states of America. They are as follows:

Saiful Munjani et al (2005), in a book "Benturan Peradaban (sikap dan perilaku Islamis Indonesia terhadap Amerika Serikat)" explores that clash

civilization can be viewed as cultural problem which is shaping a view and society's behaviour of Islamism to the United States of America.

Ralph H. Gabriel (1974) writes a book *American Values: Continuity and Change* that he is trying to provide the historical experience of America to face a crisis based on the United States philosophical point of view. David C. Leege and Lyman A. Kellstedt (1993) in a book *Rediscovering the Religious Factor in American Politics* analyzes that how to measure the behaviour of religious group in shaping a political behaviour.

From the thesis and book above, the writer could not find a research or comprehensive book analysing religion and democracy in the United States. It is therefore possible to point out that this study would produce different outcome than earlier studies.

E. Theoretical Framework

Milton Yinger quoted in Keith A. Roberts gave a definition of religion. He suggests that it is not focused on what religion essentially is but what it does. Religion is a social phenomenon as religious if it fulfills the manifest function of religion. Here, the definition refers to a functional religion which provides a sense of ultimate meaning, a system of macrosymbols, and a set of core values for life.

They invite an investigation of any profound loyalty or ultimate meaning system as a form of religiosity.⁸

Thomas Luckmann quoted in Malcolm Hamilton points out that religion is closely linked to social life where religion and socialisation are closely interwoven in most traditional societies but it does not follow that socialisation is inherently religious in character. Religion need not enter into the process. He said that human is the transcendence of biological nature and it is fundamentally a religious process. This is what makes it possible for human beings to be moral creatures and to develop universalistic values.⁹

Religion is important to access the implications for ethical systems of ongoing social transformation. Durkheim's view that the world system is becoming simultaneously more unified and diverse is destructive. As the world changes, so the various ethical transformations may be intruded into the social community. But resistance to the globalization of human life is as fierce as the forces of unification are.

The current ethical crisis of the global village is not a product simply of the late of twentieth century. It began in the prehistory, when the ethos of today's religious traditions were born in story form and continued as various localized tradition diffused, collided, and were transformed over the centuries. Although we are always in danger of overemphasizing the importance of our own historical

⁸ Keith A. Roberts, *Religion in Sociological Perspective* (California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1995), 7.

⁹ Malcolm Hamilton, *The Sociology of Religion* (London: Routledge, 1995), 184.

epoch, as the result of the dramatic transformations of society and culture precipitated by the industrial and postindustrial revolutions of the past two centuries. Human history seems to be at a critical juncture in recently. Those events now turn a special attention.¹⁰ Ethical issue can not be separated from each historical time. Those revolution leads to religion losing its social influence over many aspects of society. Therefore, it comes to the idea of secularisation. Wilson maintains that secularisation defines the process by which religious institutions, actions and consciousness lose their social significance.¹¹ Bryan S. Turner said that people in capitalist society, particularly in West, have expressed a various form and religion practice, but their institutions turn to be secularized by the authority.¹² It seems that Turner would like to remark that secularism is a movement toward modernization, and away from traditional religious values.

Meanwhile, democracy is defined as a set of rules designed to promote self-government. Democracy is a form of government in which the people govern, either directly or through elected representatives. In the United States, the democracy described as constitutional democracy which promotes liberty and self-government, since individual *liberty* is part of the process of *self-government*. It explains the principles of self-government and limited government are embodied in the constitution. Limited government is a government that is subject to strict

¹⁰ Kurtz, Lester R., *Gods in the Global Village (The World's Religions in Sociological Perspective)* (California: Pine Forge Press, 1995), 146-147.

¹¹ Malcolm Hamilton, *The Sociology of Religion*, 188.

¹² Bryan S. Turner, *Agama dan Teori Sosia*, (Yogyakarta: Ircisod, 2006), 341.

limits on its lawful uses of powers, and hence on its ability to deprive people of their liberty. Self-government is the principle that the people are the ultimate source and proper beneficiary of governing authority. In practice, a government based on majority rule.¹³

Tocqueville predicts on the future of democracy in the United States, discussing possible threats *to* democracy and possible dangers *of* democracy. He believes that democracy tends to be “soft despotism” as well as the risk of developing a tyranny of the majority. He observes that the strong role religion played in the United States was because of its separation from the government.¹⁴

There are five forms concerning to the relation between religion and democracy. *Firstly*, theocracy which is a public policy in a state fully determined by denomination of some religion. *Second*, a state dominated a half religion influence and a half secular influence. This model provides *power sharing* between states and denomination of some religion, but public policy still be dominated by religious interpretations and morality outlook of some religion. *Third*, a secular state in the form of interaction between states and religious organizations in which religion plays important role in influencing public policy. *Fourth*, a secular state where religious organizations is in privat space, but there is no activity together with state. In other words, religious perspective doesn't take a

¹³ Thomas E. Patterson, *The American Democracy* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003), 36.

¹⁴ See Diane Ravitch and Abigail Thernstrom (Ed.), *Demokrasi: Klasik dan Modern (Tulisan Tokoh-tokoh Pemikir Ulung Sepanjang Masa)* translated by Hermoyo (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2005), 179-186.

part in formulation of public policy. *Fifth*, a secular-atheis state oppressed religion.¹⁵

Meanwhile, in the case of the United States, religion tends to colour politics. Religion is not merely an affinity. It is implemented by people in public or private space. The concept of religion can be based on social group affiliation, identification of religious group, ritual practice or private religious service, ideology, doctrine of faith, the important meaning of religion, or religious word view. Each variable has influence to the response and behavior of politics .¹⁶

F. Method of Study

1. Type of Study

The research is library research, which collects data and information covered up in documentary.¹⁷ Documentary can be book, journal, magazine, newspaper, internet, and some literature pertinent to the topics of the research. The main source of this study, however, is the book of Kevin Phillips *American Theocracy*.

2. Study Approach

The study employs sociological approach which is used to understand the relation between religion and social life notably in politics. Religion is social

¹⁵ Mun'im A. Sirry, "Membendung Militansi Agama (Iman dan Politik dalam Masyarakat Modern)", (Jakarta: Erlangga, 2003), 66.

¹⁶ David C. Legee dan Lyman A. Kellstedt, *Rediscovering the Religious Factor in American Politics* (Armonk, NY: M.E., 1993), 3-31.

¹⁷ P. Joko Subagyo, *Metode Penelitian dan Praktek* (Jakarta: Rhenika Cipta, 1991), 109.

phenomenon. In fact, it is a part of social life. Study of religion means to study a society.¹⁸ By using sociology of religion study, the writer will try to explore the religion role to influence social activities especially political sphere. The classical sociological tradition of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim has produced a “neoclassical” perspective which are represented by Peter Berger, Clifford Geertz, Robert Bellah, and Thomas Luckmann which is inclined to be subjective, emphasizing individual beliefs and attitudes, opinions and values. The perspective of current work in the sociology of religion is designed well based on appropriate methodologies. The focus of these social psychological studies is usually on the problem of meaning and individual’s interpretations of reality.¹⁹

3. Data Collection

The main resources for this study are documentary data. Documentary method is collecting data, including books, article, newspaper, writings, guidelines, reports, and official websites.²⁰ Data is divided into two; they are primary data and secondary data.

Primary data of the research is source of information related to the main discussion of this, which is taken from the book *American Theocracy* by Kevin Phillips. While secondary data is source of information pertinent to supporting data of the research or data taken from other resources such as books, magazines,

¹⁸ Djam’annuri, *Agama Kita Perspektif Sejarah Agama-Agama* (Yogyakarta: Kurnia Kalam Semesta, 2002), 20.

¹⁹ Kurtz, Lester R, *Gods in the Global Village (The World’s Religions in Sociological Perspective)*, 15.

²⁰ Suharsimi Arikunto, *Prosedur Penelitian: Suatu Pendekatan Praktek* (Jakarta: Bina Usaha, 1980), 62.

newspapers, articles, which are regarded as relevant and supported to this research.

4. Data Analyzing Method

Data analyzing method is set up to compile data by classifying into some patterns, theme or category. Then compiled data would be explained or analysed in looking for the relation between the provided concepts.²¹

The writer employs Content Analysis. Contents Analysis consists of communications, either verbal or non verbal in the form of messages from a statement in text.²² The writer also analyzes collected data by analysing and interpreting so that a clear meaning and in-depth comprehension can be acquired. The data is analyzed by analytical discourse method²³. Discourse analyzing here is meant to reveal intention and meaning hidden from a statement.

G. Chapter Plan

To facilitate the investigation, the study will be divided into six chapters. The organisations are as follows:

Chapter I is introductory chapter which presents the background of the study, the research questions, the objective and significance of the study, theoretical framework, research method and chapter plan.

²¹ Dadang Akhmad, *Metodologi Penelitian Agama, Perspektif Ilmu Perbandingan Agama* (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2000), 102.

²² Burhan Bungin, *Penelitian Kualitatif (Komunikasi, Ekonomi, Kebijakan Publik, dan Ilmu Sosial lainnya)* (Jakarta: Kencana Prenada Media Group, 2007), 155.

²³ Eriyanto, *Analisis Wacana; Pengantar Analisis Teks Media* (Yogyakarta: LKIS, 2001), 5.

Chapter II examines a biography of Kevin Phillips. This chapter briefly and comprehensively provides the profile and the life of Kevin Phillips so that it can understand his background and describe his thought. This chapter includes the life background of Kevin Phillips and his works.

Chapter III explores the proliferation of religious group in the United States in *American Theocracy*. The chapter firstly discuss the sectarian quality of the United States protestantism, then discusses civil religion position in American politics. This is my attempt to get a comprehensive explanation of religious form and pluralism values among religions and also identify the relation between religion and states in the United States.

Chapter IV scrutinize discourse, issues of democracy in the United States to map religion and politics in this country. It analyses the religious influence in the American Politics of the United States. This chapter explicitly discusses the significant of religion influence in democracy.

Chapter V examines the analyzing of Kevin Phillips' view on religion and democracy. It will discuss first his thought in *American Theocracy*. It lists the main point of his thought, then describes the analysis of Kevin Phillips' view. It provides the position of religion and democracy in the United States. Then, this chapter explores critiques toward his thought in the perspective of religion and democracy in the United States.

Chapter VI is conclusion chapter. This chapter provides a conclusion and some suggestions for further research regarding religion and democracy in the United States.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

A. Conclusion

In the United States, there are some sectarians of Protestantism that flourishes the proliferation of American religion. They are Roman Catholic Church, Pantecostal, Presbyterian, Anglican, Baptist, Mormon, Jehovah witness, Methodist. Those groups have heterogeneous religious views and religious movements. Most of them are evangelical movement, millinealist group, second coming of Christ and political dominant. The United States is a pluralism religion and even civil religion. Civil religion and the idea of nationhood in the United States is closely related to protestantism. American civil religion is inclined to have nation and faith which is strengthened, patriotism, conservatism, and fundamentalist religion.

The rising of heterogeneous religious views and religious movements is caused by some reasons. *First*, it is a response towards the demise of religion in which it lost its significant. It is possible to say that the loss of monopoly of religious matters by one organization. Churches has lost its authority. Process of denominationalisation associated with Protestantism, has also played an

important part in promoting secularization. Denominations attempted to defend themselves from or dialogue to the secularization.

Second, secularization affects on the emergence of revived religious groups (sects) or new innovative developments (cults). When Church and states is separated, religion role lost. Here, religion is just for political and economical interest. In other word, it is inclined to be pragmatic.

Phillips had asserted that religious influences flourish in American politics. In the United States, the structure of states and democracy sphere was expressed politically by the religious right and the rise of the Republican Party as a powerful vehicle for religious policy-making. In short, theocratic inclination and biblical views intrudes public places. They are tried to have a religious teaching or moral values on public policy such as Whitehouse policy, Public School, on lifestyle issues such as gay marriage and abortion, on the issues of social and national life in the United States, and the rise of the Republicans Party as religious party which is changing the structure of American politics. In short, their point is keeping religion out of politics and making politics religious. The United States is a secular state in the form of interaction between states and religious organizations in which religion plays important role in influencing public policy. It can be depicted as “religious states” but rather “state religions” in which the government seeks to control religion.

The member of Republican Party is mostly conservative. Conservative concern on issues such as reduced government regulation of business, resistance to world government and to environmentalism, opposition to abortion and homosexuality, support for Christian education in the public schools. Conservatives staked out distinctive positions. They along with grassroots support Moral Majority.

Phillips criticizes the impact of Christian fundamentalists in Bush Administration. Phillips explores that because of a growing religious fervor has contributed to national decline. Phillips recognizes that religion will no longer be an inspiring factor. Religion merely is damaging democracy and so dangerous in national life. Religion merely is a threat to democracy.

Although Phillips is trying to describe the demise of religion in the development democracy in the United States, his works also leave critics to the reader up into some perspectives. The secularism of modern world forces the Christian fundamentalists intends religious values to push them in public place. Since religion loses its significance for social human life, it should express the religious values in public spaces so that it makes the social order much better. When religion is explained as the result of or reaction to deprivation, then the explanation of secularization will refer to the growth of democracy.

Phillips asserted that religion would be a threat to democracy when it pushes religious values through public policy. It is possibly that it would take

a politicized religion. However, religion is empowering for democracy. It is underlying the assumption that civil society which is one of pillar of democracy and religion would be effective in the society when it is operated as pillar of civil society. In other words, democracy takes religion to get the existence.

When religious groups have their interest accepted in congress, they struggle their interest through lobbying. When secular groups and religious groups are fighting back each other in public place trying to intrude each interest in public sphere, they are offering that what they do is a truth. Sometimes, the growth of democracy needs views in contradiction. This is a change to get democracy. Therefore, it should a real dialogue among parties in dispute.

B. Suggestion

This study has discussed the perspective of religion and democracy in *American Theocracy*. It portrays the relation of religion and democracy. This study does not provide what democracy to do for religious movement. The focus of this study is to identify how religion moves on the democratic sphere and also how democracy facilitates the religious movements. The relation between them is very dynamic. Therefore, it should be examined intensively and comprehensively.

Anyway, this study is necessary a developing research. Therefore, it is so wisely that further research should be concerning on what factors within religion in empowering democratization so that a complete picture of the significant factors of religion to build up democracy would be presented. Other further research could be possibly focusing on how government (states) should take a decision wisely to religion so that it produces more democratic in a national life.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Fikry was born in Jepara on May 17, 1983. He was educated at the SDN IV Mulyoharjo, SMP N I Jepara, and SMAN I Jepara. After finishing senior high school in Jepara, he studied at English Study Program, the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Ahmad Dahlan University Yogyakarta in 2002. He also studied at the Faculty of Ushuluddin on the department of comparative religion at Islamic University of Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta in 2003.

At the university, he ever joined an organization concerning on the issues of religion and cross culture namely Religion and Tolerance Studies Forum (RTSF) in 2005.

He has received a number of prizes. Together with some colleagues, Ahmad Asroni and Erham Budi Wirato, he won second prize in a Academic Writing Contest held by Satya Wacana University Salatiga in 2005 and he also won first prize in a Multicultural Movie Contest held by Sanata Dharma University in 2007,