| **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

The Essence of Religious Conversion in the Perspective of Alfred North Whitehead's Philosophy of Processes

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| **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to understand the essence of religious conversion from the perspective of Alfred North Whitehead's process philosophy. This type of research is library research. Data sources come from books and journal articles. The collected data is then analyzed by the method of philosophical hermeneutics with elements of personal description and reflection. The study found the following: (1) Religious conversion in the holistic model is a religious change that takes place over time and not a single event. Conversions are influenced by various interrelated variables. (2) In the meaning system model, religious conversion is understood as a change in the meaning system resulting from strong pressure from input factors and weak system elements to resist pressure. (3) Conversion career aproach sees religious conversion as a radical change in individual religion influenced by social, institutional, individual and contingency factors. Religious conversion is one form of an individual's religious participation during this phase of life. Based on the three explanations of religious conversion according to the three paradigms above, this study concludes that the essence of religious conversion from the perspective of process philosophy is the formation of human self-religiosity. The formation of self-religiosity through religious conversion involves two things, namely, datum and subjective aim. Datum is the whole variable selected through the process of prehence, while the subjective aim is the self-image desired by the individual who is forming himself. Religious conversion is a result of human nature as a being that continues to "be." the implication of this finding is the importance of formulating conversion ethics so that the phenomenon of religious conversion does not lead to social disharmony.

1. Introduction

Religious conversion has become a controversial issue worldwide. This is evident from the resistance of some religious communities in various countries and academic debates around the issue. The resistance of religious communities is evident in Christian officials in Britain. They lamented the conversion of Christians to paganism. Jewish leaders in the United States were concerned about Jewish conversion to Christianity and considered conversion a threat to their community. Likewise, extreme Hindu factions strongly condemned the conversion of Hindus to Islam in India (Bryant and Lamb, 1999:10). Indonesia is no exception. Some people consider religious conversion as a form of betrayal, so it is appropriate to get sanctions. Customary sanctions in the form of exclusion from communities in Minangkabau, Indonesia, are one example of rejection of the phenomenon of religious conversion (Kurnial Ilahi, Jamaluddin Rabain, 2017: 92). The academic debate on the issue of conversion is shown by the difficulty of researchers to construct a relatively inclusive common language that can accommodate the entire phenomenon of religious conversion with its various variations, motives and processes. Lewis Rambo stated that in the study of religious conversion, there is no theory that is universally applicable to everything. From the description above, it can be concluded that religious conversion has caused two problems, namely ethical problems and scientific problems.

Studies on religious conversion have been widely conducted. There are at least three paradigms that have been produced to understand the complexity of conversion phenomena, namely the classical paradigm, dominated by the discipline of psychology; the paradigm of social sciences research, dominated by sociology; and the global paradigm, dominated by an interdisciplinary approach (Ralp. W. Hood, C.Hill, and Spilka 2018: 226). The classical paradigm focuses only on individual factors. This appears in William James' The Verieties of Religious Experience (James, 1958). James is considered to have ignored the social aspect, which is also a variable causing religious conversion (Bryant and Lamb, 1999: 51). In the classical paradigm, religious conversion is a sudden radical change in aspects of individual religiosity. This view was greatly influenced by the prototype religious conversion experienced by Paul in the Christian tradition. The classical paradigm places agents as passive actors. Unlike the classical paradigm, rational choice theory in sociology departs from the assumption that individuals are active actors who always seek to maximize profits and minimize losses. As in the market, religion is seen as a system consisting of producers, commodities and consumers. Religious institutions are seen as commodity producers in the form of religious fatwas, which are then offered to jamaat as consumers. Religious institutions, in this perspective, seek to increase their followers in free market competition. Individuals convert according to rational choice theory because they consider that their new religion provides more attractive advantages. Criticism of the rational choice assumption that actors tend to maximize utility is not always supported by psychological evidence. Psychological evidence suggests that converting is sometimes an individual's free decision. Being faithful or converting is, in many ways, an expression of the heart, not merely for profit. Furthermore, the global paradigm dominated by an interdisciplinary approach is reflected in three conversion study models, namely the holistic model of Lewis Rambo (1993), the meaning-system model of Raymond F. Paloutzian and the conversion career approach of Henri Gooren. Lewis Rambo has yet to describe the richness of the conversion experience. For example, the transition from the experience of exase to the state of preextase as in the experience of mystics. This experience is not accommodated by the typology it proposes. While the shortcomings of the conversion career approach lie in the issue of conversion definition. Henri Gooren's definition of religious conversion seems too exclusive and too empirical. Gooren did not include any form of apostasy as part of religious conversion. Paloutzian tends to be partial in seeing changes due to conversion. Changes only occur in systems of meaning such as goals, values and life orientation. From the perspective of human philosophy, change occurs in humans with all their dimensions. Thus, the three have not produced a common language that can summarize the entire conversion with various types and motifs.

The purpose of this study is to investigate three interdisciplinary approaches in religious conversion studies, namely the holistic model approach from Lewis Rambo, the meaning system approach from Raymond Paloutzian, and the conversion career approach from Henri Gooren. Issues in religious conversion, such as concepts, processes and variables that cause conversion according to these three paradigms, will then be sought to build a new synthesis through the point of view of process philosophy so as to complement the shortcomings of previous studies that have not produced an inclusive formulation of religious conversion. Religious conversion must be viewed extensively as well as intensively. Correspondingly, the question posed in this paper is: what is the essence of religious conversion from the perspective of Afred North Whitehead's philosophy of processes? The answers to this questions provide a deep understanding of religious conversion and become a matter of thought in determining constructive attitudes towards the phenomenon of unattrievable conversion.

This study is based on an argument that reality is always in the process of "being". This corresponds to the principle of process in the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead. Process philosophy views human beings as actual entities that always form themselves over time. From this assumption, it can be concluded that religious conversion is a process of human self-formation that takes place continuously on a religious dimension.

2. Literature Review
2.1 Conceptualization of Religious Conversion.
In the classical paradigm, religious conversion is a change in character from evil to good, from sinfulness to truth, from ignorance of religion to enlightenment and spiritual activity (Starbuck, 1900:21). Houston Clark defines religious conversion as growth that contains a significant element of spiritual change. A similar statement states that religious conversion is a sudden change of emotion towards receiving divine guidance (Zakia Degrees, 1970:163). William James James further defined religious conversion as a divided self-determination.

> Converting, being reborn, receiving blessings, living religion, getting assurances are words that indicate a process both gradually and suddenly so that the person is divided and consciously feels guilty and unhappy. The person is also united by consciously feeling superior and happy as a result of a strong belief in religious reality. This is roughly what conversion means in general (James 1958:193).

Research on religious conversion with an interdisciplinary paradigm has found several models, typologies and various variables that cause religious conversion. In Lewis Rambo's holistic model, religious conversions are grouped into six categories: intensification, apostasy, affiliation, institutional transition, and tradition transition. As for Paloutzian (2017:225) Religious

conversions are distinguished in two categories: Sudden Conversion and Gradual Conversion. The first category is conversions that occur suddenly, such as Paul's conversion, which is widely used as an example in psychology. The second category is more seen as a process of trust growth in a certain period of time. The third paradigm in religious conversion research is the conversion career approach of Henri Gooren (2010). A conversion career is an individual's religious journey over a lifetime through stages and types of religious participation. The central idea of the conversion career approach is the importance of a life cycle approach in conversion studies, five typologies of religious participation, and a systematic analysis of the factors influencing religious conversion. In the career conversion approach, five types of individual religious participation are distinguished, namely preaffiliation, affiliation, conversion, confession, and disaffiliation (Gooren 2010: 50).

2.2 Key Ideas in Process Philosophy Alfred North Whitehead.

In general, process philosophy or philosophy of organisms can be interpreted as philosophical thinking that views reality as something that is in the process of "being" continuously. The nature of a being, according to Whitehead, is determined by how it creates itself in the process of becoming who it is. Whitehead distinguishes two aspects of the process of "being": microscopic and macrocopic. The first is the process of becoming an actual entity determined by objective data of the past. In other words, the microscopic process is the self-formation of an actual existence using materials inherited from the past. This process is also called concresion. The second is the process of changing from an actual entity that has experienced self-fulfillment (satisfaction) to a process of becoming a datum for the birth of a new actual entity (Sudarminta 1991: 37).

To understand Whitehead's philosophy of process in more detail, it is necessary to first understand the two basic notions that make up the building of his philosophy. The two notions are actual entity and prehence. Actual entities are the last tangible things that make up the world. There is nothing more real than the actual unit behind the actual unit. These actual units are different from each other. God is the actual entity, as is the most trivial existence in the world. These actual entity are complex and interdependent (Whitehead 2009:30). Prehension is the activity of absorbing (appropriating) environmental elements in the process of self-formation by the actual unit itself. Whitehead distinguishes two types of prehension, namely negative preception and positive prehension. The first is the process of inclusion or inclusion of elements from the environment into the process of self-formation by actual entities that are in the process of 'being', while the second is the process of inclusion or removal of environmental elements in the same process. In prehension, there are five factors involved, namely the subject who feels, the initial data that is felt, the elimination of environmental elements in negative prehension, the perceived objective data and the subjective form or the way in which the subject perceives objective data (Sudarminta 1991: 43). Here it is necessary to emphasize the difference between initial data and objective data. Initial data is all data in the environment of an actual entity, while objective data is data that is selected in the formation of an actual entity.

The process of self-formation of an actual entity in Whitehead's process philosophy occurs through at least four stages, namely the data collection stage, the data processing stage, the self-fulfillment stage and the decision stage. (1) Data collection stage. The process of self-formation always involves data. Data comes from the world that surrounds the individual, both happening and past. These data can be anything such as educational background, religion and so on. The data is collected and ready for processing. (2) Processing stage. The past data present with the then individual is then selected to conform to the self-image desired by the actual entity that is forming the self. It should be noted that this self-image or subjective aim is also a self-forming element in addition to the datum of the past. Self-image is not something final. Self-image may change according to data availability. (3) The stage of self-fullness. At this stage the process of self-formation has reached fullness. Self-fullness here is interpreted as running out of creativity for the actual entity to continue self-formation. By having achieved self-fullness, the actual entity has become an inviolable fact. It is definitive (P. Hardono Hadi 1996:81). By having experienced the fullness of the self where the actual entity has reached the pinnacle of self-formation. The actual entity has become a hard fact that cannot be changed. (4) decision stage. The self-fulness experienced by an actual entity pushes that actual entity to a decision, that is, an attitude of self-determination. This can be illustrated as follows: when an individual determines himself in a problem, then that self-determination is the history of his life, which will also soon become data for the formation of the next self. This is the process of forming a human personality that takes place over time. The collection of personalities formed by data and self-idealism during life is called identity.

3. Methodology

This research is library research with a focus on three interdisciplinary approaches in religious conversion studies, namely the holistic model from Lewis Rambo, the meaning-system model from Raymond F. Paloutzian and Henri Gooren's career conversion approach. Data is collected from primary sources and secondary sources. These sources include the book understanding religious conversion by Lewis Rambo (1993), Invitation to the psychology of religion by Raymond F. Paloutzian (2017) and religious conversion and disafiliation tracing patterns of change in faith practice by Henri Gooren (2010).

These data were analyzed using the philosophical hermeneutics method model of Anton Bakker and Charris Zubair (1990) with elements including interpretation and personal reflection. Interpretation is used to capture the hidden philosophy behind the data,

while personal reflection is used to evaluate the hidden philosophy behind the data and build a more comprehensive and balanced conception (Bakker 1990: 119).

4. Research Results
4.1 Religious Conversion according to Lewis Ray Rambo's Holistic Model.
The first interdisciplinary approach is the holistic model developed by Lewis Rambo (1993). This model involves the disciplines of psychology, sociology, anthropology and religious studies. According to Rambo, definitions of religious conversion vary, depending on who and how a group says it. Rambo puts limits by looking at how far a person has to go socially and culturally to be called a conversion. With this restriction, religious conversion is classified into six six typologies, namely (1) intensification, which is the strengthening of the religious commitment of individuals who already have an affiliation to a previous religion without having to step into the traditions of other religions. Such a phenomenon in Islamic society today is usually referred to as hijra activity. The example given by William James about the conversion case experienced by an American citizen named Steven H. Bredley can be considered a type of intensified conversion. (2) Apostasi is the rejection or denial of the religion professed before converting to another religion. (3) affiliation: this type of conversion is the movement of an individual or group from low faith commitment to full involvement with the institution or community of faith. In a Christian context, affiliation is currently controversial because it is accused of being a manipulative recruitment strategy often waged against the New Religious Movement (NRM) and fundamentalist Christians. (4) institutional transition, which refers to the religious changes of individuals or groups within the same religious tradition. For example, the change from Baptist to Presbyterian church in Protestant Christianity in America. In Islam, this type is seen in the transition of individuals or groups from Sunni to Shi'a sects (Dianto, 2022: 41). (6) Tradition transition is a change in individuals and groups in aspects of worldview, ritual systems, and lifestyles. This total change occurs in the context of cross-cultural encounters or conflicts. Historically, this type of conversion arose when a religion expanded as it did in Christianity and Islam.

Another way to understand the various causes of religious conversion is to look at the motives underlying religious conversion. John Lofland and Norman Skonovd in Lewis Rambo (1993) classify at least six conversion motives. (1) intellectual motives. One seeks knowledge about religious and spiritual issues through books, television, articles, lectures, and other media without involving significant social contact. Individuals actively seek and explore various religious alternatives. (2) mystical motives. Mysticism is considered the prototype of religious conversion, as in Paul's case. Mystical conversions are generally sudden caused by sights, sounds and unusual experiences. (3) experimental motives. This motive involves the active exploration of religious choices. The subject of conversion tries theology, ritual, and religious organization and seeks to discover whether the system is true in the sense of being beneficial or not to them. (4) affectional motives. This motif emphasizes interpersonal bonding as an important factor in the conversion process. The point is the experience of feeling loved, nurtured, and cared for by a group and its leaders. (5) revivalists. This motive uses crowd obedience to influence the behavior of conversion subjects. Furthermore, the individual is emotionally intrigued and driven to convert. Revivalist activities, for example, are carried out through revival meetings that feature music and sermons that evoke emotions. (6) coercive. This type of conversion is relatively rare. Indoctrination, coercion, mind formation, and programming are other names for such processes. A conversion is more or less called coercive according to the level of pressure exerted on the prospective conversion to participate, conform, and acknowledge. The lack of food and sleep can make the subject of conversion unable to withstand pressure and submit to the ideology of the group.

Lewis Rambo ordered religious conversion into seven stages: (1) Context stage. It is the ecology in which conversion occurs. Context encompasses the entirety of dynamics that include the individuals, events, experiences and institutions involved in the conversion. Context is the integration of both infrastructure and conversion superstructure, covering social, cultural, religious, and personal dimensions. (2) Crisis stage. Religious conversion is usually preceded by a crisis situation. Crises can stem from religion, politics, psychology and culture. Crises are drivers of change. Crises are triggered by both internal and external factors. These external factors can be contact with invaders for the sake of exploration and trade or the use of military force involving coercion, manipulation or threats. On a personal level, crises can be triggered by people (missionaries, family members) or events (loneliness, mystical experiences). (3) the question stage. This phase is the stage of seeking salvation. This stage shows how a person responds to the crisis. In crisis situations, this active search becomes even more interesting. Individuals seek resources to grow and develop in order to fill voids or enrich lives. (4) The stage of encounter. At this stage, one makes contact with the proponents of conversion, such as missionaries, preachers, pastors and so on. This first contact can drive the conversion process, trigger crises, and drive questions for new solutions. (6) commitment. A common method of publicly displaying commitment is personal testimonials. A narrative of one's life before and after conversion. The testimonials display a reconstruction of the individual's life biography information. Commitment is characterized by certain rituals, such as baptism. (7) Consequences. Converts must change aspects of the offender's life according to the prescriptions of a particular religious community. This dimension includes affective, intellectual, ethical, religious and socio-political domains.

4.2 Religious conversion according to Raymond F. Paloutzian's The Meaning System Model

The study of religious conversion with a global approach was also conducted by Raymod. F Paloutzian, a social and experimental psychologist at Wetsmond Colledge California. Some of his works are Invitation To The Psychology of Religion (2017). Paloutzian is also the editor of the Hand Book of The Psychology of Religion and Spirituality (2005). In this book, Paloutzian proposes a systems of meaning approach as an analytical tool for religious conversion. Paloutzian's meaning-system model is sufficient for understanding religious conversion and spiritual transformation at all levels of analysis, both micro and macro. Paloutzian psychology is about meaning, and religious conversion is also about how one understands a particular meaning. The system of meaning model is a powerful idea for understanding all levels of analysis, how religion functions and how religious conversion occurs. The concept of religion as a system of meaning, according to Paloutzian, is a synthesis. The system of meaning in the Paloutzian approach is a human cognitive structure that includes attitudes, beliefs, values, orientations, more general overall goals, self-definition and several major loci of attention. The meaning of each of these elements is as follows: (1) Beliefs and Attitudes. Trust can appear in various forms, for example, global trust (Raymod F.Paloutzian, 2017: 69). Global belief is also referred to as the world's assumption or woridview, which broadly includes belief, justice and virtue. This belief shapes the way individuals perceive the world (L.Park, 2005: 297). (2) Values. Values are a guide in making decisions. Individuals use values to determine worthiness, importance, truth or moral truth. Religion and spirituality teach the value of kindness and can be a powerful resource for individuals and cultures. Religion often provides a frame of evaluation of what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is bad. (3) Goals and Action Tendencies. Goals are things or circumstances that people work towards an achievement, whether goals near or far, reaching narrow and specific to global and abstract goals. (4) Identitas dan definisi diri *(identity and self-definition)*. The two are like two sides of one coin. Identity and self-definition enable a person to answer the question of who he is. For example, if someone says that I am a good Catholic, then Catholicism is part of their identity. (5) Ultimate concern. This element is the main inviolable principle. For example, God, higher powers, states, ideologies and end days. The ultimate concern is the main thing that can replace something else(Raymod F.Paloutzian, 2017:69–71).

In the approach of religion as a system of meaning, the conversion process begins with changes in the components of the system. When system components come under pressure from outside, the inputs face information that already exists in other system elements. If the initial belief resists pressure, the bonds of the elements of the system will resist change, but if the resisting ability has not developed, then the pressure on the belief will be strong enough to subvert or destroy other elements of the system. So, a system of meaning can be modified in one or more aspects of it. Visually, the conversion process can be seen in Figure 3.1 below.

Figure 3.1 Figure of the process of changing the system of meaning
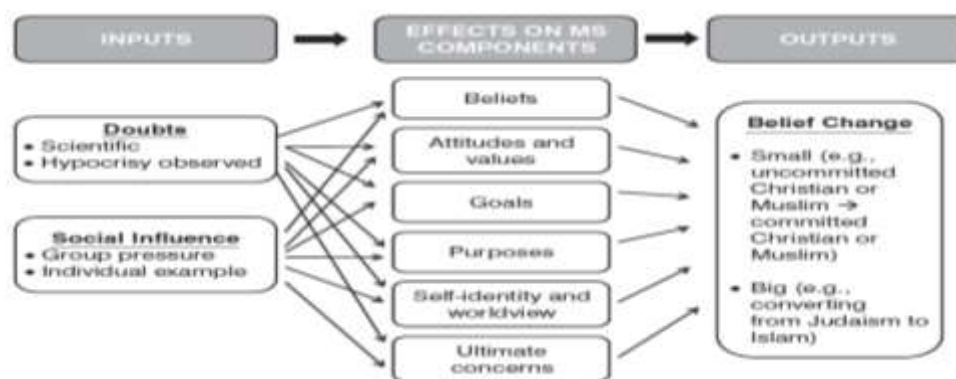

Figure 3.1. shows that the left column serves as input. The input prompts modifications to one or more elements of the system shown in the middle column. The rightmost column is the changes that should appear as a result of system modifications. The greater the internal change, the greater the change in output can be identified (Raymod F. Paloutzian, 2017: 221-224). The ability of elements in the system to interact to assess the inputs and regulate the outputs of the system of meaning. Each element can affect the others. For example, a piece of information can enter an individual's mind and challenge that individual's beliefs and values. This conflict is then considered contrary to one's ultimate concern, will then provide feedback into the meaning system and encourage solving problems or conflicts by receiving new information or maintaining previous beliefs and values (Raymod F. Paloutzian, 2017: 67).

Religious conversion involves at least the following elements: (1) Need, one must need or want something, whether consciously or unconsciously. For example, wanting pleasure, justice, survival, eliminating unpleasant mental or emotional states, guilt, anxiety and loneliness. (2) Doubt: a person must doubt (in limited concepts as cognitive distrust, vague anxiety etc.) that his needs will be met or his problems will be solved in the system available at that time. For example, the contradiction of two statements in scripture,

the incompatibility of scientific ideas with religious teachings, religious leaders who are observed as hypocrites. In many cases, there is a difference between what is and should be in life, both in one's personal life and the lives of others. This difference leads to doubt. (3) Context and Resouces: There must be sources that make the conversion possible. For example, when someone is looking for meaning. The discovery of meaning in religions did not happen by chance. One must first meet with the agent through the medium of communication. (4) Appropriation. For change to occur, one's system of meaning must pay attention to, encounter, appropriate, and respond to the above sources. The more confronting the sources of a system of meaning, the greater the likelihood of changes in one or more elements of the system, and the greater the change in psychological functions such as beliefs or behaviors that differ from before. (5) Ellimination of Barriers. Bans and obstacles must be set aside. For example, if an ethnicity, religious group, or cultural group forbids a person from converting, potential converts are likely to show resistance. In some cases, the barriers to leaving parents are extreme. (6) Implementation. Changes must be implemented. New beliefs and rituals should be performed differently from previous rituals. The acceptance of a new set of doctrines changes one's opinion about whether Jesus is the messiah or Muhammad is the last prophet. Adjusting to the new teaching and following what the new teaching says is an example of the implementation stage.

According to Paloutzian, religious conversion does not change the character or, core traits or basic structure of a person's personality. What is meant by the core personality, as stated by Paloutzian is, referring to the concept of five basic traits (big five) in personality theory which include (1) openness, is the nature of proactively seeking new experiences, (2) conscientiousness, is persistence and motivation shown in behavior that leads to goals, (3) extraversion is the quantity and intensity of one's interpersonal interactions, (4) agreablesness, the quality of one's interpersonal interactions continuously from meekness to antagonists, (5) neuroticm is the tendency to experience negative emotions such as anxiety and depression (Ralp L. Piedmont, 2005: 253). These personality traits are relatively stable at the age of 25 to 30 years. This fact reaffirms that basic personality does not change with religious changes (Paloutzian, 2005: 1067). Introverts do not automatically become extroverts with religious conversions. Their characteristics look the same but are expressed according to their new religious orientation.

4.3 Religious Conversion According to Henri Gooren's Conversion Career Approach

The third approach in religious conversion research is proposed by Henri Gooren in the book *Religious Conversion and Disaffiliation Tracing Patterns of Change in Faith Practice* (2010). Gooren proposes the Conversion Career approach in outlining changes in an individual's religious attitude. A conversion career is an individual's religious journey over a lifetime through stages and types of religious participation. The central idea of this approach is the importance of a life cycle approach in conversion studies, five typologies of religious participation, and a systematic analysis of the factors influencing religious conversion. Religious conversion, in the career conversion approach, is built from a number of observed parameters. According to Gooren, these parameters are useful for identifying factors in the conversion process. It is also useful to know indicators that show true conversion and indicators that demonstrate the continuity of religious commitment after conversion. From these parameters, Gooren formulated three important elements, namely (1) Factors in conversion, which include contingency factors, individual factors, institutional factors, cultural factors, and social factors. (2) Indicators showing actual conversion. The most helpful indicators in conversion studies are those related to thinking and ways of speaking. The subject of conversion should include a biographical reconstruction or reorganization of his or her life, (3) Indicators that display a commitment to the church after conversion occurs (Gooren, 2010:44).

In the career conversion approach, there are five main factors that cause religious conversion, namely (1) social factors, including in the category of social factors are family, friends, social networks and members of religious groups. (2) institutional factors, including dissatisfaction with a religious group, inactivity in religious activities, presence of different religious groups, evangelism, TV/radio messages, attraction of leaders, religious organizations, rituals, religious values, doctrine and competition between religious organizations. (3) cultural and political factors, in the form of cultural attractiveness, politics of a religious group, tensions between religious and ethnic groups. (4) Individual factors. These factors include religious views or the need for prior socialization. It can also be a personal need to search for meaning and spirituality within a religious group, a desire to change one's life situation, and certain characteristics such as feelings of insecurity. (5) Contingency Factor (2010: 51-52). Contingency factors include very strong crises, alcohol problems, unemployment, marriage, divorce and migration. In addition, religion provides solutions to crises, such as healing, finding new jobs through members of certain religions, opportunities to meet religious figures, missionaries, preachers or preachers. Included in this contingency factor is what believers believe to be destiny (Gooren, 2010:141).

In the career conversion approach, five types of individual religious participation are distinguished, which include preaffiliation, affiliation, conversion, confession, and disaffiliation (Gooren 2010: 50). Preaffiliation is a person's life situation or worldview before an affiliate or conversion. In church terms, it is called "visitor". Affiliation is formal membership in a religious group without any change of identity. In church terms, it is called "member" or baptized member. Religious participation, then, is conversion, which means a radical change in an individual's religious identity followed by a commitment to a religious group. Conversions can occur within the same religious tradition or step outside different traditions. This concept in church terms is called "full member". The four confessions are core members with a very high level of participation in a new religion with such strong outward evangelism.

For example, a person who enters a new religion, accompanied by a strong religious commitment to his new religion, and then becomes a commissioner or preacher to convey the values of the teachings of his new religion. Finally, disaffiliation, in Henri Gooren's approach, is referred to as no church membership or visits or, in church terms named, inactive member, seeker, unchurched Christian.

4.4 The Essence Religious Conversion in Process Philosophical Perspective

Religious conversion studies have produced three interdisciplinary approaches: the holistic model, the meaning-system model, and the conversion career approach. The holistic model understands religious conversion as a process of change over time and taking place gradually (context, crisis, question, encounter, interaction, commitment, consequence). In the holistic model, religious conversion is classified into four types: apostasy, intensification, institutional transition, tradition transition. The meaning system model understands religious conversion as a change in the elements of the meaning system. These elements include attitudes, beliefs, values, orientations and worldviews. When one element of the meaning system is under external pressure where the elements are not strong enough to resist the pressure, then changes to the meaning system may occur. As for the career conversion approach, religious conversion is one of an individual's religious participation during a lifetime. Religious conversion is influenced by five factors: social factors, cultural factors, institutional factors, individual factors and contingency factors. An indicator of religious conversion in a conversion career approach is a radical change in the empirically observed biography of the individual. Referring to Alfred North Whitehead's process philosophy which assumes that reality is always in a state of being, then religious conversion in these three paradigms can be interpreted as a process of human self-formation in religious aspects. All three approaches to religious conversion show the same activity, namely, a change in religious attitudes. This change is another name for process in the context of process philosophy. For example, Rambo understands religious conversion as a process of change over time. Similarly, Paloutzian sees religious conversion as a change in the system of meaning in the individual. Similarly, Henri Gooren also viewed religious conversion as a radical change in the religion of the individual. Thus, religious conversion in these three approaches can be summarized in a single formulation, namely the process of forming the self-religiosity of actual entities. The actual entity referred to here is the individual himself who is carrying out religious conversion activities.

Furthermore, following the four stages of self-creation of actual entities in Whitehead's process philosophy, the formation of self-religiosity in religious conversion proceeds through the following stages:

Data Collection Stage. In accordance with the idea of data as material for forming the actual entity, religious conversion as the formation of self-religiosity also involves data. The data referred to in religious conversion are all external variables identified by the three paradigms above. In the holistic model, the data is in the form of cultural, social, personal and religious dimensions. Henri Gooren's five proposed conversion factors can also be positioned as data. So is the term input in the Paloutzian meaning-system model. All of them are data that individuals use in shaping self-religiosity. Keep in mind that in addition to data, the formation of self-religiosity in religious conversion also involves subjective aim or self-image. Subjective aim can be paralleled with the elements of the meaning system in the Paloutzian model of the meaning system, or what is referred to as the motive in Lewis Rambo's holistic model.

Data Processing Stage. The external factors in the three conversion approaches above are still external data that must be processed. To produce the desired profile of self-religiosity, the second stage begins namely data processing. The data derived from various variables are then selected and adjusted to individual self-idealism. This selection process is the activity of prehension or perceiving environmental elements surrounding the actual entity that is forming itself. The materials surrounding the individual at that time, weighed from both positive and negative sides. There are negative precepts and positive prehension for individuals who are pursuing self-religiosity through conversion activities. Examples of negative preception Religious conversion in the Paloutzian system of meaning approach is apparent when individuals process input factors. Paloutzian states that input is responded to by elements in the system. There is bargaining between the input and the elements of the system before accepting or rejecting the pressure coming from the input. In Henri Gooren, the stage of data processing is seen when individuals are faced with the system of the religious market. In that situation, individuals make a cost-benefit analysis when they consider membership in a particular religious organization (Gooren 2010:67). The example given by Henri Gooren for this case is the conversion of New Age spirituality to Sufi Islam by a woman named Bilqis. The next example is illustrated in the case of B.R. Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism. Ambedkar was one of the Indians who received his education in England. Upon his return to India, Ambedkar believed that Hinduism's strict caste system was the source of suffering for many. For several years, Ambedkar consciously sought a religion that could foster prosperity for his people. Ambedkar investigated Islam and Christianity, the two preferred religions in India at that time, before finally choosing Buddhism (Rambo 1993:57). Here, subjective aim as a mental pole plays a role in data processing and selection.

The stage of self-fullness. This stage is the phase when the individual has had enough. There is no other alternative that can be pursued again in realizing the self-religiosity to which one aspires. The individual has lost the creativity of self-determination. The

process of formation of the religious me has reached a peak. The stage of fullness marks the end of his entire subjectivity. Individuals have become facts in the world (P. Hardono Hadi 1996: 200). All data has been evaluated. The individual has learned the teachings, lifestyle, expectations of the group and is ready to make decisions. At the stage of fullness, the individual begins to commit to orienting his life to a particular religious group. Returning to Ambedkar's case, he was convinced of Buddhism as the religion best suited to serve the needs of his people. Ambedkar saw no solution to the problems he faced in Islam. Neither is it found in Christianity. Ambedkar referred to Buddhism as a religion that he saw as a solution to the problems he faced (Rambo 1993: 58).

Decision stage. After experiencing self-fullness, the next stage is decision making. The decision stage is the finalization phase of self-formation. When an individual makes a decision as to whether to repent (synthesis), convert (apostasy), switch to a new sect (transition institution), affiliation to a particular religious group (affiliation) or become a commissioner (confession), then at that time, a person with a certain religiosity has been formed. The decision can no longer be contested. A person with previous religious qualities cannot be repeated. The religiosity of the self that has been formed at that present moment has reached perfection or fullness of the self. In the event of the conversion of Ambedkar and his people to Buddhism, he has shown a personality as a Budist. Self-religiosity that has experienced self-fulness will soon become a thing of the past and serve as data that can be used for the formation of further self-religiosity. Thus, the formation of self-religiosity in religious conversion activities takes place from time to time.

The meaning of religious conversion as a process of human self-formation in religious aspects has implications for social ethical issues. In the introduction of this article it has been stated that one of the controversial problems in religious conversion is the resistance of religious communities to the phenomenon of religious conversion. This resistance stems from the failure of each individual to see the nature of man as a being who is always in a state of being, as postulated in Whitehead's philosophy of process. In other words, the meaning of religious conversion as the formation of self-religiosity has ethical implications in the form of the importance of formulating conversion ethics. The ethic of conversion is necessary so that religious conversion does not lead to social disharmony. The most important thing is not the question of conversion itself but how religious conversion is treated proportionally. Religious conversion is an unavoidable phenomenon because it is the embodiment of human nature as an "always becoming" being.

The government, as the authority holder needs to draw up a conversion code of ethics. This code of ethics is further socialized as a guideline for all parties so that the impression of superiority and inferiority in religious conversion is not too highlighted. Testimonials that display post-conversion self-reconstruction by conversion actors must still practice responsible freedom in the sense of safeguarding the freedom of followers of other religions from their blasphemy attitudes.

5. Conclusion

The religious conversion discussed in this article is limited to three approaches: Lewis Rambo's systematic stage model, Henri Gooren's career conversion and Raymond's meaning system model. F. Paloutzian. From the perspective of process philosophy, religious conversion in the three approaches above is interpreted as the refinement of self-religiosity. It is based on the assumption that humans as an actual entity continue to form themselves over time. The formation of the human self in religious conversion by actual units (humans) always involves data and self-image (subjective aim). There is a process of prehension in conversion activities by actual entities that are forming themselves.

Religious conversion as the formation of self-religiosity is a common language or a single formulation that can synthesize the variety of religious conversion ideas as in the three approaches described earlier. This formulation is an alternative formulation that can also be used to explain the variety of ideas in existing religious conversion studies. Thus, the process of philosophy makes theoretical contributions that serve as a general explanation in conversion studies.

The limitation of this study lies in its generality. The use of process philosophy as a formal object in this article does not provide a detailed picture of religious conversion, as are there differences in religious conversion by gender? Process philosophy only explains that humans are always coming, and religious conversion is one of its manifestations. Therefore, studies based on positive sciences still need to be continued to answer the problem of conversion with observed indicators. In addition, research with other philosophical approaches, such as value philosophy, is also needed to see which values are dominant in conversion to various religious communities.

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