

RELIGI

JURNAL STUDI AGAMA-AGAMA

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Roni Ismail

UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta

Email: roni.ismail@uin-suka.ac.id

Abstract

According to its constitution (Article 29, Paragraphs 1 and 2), Indonesia guarantees every citizen the right to practice a religion and worship according to their respective beliefs. However, there are organized religions, tribal or local religions, and belief systems (*aliran kepercayaan*) whose religious rights are not guaranteed, experiencing restrictions and even repression in practicing their faith. One cause of this anomaly is the definition of religion used as the basis for policy in Indonesia. Religion is still narrowly defined, characterized by an Abrahamic religion lens, as a “principle of belief in God and a set of worship rules, possessing a holy book and a messenger”. Under this concept, Indonesia only recognizes six official religions with full religious and administrative guarantees. Consequently, many tribal religions and belief systems are excluded, failing to receive religious and administrative rights. Indonesia currently adheres to a religious diversity governance model known as Non-Constitutional Pluralism (NOCOP). A concept of religion as a collective name—rather than a dogmatic one—is needed, considering the sociology, anthropology, and psychology of the Indonesian people. The concept of religion in William James’ psychology of religion, defined as “the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine,” is relevant for use. This definition is open, broad, and non-dogmatic, thus covering all official and unofficial religions, tribal/local religions, and various belief systems in God Almighty. This concept allows Indonesia to shift toward a Constitutional Pluralism model, ensuring that all religions and beliefs are guaranteed their rights to practice, education, house of worship assistance, and other administrative rights.

Keywords: Concept of religion, William James’ psychology of religion, religious governance, constitutional pluralism.

Abstrak

Indonesia dalam konstitusinya Pasal 29 Ayat 1 dan 2 menjamin setiap warga negara untuk memeluk agama dan beribadat menurut kepercayaannya masing-masing. Akan tetapi, ada agama-agama (*organized religion*), agama suku atau lokal, dan aliran-aliran kepercayaan tidak terjamin hak-hak beragamanya, mengalami restriksi bahkan represi dalam beragama dan

beribadat menurut agamanya. Salah satu penyebab anomali ini adalah definisi agama yang dijadikan dasar kebijakan di Indonesia. Agama masih didefinisikan secara sempit dan bercorak *Abrahamic religion* sebagai “prinsip kepercayaan kepada Tuhan dan tata aturan peribadatan, yang memiliki kitab suci dan utusan”. Dengan konsep ini, Indonesia hanya mengakui enam agama resmi dengan segala jaminan dan hak-hak keagamaan dan administratif lainnya. Akan tetapi, banyak agama suku dan aliran kepercayaan tidak dapat tercakup di dalamnya sehingga tidak mendapatkan hak keberagamaan dan hak-hak administratif lain. Indonesia masih menganut governansi keragaman beragama *Non-Constitutional Pluralism* (NOCOP). Diperlukan konsep agama sebagai nama kolektif, bukan dogmatis, yang mempertimbangkan sosiologi, antropologi dan psikologi bangsa Indonesia. Konsep agama dalam psikologi agama William James sebagai “segala perasaan, tindakan, dan pengalaman manusia secara individual dalam hubungannya dengan apapun yang dipandang Ilahi” relevan digunakan. Ia bersifat terbuka, luas dan tidak dogmatis sehingga bisa mencakup semua agama resmi, agama tidak resmi, agama-agama suku atau lokal, dan aneka aliran kepercayaan kepada Tuhan Yang Maha Esa. Konsep agama James ini relevan untuk governansi keragaman agama di Indonesia, dan memungkinkan Indonesia menerapkan model *Non-Constitutional Pluralism* (NOCOP) agar semua agama dan aliran kepercayaan di Indonesia terjamin hak keberagamaan, pendidikan, bantuan rumah ibadah, dan hak-hak administratif lainnya.

Kata Kunci: Konsep agama, psikologi agama William James, governansi agama, *constitutional pluralism*

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, the state constitutionally guarantees the freedom of citizens to embrace their respective religions and beliefs. Article 29, Paragraph 1 of the 1945 Constitution affirms that “The State is based upon the belief in the One and Only God,” while Paragraph 2 states, “The State guarantees all persons the freedom of worship, each according to his/her own religion or belief.” However, only six official religions are recognized in Indonesia: Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. Even Confucianism was only re-recognized after the Reformation era when the then President KH Abdurrahman Wahid revoked Presidential Instruction No. 14 of 1967 and the 1978 Minister of Home Affairs Decision. With these revocations, Law No. 1/Pnps/1965 was reinstated, stating, “The religions embraced by the people of Indonesia are Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism,” thereby re-establishing Confucianism as an official religion alongside the others.¹

Nevertheless, many belief systems (*aliran kepercayaan*) and tribal religions remain unrecognized and do not receive the guarantees of Article 29, Paragraphs 1 and 2 of the 1945 Constitution. Some tribal religions have even been categorized as variants of official religions; for instance, the *Kaharingan* and *Aluk To Dolo*² religions were grouped into Hinduism through the Decree of the Director General for Hindu and Buddhist

¹ “Undang-undang No.1/Pnps/1965 : Indonesia ada 6 Agama”, www.kemenag.go.id, diakses 4 Februari 2026, pukul 22:44 WIB.

² Roni Ismail, “Ritual Kematian dalam Agama Asli Toraja ‘Aluk To Dolo’”, *Religi*, Vol. 15, No. 1, Tahun 2019, p. 87-106.

Community Guidance No. Dd/M/200-VII/1969 on November 15, 1969. In reality, these two tribal religions differ significantly from Hinduism in almost all aspects.³ Furthermore, organized religions that are not yet recognized in Indonesia, such as Judaism, have actually existed and developed in places like Surabaya and Manado.⁴ Beyond Judaism, numerous belief systems also lack state guarantees for religious freedom, including the right to list their faith on Identity Cards (KTP), access to religious education, the establishment of houses of worship,⁵ and social assistance for those houses of worship.⁶

In the study of religious diversity governance, as noted by Sarkissian, the “recognition” of certain official religions and the “neglect” of others indicates that Indonesia, as a state, has practiced “restriction,” or even “repression,” toward various religions and beliefs outside the six official ones. Restriction and repression are generally forms of state regulation of religious diversity. These two models of state governance result in “support” for official religions and “abandonment” of all non-official religions and beliefs.⁷

According to the author’s first observation, a primary cause for this “restriction” and “repression” in Indonesia is the narrow, Abrahamic-centric definition of religion applied by the state. Within the Abrahamic framework, religion is defined as:

“a principle of belief in God and a set of worship rules,” often supplemented by the requirement of “possessing a holy book and a messenger.”⁸

This definition is highly characteristic of Abrahamic religions and is, therefore, narrow and rigid.⁹

As a result of this definition, many tribal religions and belief systems are excluded and are thus not considered “religions.” Most tribal religions lack the concept of a “messenger” (Prophet), and while some have a concept of divinity, it is generally an impersonal god; few possess a holy book. Belief systems experience similar “restriction”

³ Ahmad Rosyadi (ed.), *Perkembangan Paham Keagamaan Lokal di Indonesia*, (Jakarta: Badan Litbang dan Diklat, Kemenag RI, 2011), p. xxiv-xxv

⁴ Sekar Ayu Aryani, “Dialectic Of Religion And National Identity In North Sulawesi Jewish Communities From The Perspective Of Cross-Cultural And Religious Psychology”, *Al-Jami’ah*, Vol. 60, No. 1, 2022, p. 199-226.

⁵ M. Yusuf Arsy (ed.), *Rumah Ibadat di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Badan Litbang dan Diklat, Kemenag RI, 2011), p. 5-17. Lihat juga, Haidlor Ali Ahmad (ed.), *Hubungan Umat Beragama: Studi Kasus Penutupan/Perselisihan Rumah Ibadat*, (Jakarta: Badan Litbang dan Diklat, Kemenag RI, 2012), p. 14-21.

⁶ Muchit A. Karim (ed.), *Bantuan Sosial Kementerian Agama RI bagi Rumah Ibadat dan Ormas Keagamaan di Indonesia*, (Jakarta: Badan Litbang dan Diklat, Kemenag RI, 2011), p. 211.

⁷ Ani Sarkissian, *Varieties of Religious Repression. Why Governments Restrict Religion*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p.

⁸ IGM Nurdjana, *Hukum dan Aliran Kepercayaan Menyimpang di Indonesia*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2009), p. 15.

⁹ Kelly James Clark (ed.), *Anak-anak Abraham*, terj. Indro Suprobo dan Lisita, (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2014).

because they generally lack a personal concept of God, few have holy books, and almost all lack the concept of a messenger or Prophet. Although their full designation is “Belief Systems in the One and Only God,” they are still defined as beliefs outside of and not included within the category of religion.¹⁰

Due to this narrow definition, not only are tribal religions and belief systems excluded from the category of religion, but their adherents are also denied the right to their specific religious identity despite the guarantees of the 1945 Constitution. Yet, from the perspective of the psychology of religion, for example, religion as an object of study is defined as “whatever is called religion by its adherents.”¹¹ Furthermore, the government—as noted in the author’s second observation—has not yet attempted to redefine religion from a historical-phenomenological perspective that is broad and inclusive. Consequently, religious restriction is a direct consequence of the narrow, Abrahamic-centric definition used as the basis for political policy and diversity governance in Indonesia.

The author’s third observation notes that a theological and Abrahamic-centric definition of religion is no longer relevant—and has even “expired”—for the politics and governance of Indonesia’s highly pluralistic religious and cultural landscape. An open, broad, and inclusive definition is required to ensure that state governance is based on a more comprehensive understanding. This new definition is a necessity and an urgent matter to embrace the diversity of tribal religions and belief systems. Such a definition cannot be formulated through a mono-disciplinary approach; rather, it requires a dialogue between various disciplines. In the words of Amin Abdullah, a multi, inter, and transdisciplinary (MIT) approach¹² is needed even for the “simple” task of defining “religion.” This is crucial as it profoundly influences the politics of religious governance. The state must engage with social-religious disciplines such as the anthropology, sociology, philosophy, and psychology of religion in redefining this term.

In the psychology of religion, for instance, what is studied is not religion in its doctrinal or normative sense, but religion as a “religious experience.” This definition is dynamic and open, capable of accommodating all faiths—whether tribal, “imported,” Abrahamic, or various belief systems—regardless of whether they have a personal or impersonal God, a holy book, a messenger, or specific ritual systems. For example, the American psychologist of religion William James, in his book *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, defines religion historically and phenomenologically as subjective, emotional,

¹⁰ IGM Nurdjana, *Hukum dan Aliran Kepercayaan Menyimpang di Indonesia*, p. 17.

¹¹ Robert W. Crapps, *Dialog Psikologi dan Agama sejak William James hingga Gordon Allport*, terj. A. M. Harjana (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1993), p. 19-21.

¹² M. Amin Abdullah, *Multidisiplin, Interdisiplin, & Transdisiplin. Metode Studi Agama & Studi Islam di Era Kontemporer*, (Yogyakarta: IB Pustaka, 2022), h. 100.

and varied experiences, thus encompassing an expansive and historical meaning of religion.¹³

Through this open definition, the psychology of religion can provide a tangible contribution to building inclusive religious governance, as it focuses on human experience rather than the rigid doctrines defined by the state. James defines religion not as a formal doctrine that limits other definitions, but as an open concept derived from the experiences of individuals, making it universal enough to cover various religions and beliefs. Therefore, this article will analyze the essence of religion in James's psychology, why he defines it as such, and its relevance to the politics and governance of religious diversity in Indonesia. This study is strategically important for contributing to the improvement of religious governance in the country.

THE ESSENCE OF RELIGION ACCORDING TO WILLIAM JAMES

William James is regarded as both the Father of Modern Psychology¹⁴ and the Father of Religious Psychology in America. His status as a modern psychologist is established through his works, *The Principles of Psychology*, Vol. 1 and 2,¹⁵ as part of the humanistic and transpersonal schools of thought.¹⁶ His standing as a religious psychologist is based on his monumental work, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study of Human Nature*. According to Thouless, this book made the study of religious psychology popular in America at the end of the 19th century and is considered a pioneering work in the field.¹⁷ Its monumental status is evidenced by the fact that it reached its 38th printing by 1935¹⁸ and continues to be printed and studied today. Content-wise, it remains significant for its positive contribution to the understanding of human nature.¹⁹

James admitted that *The Varieties of Religious Experience* would not have been published if he had not been given the opportunity to lecture at Gifford. The book is a collection of his lectures at the *Gifford Lectures on Natural Religion* forum at Edinburgh University from 1901 to 1902. The twenty lectures were originally designed in two series of ten lectures each. The first series was descriptive, focusing on "Man's Religious Appetites," while the second was metaphysical, centered on "the satisfaction of (religious) needs through philosophy." However, James noted that due to the dynamic development

¹³ Robert W. Crapps, *Dialog Psikologi dan Agama*, p. 150-152.

¹⁴ David M Wulff, *Psychology of Religion: Classic and Contemporary*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 1997), p. 27.

¹⁵ William James, *The Principle of Psychology, Vol. 1*, (London: Macat International. Ltd, 2007).

¹⁶ Ujam Jaenudin, *Psikologi Transpersonal*, (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2012), p. 85-86.

¹⁷ Robert H. Thouless, *Pengantar Psikologi Agama*, terj. Machnun Husein, (Jakarta: Rajawali, 1992), p. 1.

¹⁸ Lihat, David M Wulff, *Psychology of Religion: Classic and Contemporary*, p. 28.

¹⁹ Walter Houston Clark, *The Psychology of Religion. An Introduction to Religious Experience and Behavior*, (New York: The MacMillan Company, cet. 9, 1968), p. 8.

of psychology, the “Man’s Religious Appetites” series eventually expanded to encompass all twenty lectures.²⁰

The twenty lectures are highly systematic and coherent. Interestingly, this was a result of an accidental event: while vacationing in the Adirondack Mountains, James got lost and fell ill. This incident gave him ample time to meticulously prepare his materials. *The Varieties of Religious Experience* spans over 500 pages and consists of 14 major topics delivered across 20 lectures. Throughout these lectures, James maintained that a broad understanding of “specific cases” makes a person wiser than possessing abstract formulas, however deep they may be. In the book, James provides concrete examples of religious experiences involving “extreme religious temperaments,” which he describes as an “acute fever.” He compiled testimonials of these extraordinary religious experiences from personal documents collected from diverse sources.²¹

James believed that the scientific method for discovering the psychological meaning of religion does not lie in logical or theoretical arguments, but in letting the experience speak for itself as expressed by the subject—as an expression of their inner life. He examined religious or spiritual experiences from reliable sources such as literature, reports, manuscripts, and documents. These sources relate to the experiences of individuals with strong personal integrity; thus, James argued they were reliable despite being inherently subjective. According to James, this subjectivity is crucial because it represents a living reality and provides psychological-religious data when processed with sound reasoning.²²

THE DEFINITION OF RELIGION IN WILLIAM JAMES’S PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION

In defining religion broadly and inclusively, James begins Lecture 2 of *The Varieties of Religious Experience* by noting the various and sometimes conflicting definitions of religion. Consequently, for James, the word “religion” cannot represent a single “principle” or “essence”; instead, it must be defined as a collective name.

James thus defines religion in its broad, all-encompassing sense as a collective name:

“the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine.”²³

²⁰ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 15.

²¹ David M Wulff, *Psychology of Religion: Classic and Contemporary*, p. 28.

²² William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 61.

²³ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 92.

“The Divine,” according to James, refers to essential god-like qualities that can encompass both personal and impersonal divinity. The Divine is characterized, first, by that which is believed to have existence and power. In this sense, James defines religion as an attitude toward whatever one considers “fundamental truth.” Second, it is that which receives a “total reaction.” A total reaction to this “fundamental truth” is religious in nature because it is not an ordinary reaction; it goes beneath the surface of existence and reaches a deep, mysterious feeling.²⁴

James’s concept of religion is essentially synonymous with “religious experience” itself. According to James, all human religious experiences, regardless of the subjects’ religious backgrounds, center on a state of mystical consciousness. This religious experience as mystical consciousness is characterized by being personal, emotional, and varied.²⁵ First, personal means religious experience is deeply private and unique to the individual. Second, emotionality means that, according to James’s documents, religious experience expresses an overflow of sentiment rather than mere thoughts about religion. James concluded that all religious systems are similar because they stem from these religious feelings. Third, variety means that religious experiences are limitless, each possessing its own uniqueness. James posits that regardless of the nature of the experience, each person persists in their own.

In Thouless’s terms, James’s definition refers to religion as it lives within the believer in society;²⁶ Zakiah Daradjat refers to it as religious consciousness and experience;²⁷ and Dister describes it as the intentional relationship of a religious human directing themselves consciously toward God.²⁸

This open definition is a contribution of religious psychology and is highly relevant for improving the politics and governance of religious diversity in Indonesia. James’s understanding of religion is not Abrahamic-centric. Because he disliked rigid, institutional-formal religious formulas, his concept focuses on the experience, internal appreciation, and spiritual behavior that are unique to an individual’s involvement with what they consider “the divine.”²⁹

²⁴ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 96-98.

²⁵ Robert W. Crapps, *Dialog Psikologi dan Agama*, p. 150-152.

²⁶ Robert H. Thouless, *Pengantar Psikologi Agama*, p. 21.

²⁷ Zakiah Daradjat, *Ilmu Jiwa Agama*, (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, cet. 17, 2015), p. 6.

²⁸ Nico Syukur Dister, *Pengalaman dan Motivasi Beragama. Pengantar Psikologi Agama*, (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1988), p. 13.

²⁹ Djam’annuri, *Ilmu Perbandingan Agama: Pengertian dan Objek Kajian*, (Yogyakarta: Kurnia Kalam Semesta, 1998), p. 36.

Besides being a psychologist, James was a Pragmatist philosopher³⁰ along with Peirce and Dewey.³¹ In a section of his book titled “Pragmatism and the Metaphysical Attributes of the Divine,” James emphasizes the link between pragmatism and the morality derived from the metaphysical attributes of the Divine. According to his pragmatism, all metaphysical attributes of the Divine are closely related to human moral life, and it is vital for humans to continue gaining knowledge about them. All divine attributes have a definite connection to practical human life.³²

For example, James argues that if humans believe the Divine is “The Most Holy” and that God does nothing but good, then humans must act with holiness and goodness. If humans believe the Divine is “All-Knowing” and sees us in the dark, then humans must behave correctly. If the Divine is believed to be “All-Just” and can punish according to His omniscience, then humans must act justly. If the Divine is “The Most Loving” and can forgive, then love must be the foundation of human life, and so on.³³ James concludes his discussion by inviting us to say a final farewell to dogmatic concepts of religion.³⁴

THE SUITABILITY OF WILLIAM JAMES’S CONCEPT FOR RELIGIOUS GOVERNANCE IN INDONESIA

Veit Bader, in his book *Secularism or Democracy? Associational Governance of Religious Diversity* (2007), outlines normative models of religious governance: (1) strong establishment, (2) weak establishment, (3) constitutional pluralism, (4) non-constitutional pluralism (NOCOP), and (5) strict separationism.

First, Strong Establishment refers to a state with one official religion or a monopolistic church, also called constitutional and/or legal establishment. This model implies administrative and political monism aimed at forming cultural-religio-national monism. Examples include Greece, Serbia, and Israel.³⁵ Second, Weak Establishment involves a weak designation of an official religion while maintaining religious freedom and pluralism. Contemporary European examples include England, Scotland, and Scandinavian countries. Third, Constitutional Pluralism (plural establishment) is a state with several official religions, such as Finland, which recognizes both the Lutheran and Orthodox

³⁰ William James, *Pragmatism, A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*, (New York: Longmans, Green, 1922).

³¹ Multin K. Munitz, *Contemporary Analytic Philosophy*, (New York: McMillan Publishing, 1952)

³² William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 574-577.

³³ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 578.

³⁴ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 578.

³⁵ Veit Bader, *Secularism or Democracy? Associational Governance of Religious Diversity*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007), p. 201

churches. This model provides constitutional recognition for more than one organized religion.³⁶

Fourth, Non-Constitutional Pluralism (NOCOP) combines constitutional dis-establishment with restricted legal pluralism, administrative institutionalization of several organized religions, institutionalized political pluralism, and the religio-cultural pluralization of the state. Fifth, Strict Separationism is the strict divide between religion and state, such as *laïcité* in France.³⁷

Based on Bader's models, Indonesia is closer to NOCOP. This is because Indonesia recognizes only six official religions with full "support" while restricting others through "neglect" of their rights. This pattern of supporting some and neglecting others is a historical reality seen in various Indonesian kingdoms and sultanates. Religions or sects close to power received legal support, while others faced neglect or repression.³⁸ However, in the relationship between religion and state—whether democratic, liberal, secular, or theocratic—the state inevitably intervenes through religious governance, including religious freedom, religious education, and missions.³⁹

In the current Indonesian context, "support" for the six official religions includes identity documents, the establishment of houses of worship, the right to associate, education, and religious holidays. Notably, Islam receives a larger portion of support, such as the legalization of Islamic laws into national and regional legislation.⁴⁰

"Neglecting" those outside the six official religions not only strips tribal religions and belief systems of their rights but also erases their identity by forcing them into official categories. Indonesia needs to adopt Bader's Constitutional Pluralism model to ensure the religious freedom of all citizens. Redefining religion using James's broad and inclusive concept is highly relevant to ensuring the freedom of religion and belief for all Indonesians.

³⁶ Veit Bader, *Secularism or Democracy?*, p. 202

³⁷ Veit Bader, *Secularism or Democracy?*, p. 203

³⁸ J. Mardimin (peny.), *Mempercapkan Relasi Agama dan Negara. Menata Ulang Hubungan Agama dan Negara di Indonesia*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2011), p. x-xv.

³⁹ Jazim Hamidi dan M. Husnu Abadi, *Intervensi Negara terhadap Negara*, (Yogyakarta: UII Press, 2001), p. 135-153.

⁴⁰ In the context of the province of Nangroe Aceh Darussalam, for example, three laws were issued that enable the region to implement Islamic law, namely: No. 44 of 1999 concerning Aceh as a Special Region; No. 18 of 2001, concerning Special Autonomy of the Province of Nangroe Aceh Darussalam, and; No. 14 of 2006 concerning the Aceh Government Law. Moch Nur Ichwan, Arskal Salim, and Eka Srimulyani, "Islam and Dormant Citizenship: Soft Religious Ethno-Nationalism and Minorities in Aceh, Indonesia", *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, tahun 2020, DOI: 10.1080/09596410.2020.1780407

THE CONTRIBUTION OF WILLIAM JAMES'S CONCEPT TO CONSTITUTIONAL PLURALISM IN INDONESIA

The narrow, Abrahamic-centric concept of religion used as a basis for policy has led to “restriction” for some and “repression” for others. Thus, it is no longer relevant as it violates Universal Human Rights and contradicts Article 29 of the Constitution. A new, essential formulation of religion as a collective name is needed to encompass Indonesia's religious diversity.

The existence of numerous organized religions, tribal religions, and belief systems clearly shows that Indonesia is an ethnically, culturally, and religiously pluralistic nation. While organized religions like Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism have clear concepts of divinity, messengers, holy books, and systematic worship, tribal religions and belief systems also have concepts of divinity, rituals, founders, and sacred references. Indonesia should consider Bader's “Constitutional or Legal Pluralism” model so that all groups receive the guarantees promised in Article 29, Paragraph 2.

The first step toward this model is replacing the narrow Abrahamic-centric policy basis with a broad understanding of religion as a collective name. William James's concept—rooted in religious psychology and pragmatism—is highly relevant here.

The relevance of James's concept is based on several key arguments: (1) religion as a human experience in relation to “the Divine,” (2) the Divine as a source of power requiring a “total reaction,” (3) religion as a personal, emotional, and varied experience, and (4) James's pragmatism which rejects dogmatic concepts.

First, religion as an individual experience in relation to the Divine. Like Abrahamic religions, tribal religions and belief systems have concepts for relating to the Divine. For example, in the Toraja *Aluk To Dolo* religion, the Divine is called “Puang Matua” (God the Creator), and they hold eschatological concepts of “Puya” (the afterlife).⁴¹ They also use rituals as a medium to relate to the Divine. Belief systems use “meditation” (*semedi/samadi*) to connect with God, while tribal religions have rituals like the Toraja *Rambu Solok* funeral ceremony.⁴²

Second, the Divine as a power requiring a “total reaction.” The concept of God is not exclusive to Abrahamic faiths. Adherents of tribal religions and belief systems also hold firm to the power of the Divine and provide a “total reaction” through offerings,

⁴¹ Roni Ismail, “Ritual Kematian dalam Agama Asli Toraja ‘Aluk To Dolo’”, p. 89-90.

⁴² Roni Ismail, “Ritual Kematian dalam Agama Asli Toraja ‘Aluk To Dolo’”, p. 91-93.

sacrifices, and solemn worship. The *Rambu Solok* ceremony is a “total reaction” to honor “Puang Matua,” where people are willing to spend vast sums of money.⁴³

Third, religion as a personal, emotional, and varied experience. James’s three characteristics—personal (unique to the individual), emotional (filled with feeling), and variety (limitless and unique)—are open and inclusive.⁴⁴ These are not Abrahamic-centric and thus can accommodate tribal religions and belief systems.

Fourth, James’s pragmatism calls for an end to dogmatic religion. By focusing on the practical consequences of divine attributes, we see that all religions teach similar virtues like love and compassion. Thus, rigid dogmatic conceptualizations are no longer relevant to Indonesia’s sociological and psychological context. We must end the dogmatic concept of religion⁴⁵ and replace it with an open collective name.

In conclusion, the Abrahamic-centric concept is no longer relevant for Indonesia’s pluralistic governance. Indonesia should move toward Constitutional or Legal Pluralism using James’s open definition. This would: first, fulfill the rights of all citizens; second, restore the dignity of Article 29 of the 1945 Constitution, supporting national stability; and third, allow the state to act as a “Motherland” (*Ibu Pertiwi*) that treats all its children with justice and compassion regarding their religious rights.

CONCLUSION

William James defines the concept of religion based on pragmatist philosophy and the psychology of religion, rather than in a dogmatic sense that involves aspects such as a personal God, holy scriptures, systematic worship, and messengers (Prophets). Instead, James defines religion as a religious experience that is personal, emotional, and diverse, occurring in an individual’s encounter with what they perceive as “the Divine.” James’s pragmatism emphasizes the importance of emulating the metaphysical attributes of “the Divine” through concrete actions or morality, rather than mere dogma. James’s understanding or concept of religion is non-dogmatic and is not oriented toward Abrahamic religions, making it broad, all-encompassing, or functioning as a collective name.

This concept of religion in William James’s psychology of religion is highly relevant for application in the governance of religious diversity in Indonesia, which still follows the NOCOP model. James’s concept of religion as a human experience in relating to “the Divine”—the belief that “the Divine” possesses power and evokes a total human reaction, that religion is a personal, emotional, and varied experience for every individual,

⁴³ Roni Ismail, “Ritual Kematian dalam Agama Asli Toraja ‘Aluk To Dolo’”, p. 90.

⁴⁴ Robert W. Crapps, *Dialog Psikologi dan Agama*, p. 22

⁴⁵ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 578.

and that the metaphysical attributes of “the Divine” must have implications for moral action—is broad and covers all religions and belief systems. These characteristics are not exclusively held by Abrahamic religions. Thus, by adopting James’s concept of religion, Indonesia can shift from the NOCOP religious diversity governance toward Constitutional Pluralism or Legal Pluralism.

Under the Constitutional Pluralism model of religious diversity governance, all religions embraced by Indonesian citizens—including the six official religions, unofficial religions, local/tribal religions, and belief systems—would be guaranteed the right to practice their faith and worship, as well as access to education and other administrative rights. The dignity of Article 29, Paragraphs 1 and 2 of the 1945 Constitution would be restored, enabling the motherland to act justly toward all its people. This would also contribute to the stability of the nation, which remains prone to conflict, by ensuring that the rights to religion and belief for all citizens are guaranteed both *de jure* and, most importantly, *de facto*.

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RELIGI

JURNAL STUDI AGAMA-AGAMA

Prodi Studi Agama-Agama
Fakultas Ushuluddin dan Pemikiran Islam
UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta

