

**Eco-theological Construction of Waste Management
in the Rebot Church Congregation, Kupang City, East Nusa Tenggara**

**Konstruksi Ekoteologis dalam Pengelolaan Sampah
pada Jemaat Gereja Rebot di Kota Kupang, Nusa Tenggara Timur**

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the social construction process of eco-theology-based waste management among the Rebot church congregation in Kupang City, East Nusa Tenggara. This study uses the phenomenological method, especially Berger and Luckmann's theory on the social construction of reality. The results of the study indicate that there is a relationship between waste management and the congregation's beliefs, where the congregation interprets waste management activities as a form of obedience to God. As servants of Allah, humans must be able to overcome waste as one of the social problems of society, by turning waste into "bread". Waste is seen as a challenge to human beings; if it can be managed wisely, it can be a blessing that is beneficial to life. Waste management activities in the congregation are the result of social construction that occurs through three dialectical phases. The externalization phase is marked by various products of waste management activities by the congregation, such as managing waste through waste banks, sorting waste, utilizing waste into compost, forming waste volunteers, and reducing the use of single-use plastic waste. The phase of objectivation occurs when the products of waste management activities that occur in the externalization phase undergo a reification process. The product of activity then undergoes institutionalization and is strengthened by the presence of religious legitimacy. The phase of internalization occurs when the procession of re-absorption of various waste management activity products of the congregations that have been objectivated, into the structures of subjective awareness.

Keywords: *phenomenology, ecotheology, externalization, objectivation, internalisation*



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INTRODUCTION

Ecological crises all over the world have raised a call to everybody to start working together and caring for the natural environment. In theology, this is called the ecotheological approach (Chibuye & Buitendag, 2020). The main focus of this ecotheological approach is on human beliefs and spiritual practices on one side, and its implication and interaction between humans and nature on the other side (Johnson, 2018). The main characteristics of God are kindness, fairness, love, and affection, so human interaction with other living beings must reflect these characteristics of God (Warners, 2021).

A dominant approach that has been carried out to overcome environmental problems nowadays is of a conventional and secular nature. This is not easy to be accepted and practiced by the Indonesian community, who are well known as religious people. Therefore, there needs to be another approach that is more appropriate to use, that is a religious approach (Mangunjaya, 2007). Besides, the religious values themselves are intrinsically very relevant to maintaining the balance of nature in this ecological crisis situation (Nasr, 2020).

One of the great threats to the environment that happens to humans is waste production. According to the risk rating agency “*Verisk Maplecroft*”, the trend of world waste production mostly comes from foods, plastics, and other dangerous waste, which reach 2.1 billion tons per year (Smith, 2019). This shows that plastic waste has become a serious environmental problem. Since the plastic product was first commercialized, these durable and comfortable goods have resulted in dependency and addiction that absorbs the entire life of modern society and its infrastructure (George, 2020). Reliance on plastic-based goods has produced an abundance of plastic waste all over the world. Consumerism habits and bad waste management practices also have made plastic waste problems more complex.

Lau et al. (2020) in a publication entitled *Evaluating Scenarios Toward Zero Plastic Pollution* released that as much as 1.3 billion tons of plastic waste will pollute the world in 2040 if no real actions by the world population are taken to overcome this problem. According to ‘*Our World in Data*’ (in Ritchie & Roser, 2020), most world plastic waste comes from Asia. China is the biggest contributor country of mismanaged plastic waste (around 28% of the total global production), followed by Indonesia (10%), the Philippines and Vietnam (around 6%), and Thailand (around 3.2%). Other leading countries include Egypt (around 3%), Nigeria (around 2.7%), and South Africa (around 2%). This uncontrollable plastic waste endangers the ecosystem, causing degradation of habitat quality, biodiversity, and food security, and there is even an increase in the mortality rate of various types of animals (Vallero, 2019; Welden, 2020).

Such environmental problems as this waste cannot be solved simply by taking insights from anthropocentrism. It must come from the theological awareness. The ecotheological approach views that environmental ethics is not only a matter of life and death, but it must also consider the conditions and carrying capacity of the environment for the benefit of current and future generations. For that reason, all religions are required to play an important role in preserving and caring for the ecological and socio-economic life that is important to the community.

In this regard, the role of religious authorities is very much needed to raise awareness and mobilize the participation of religious communities in overcoming the waste problem (Atiemo, 2018). For example, waste management that is based on Islamic law is actually the implementation of the three-principle *qawaid fihiyyah* which includes *Tauhid* (the singleness of Allah), *Khilafah* (human representative), and *Amanah* (trust). These three principles are pillars of environmental ethics in Islam (Samori et al., 2018). At the practical level, research by Abdul Fatah et al. (2013) shows how this kind of awareness that is based on Islamic ethics has given birth to the phenomenon of changing the paradigm of society in Potorono Village in managing waste using the 3 R (reuse, reduce, recycle). This waste management method is carried out through the shodaqoh program and buying-and-selling waste. Furthermore, research by Sukiati (2019) describes waste management at Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Sumatera Utara. This research applied three approaches, namely the Islamic theological approach, the moral and character approach, and the social approach in waste management. The theological approach stresses that waste management must be conducted with the belief that it is all on religious orders. The character approach sees that caring for the environment including managing waste is a reflection of a good character. The social approach sees that waste is not something to be ignored, but it must be managed together in an integrated way.

Likewise, Christians also have a responsibility to serve with a conscience for the people's welfare. Therefore, the Christian community is required to stop environmental pollution by irresponsible persons for God's creation (Mwambazambi, 2011). Moreover, churches can become an important instrument in enabling the congregation to have faith and encourage them to be aware of the environment as a divine mandate, through various programs and sermons related to environment management (Maseno, 2021). Research by Ahfia Ban (2019) describes how the church in Ghana is involved in dealing with waste management which is one of the biggest problems in the country. They build a theology of stewardship by advocating a change of attitudes toward God's creation, by committing to tackle the waste problem in Ghana.

The ecotheological approach described above is also very relevant to tackling waste problems in Kupang City, Nusa Tenggara Timur, which still cannot be managed well. Nowadays, the waste product in Kupang City reaches 200-250 tons a day. Kupang City only has a final processing site (landfill), namely the Alak landfill. Waste management in the Alak landfill uses an open dumping method. This is one of the worst methods in waste management. The waste produced by the community in Kupang City is just piled up in the landfill without further processing. The open dumping method certainly results in environmental destruction, such as polluting the soiled water, polluting air, destroying the view, causing bad smells around the landfill area, and other negative impacts. Therefore, there need to be new methods to tackle waste problems, one of which is intermediate waste processing facilities so that the waste that is thrown into the landfill is only a residue, meaning this waste cannot be processed further in the intermediate waste processing facilities.

In relation to this, it is very interesting to understand the role played by the church *Gereja Masehi Injil in Timor* (JMIT) Rehobot Bakunase Klasis Kupang City (later on called Rehobot Church), which is one of the religious institutions for Christians in Kupang City. Rehobot Church has practiced ecological-based waste management by establishing a waste bank and plastic waste volunteers. Actions to manage waste are based on the religious values pioneered by Rehobot Church. It is one of the very good approaches to handle waste problems in Kupang City

In order to explain the role of Rehobot Church, this writer sees not only how the ecological-based waste management is carried out as it was in the past, but it also focuses on the meaning of the subject, especially to see how the subject's ecotheologic constructing process is in managing waste based on religious values. Various values, norms, and other things that affect the individual church congregation of Rehobot Church in Kupang City are the stock of knowledge, which influences them to behave naturally in the social world. The stock of knowledge will become a basis for each individual church member of Rehobot Church of Kupang City to interpret anything happening around them before they take action related to waste management. Therefore, this research focuses on how the social construction process of waste management which is based on eco-theology is carried out among the congregation of Rehobot Church, in which the stock of knowledge they own becomes the basis for action. This research gives new insight into ecotheological values in managing waste, including an in-depth dialectical study on the following aspects: externalization, objectivity, and internalization, which are established by the congregation of Rehobot Church. The problem formulation of the research is how the process of ecotheological construction happens to the congregation of Rehobot Church of Kupang City when managing waste. The purpose of the research is to find out the process of ecotheological construction in the congregation of Rehobot Church when managing waste.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to understand and express a research reality based on the research subjects' perspectives, this research used a phenomenological method. According to Schutz (in Creswell & Poth, 2017), phenomenology studies how actors in society describe their daily world, and how an individual with his awareness constructs the meaning of an interaction process between individuals.

The theory of social construction from Berger and Luckmann becomes an analysis instrument in this research to analyze the phenomenon of theological-based waste management among the congregation of Rehobot Church. Berger and Luckmann's view on social construction is the basis for finding the relationship between social conditions and knowledge. According to Berger and Luckmann, in order to understand a unique reality of a society well, it is necessary to find out first how reality is formed (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). The social construction process stresses a dialectic process in which an individual creates society, and in turn, the society creates an individual. This dialectic process happens through three stages, namely externalization, objectivation, and internalization. They are three social

construction processes that happen continuously in society (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). The social construction view stresses that human is a product of a society where there is an objective social world that forms individuals in society.

The data collection technique used in this research was carried out by in-depth interviews, participative observation, and document tracing. Subjects in this research were determined using a purposive method in which the subjects were chosen based on a certain purpose, namely depending on the capability of the actors that were interviewed in order to articulate their life experiences. The research subjects were the congregation and leaders of Gereja Rehobot. The research location was Rehobot Church of Bakunase in Kupang City.

The data analyses technique used in this phenomenological study are as follows: (1) the researcher digs deeply into the phenomenon experienced by the research subjects, (2) the researcher looks for statements (from the interview) about how the subjects understand their experience in managing ecotheological-based waste. The detailed statements are treated equally, and then they are developed without repetition. (3) the research statements are then grouped into meaningful units, and the researcher details the units and writes an explanation text about the experience by giving a careful example. (4) Furthermore, the researcher reflects his thoughts using an imaginative variation and structural description, and then finds out the possible overall meaning through divergent perspectives and considers the frame of reference of the phenomena, and later on carries out the construction of how these phenomena happen. (5) Finally, the researcher constructs the overall explanation of the meanings and the essence of the experience (Farid & Adib, 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Profile of Rehobot Church

The congregations of Gereja Masehi Injil di Timor (GMIT) Rehobot Bakunase Klasis of Kupang City live in the Village of Bakunase, Kota Raja District, Kupang City, Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT). Rehobot Church was officially opened on May 1, 1955. Previously there was a church, Betel Kuatae Church (Congregation), Kupang, which was officially opened in 1910. The name Rehobot was given based on the environmental nature around the people's place which has 5 water sources, namely Oenunu, Labat, Amnesi, Oepul Oelusapi, and Air Sagu which all flow into "penjarum" (the well of relief). Nowadays the congregation of the Rehobot Church amounts to 3000s, consisting of 780 heads of families. The composition of the Daily Rehobot Congregational Council consists of Pastor Yuliana Bani-Banunu, STh as the Chairman of the Council, Pastor Yerry Y. Hawu, STh as the Vice Chairman, Pastor Thersia Salu-Ratu Nubi as the Vice Chairman I, Pastor Paulus Lani as the Vice Chairman II, and Pastor Jotje Adoe as the Vice Chairman III.

As a form of concern for the waste problem in Kupang City, in 2019 Rehobot Waste Bank was established, initiated by Pastor Yerry Y. Hawu. This Rehobot waste bank has made Rehobot Church the only church in Kupang City that has a waste bank. In addition to establishing a waste bank, on September 22, 2020, Rehobot Church also formed plastic waste volunteers, which was directly opened by the Vice Mayor of Kupang City, Jefri Riwu Kore. The inauguration of 138 plastic waste volunteers from Rehobot Church took place in the churchyard. The plastic waste volunteer organization was established to overcome the plastic waste problem, a kind of non-biodegradable waste that can be found plenty in Kupang City.

Social Construction Process of Ecotheological-based Waste Management

This study on ecotheological-based waste is an effort to find out the importance of the interpretation of the Rehobot Congregation in managing the environment, especially waste management in Kupang City. The congregation's behavior in managing waste is an externalization process from what they have known about the waste itself. This knowledge is based on their daily experience. The sociological analysis to see the congregation's behavior in managing waste must start from understanding the social reality and their interpretation for managing the waste itself. This research views social construction as a foundation to look for its relationship between the congregation knowledge and the condition of ecotheological-based waste management. In order to understand fully the various realities of ecotheological-based waste management, the researcher is trying to understand how the realities are formed.

The social construction process of ecotheological-based waste management in the Rehobot Church congregation happens through three dialectical stages, namely externalization, objectivation, and internalization. The three ecological construction processes last continuously in the Rehobot Church congregation. The externalization process stresses that human is a product of a society in which there is an objective social world that has formed an individual. In this research context, the interpretation of ecotheological-based waste management in the Rehobot Church congregation can be called as a social reality that occurs from the dialectical process in society. For example, the Rehobot Church congregation interprets waste as “bread”, which is part of their belief since it has a benefit value, which can be seen from the interview with Pastor YH, a waste volunteer of Rehobot Church congregation. He said that:

“In the Bible, there is a popular verse that can change a stone into bread... It is indeed a test or a trial that is given by the devil to Jesus in the arid desert, and Jesus was hungry because he had fasted for 40 days. Jesus was tempted by the devil, who offered him facility so that Jesus would use his power as God’s son and the devil said “because you are God’s son, change the stone into bread, you can do it because you have power. However, Jesus gave us a good example, humans live not just for bread, we also need to be obedient to Allah’s word and that is the most important thing. When people are obedient to Allah’s word, whatever problem or challenges can be overcome or managed. That is the background of theological thinking, changing a stone into bread, and we interpret stone as waste. Waste is our challenge, we will use that spirit to encourage pastors, especially society or congregation, that waste that we consider a problem and our inability to tackle waste around us can actually be converted into bread, or something that is useful. This underlies our spirit to encourage the congregation, whether they are Christians, Catholics, or Islam, to see that the waste problem is part of our responsibility as religious people in society. That is the tagline background of “waste becomes bread”, waste that we throw away can become *rupiah* (money). If people can think of that, the waste problem will be able to be solved (YH, Pembina Relawan Sampah, 10/9/2021).

The Rehobot Church congregation interprets waste management as part of their beliefs as Christian-Protestant followers. In their view, obedience to Allah’s word is something that is very important in the world. This can be represented in various activities of waste management, by changing waste into bread. Waste that is something dirty, smells bad, and has no value can become something useful that has an economic value. Good and proper management of waste is considered a way for a servant of God to be responsible to handle various social problems.

Externalization Process

The result of activities practiced by the Rehobot Church congregation in Kupang City is an expression of their socio-cultural world. This expression which is done continuously in their daily life is a dialectical result of their stock of knowledge and their daily experience. Various products of activities in managing waste can be seen from physical as well as mental activities. According to them, managing waste correctly and properly is a form of their obedience to Allah’s word. With the tagline “change waste into bread” the congregation become used to waste management activities in order to overcome waste problems which have become one of the social problems that are faced by people in Kupang City. Various forms of activities of waste management become self-expression of the congregation, showing their existence which is in harmony with nature as social beings as well individual beings. This certainly cannot be separated from others’ help and the environmental influence in carrying out aspects of life.

The externalization process was formed by the congregation as a form of waste management activities that have been carried out continuously based on subjective interpretation. The reality of waste management that we can see every day is not merely a spontaneous and unintentional occurrence. All forms of externalizations that are seen in the congregation’s daily lives is a very meaningful decision for them. The Rehobot Church congregations think, select and decide what actions that can and cannot be done. Therefore, the externalization process is not a spontaneous action, but it is a very careful action based on the stock of knowledge the congregation owns.

One of the main programs of the Rehobot Church to overcome waste problems is establishing a waste bank. The waste bank managed by the church caretaker was first established at the end of 2019. The waste bank was established in order to make people wiser in managing their waste. With the availability of a waste bank, the waste produced by the congregation, whether it is from the household or the church, will not be directly thrown into the landfill. Moreover, at this time Kupang City has owned a landfill, Alak. Therefore, with the availability of the waste bank managed by the Rehobot Church, some of the waste can be processed in the waste bank; thus, not all waste is thrown into the landfill.

Besides that, the church that takes part in solving the waste problems also makes its congregation more interested in participating. In the past, they did not care about waste problems, but now they are proactive to help the church and the government to overcome waste problems. In general, they become accustomed to various activities of waste management. They also become more friendly with the environment, such as avoiding throwing away waste anywhere. However, it is undeniable that there are still some congregations who still don't care about the waste problems, although the number is relatively smaller.

Since the church administrator set up a waste bank, the congregation also becomes used to doing activities of sorting waste according to the types of waste. Waste selection activities are carried out by the congregations by classifying as well as separating waste according to the types and nature of the waste. This sorting makes it easier for the waste bank management to do the recycling process. Furthermore, sorting waste is also aimed to make the congregation aware of the proper action to manage the produced household waste, such as organic waste which can be used by some congregations to be processed to become fertilizers. It is a fact that some congregations are still not accustomed to doing waste sorting activities. As a matter of fact, some still throw away waste anywhere. As can be seen from the interview with SD, a housewife who says:

“Lack of awareness from the public, although a lot of waste bins are provided by the government. They still do not care about sorting and throwing waste into the right place. It might need more socialization in the community, in schools, and among the youth, in order to increase their awareness. It is also necessary to carry out activities of waste management to make something valuable, such as turning organic waste into fertilizers or to conduct training of converting waste into crafts” (SD, Bakunase, 10/9/2021)

From the research results, the researcher can see that there are still many congregations that do not care about environmental problems, especially about waste. In spite of that, there are some who have a big concern for waste problems. In the Rehobot Church congregation, there are some youths who are very pro-active towards waste issues. This can be seen from some people who are voluntarily forming plastic waste volunteers. The aim of the establishment of plastic waste volunteer is to help the church to overcome waste in Kupang City. In the interview, EM, a volunteer, says that:

“For me, managing waste well is a worship... I joined the waste volunteer because I want to do something useful for other people. By joining the waste volunteer, I can help solve waste problems around the neighborhood. Besides, I can make use of waste which so far has been considered useless, by turning it into something useful for other people. For example, we have a waste bank. The waste which has so far been dumped anywhere can now be converted into savings, thanks to the waste bank. Although it may not be much, at least this activity can give a solution to the waste problems around us, especially for the Rehobot congregation”. (EM, Relawan Sampah, 19/9/2021)

From the results of the interview, the research can find out that the congregations' awareness to overcome waste problems in Kupang City is already satisfying, especially for the youth of the Rehobot Church. By joining the plastic waste volunteers they can certainly contribute directly to overcoming waste problems in Kupang City. Besides, the volunteers are required to help the church administrator to manage the waste bank, such as socializing it to the church congregation to become customers of the waste bank, learning how to recycle waste, and, as active agents, campaigning for environmentally-friendly behavior. One of the activities that finally becomes a habit of the youth Rehobot Church congregations is an effort to reduce the use of once-used plastic. Reducing once-used plastic waste will certainly become one of the most effective efforts to reduce the use of plastic waste.

Objectivation Process

Objectivation process starts from the congregation's ability to express themselves, which is transformed into various activities of waste management that are based on ecotheological values, which in turn the various products of the activities more or less can last long from the subjective processes, so that it is possible that the objectivation process can be used until the face-to-face situation (when the pandemic is over), where the congregations can understand it directly.

Objectivation process in the context of waste management that is carried out by the Rehobot Church congregation at first happened because of the waste management activity carried out by the Rehobot

church administrator. Then this ecotheological-based waste management happening in the objectivation process becomes a habit and it undertakes an institutionalization process. In the interview, pastor YH, the vice chairman of the Rehobot Church congregation, says that:

“Initially, the waste management activity was carried out as an effort to solve the social problem in society of Kupang City, especially in the area around the Rehobot Church, Bakunase region and its surrounding. Besides the community, the church also produces waste every day, we use paper, packaged drinks, when there is an activity in the church. We all certainly produce waste. For that, we must also be responsible for the waste that we produce. That is the reason we (the church administrator) took an initiative to manage the waste as a form of our responsibility for the problem that we have created”. (YH, vice chairman of the assembly, 19/9/2021)

In the view of social construction theory, various activities in the objectivation moments will undergo a process of habituation, namely a process when a rational action has become a part of their daily life. The institutionalization process of waste management activities that are based on eco-theology occurs because of the habitation and waste management activities initiated by the Rehobot Church administrators. Pastors, assembly, church administrators, and congregations continuously carry out activities of waste management so that this becomes a certain pattern. In turn, the community has a new habit of waste management. If previously the congregations do not care about waste problems that are produced every day, now they become more responsible by carrying out various waste management activities, such as sorting waste according to types, do not litter, converting waste into compost, reducing once-used plastics, and even become plastic waste volunteers.

In time, the activities of waste management by the Rehobot Church congregations will form a habitation pattern that becomes a foundation for other congregations to carry out waste management activities in the future by using similar methods. In the process of habitation carried out by the congregations, it is possible that there might be innovations that will take place in the future. The waste management activities that have undergone a habitation process will then become an institution. The institutionalization process happens when various activities that have become habitation for various types of Rehobot congregations have undergone typification. Each typification will form an institution, where various activities of waste management carried out by the congregations have become a habitation in the form of institutions that belong to them together. This means that the typification of waste management carried out by the congregations are available for all members, and these institutions typify individuals and activities of waste management that are carried out.

The typification happening to the Rehobot Church congregations do not occur automatically, but it happens diachronically. Institutions also control the Rehobot Church congregations by forming behavior patterns. These are the patterns that are attached and later on they control the institutionalization. It means that the waste management activity segment by the church congregations that have been institutionalized has been placed under social control.

Various activities of waste management which at the beginning were a social form that was attached later on are considered as “given” that can no longer be changed, and any activity of waste management to be carried out by the congregations will be based on the experience of waste management with ecotheological values experienced previously. The objectivation process happens when various activities of waste management by the congregations that have been externalized have become objective. Thus, the objectivation process is a collection of mental and physical activities in waste management that is based on eco-theology by the Rehobot Church congregations in the form of external facticity. Therefore, the institutional world can be said as various activities of waste management based on ecotheological values by the congregations that have been objectified.

The institutionalization process in the context of waste management carried out by the Rehobot Church congregations can become an objectivation when it is reified. Reification happens when various human activities are not considered human products, and they seem to be natural facts or manifestations of divine will. This also applies to the phenomenon of waste management by the Rehobot Church congregations; the product of the activities seems to be a fact happening beyond their control. The reification process implies that human beings can forget the fact if they construct the human world, so that the world that is reified is no longer the human world and becomes a foreign facticity, and it is beyond their activity product.

In the process of institutionalization, in spite of the various theological-based waste management activities, which in reality have undergone an institutionalization process that tends to last long, in fact, institutionalization is an unstable process. Various activities of waste management that are ecotheological-based that have undergone institutionalization also have a tendency to experience institutional dismantling. Therefore, the institutionalization process must be strengthened with a legitimacy process which is the second stage of objectivation. Legitimacy functions to make institutionalized objectivation become subjectively reasonable and objectively available. The ecotheological construction in waste management created socially by the Rehobot Church congregations is very vulnerable because its existence is threatened by various interests. Thus, legitimacy has an important position in an effort to maintain the various activities of ecotheological-based waste management.

In the context of waste management carried out by the Rehobot Church congregations in Kupang City, the legitimacy process is strengthened with the belief of the Christian-Protestants. The Christian-Protestant religion is a very effective instrument to maintain various activities of waste management that have been institutionalized. Religious legitimacy effectively strengthens the social world that has been established by the congregations.

This perspective stresses that religion can legitimate social institutions by giving a valid ontological status, in which religions can put institutions into the sacred and cosmic frame of reference. Therefore, the historical constructions and activities of waste management that are practiced by the Rehobot Church congregations can be seen from the highest point that can transcend history as well as human beings. Something that can transcend legitimizes various activities that have been institutionalized. This view is strengthened by the results of an interview with MM, the owner of Mutiara Timor waste bank, who says:

“Religion has a very big power to change human behavior. We know that the waste problem is a problem of human behavior since they like littering and never managed it wisely. Therefore, religion plays an important role in changing human behavior. As we know, religious leaders who give an appeal will be listened to by the community more, compared to the one given by the government. Sometimes the government’s appeal is obeyed out of compulsion, but if it is given by religious leaders, like pastors and clerics, they will listen more.” (MM, Maulafa, 21/10/2021)

This view explains that the strongest legitimacy can be seen from the institutional setting that can be seen directly reflecting as well as realizing the divine structure, that is the concept of the relationship between community and cosmos as a representation between micro cosmos and macro cosmos. Something that happens in the world has a correlation with power in the sky. Therefore, it can be said that when the congregations carry out activities of waste management that have undergone an institutionalization process or have been objectivated, they not only create a social reality but also participate in establishing their obedience to Allah.

Activities of managing ecotheological-based waste that has been constructed by the Rehobot Church congregations in Kupang City are interpreted as their obedience to Allah. The interpretation of “converting waste into bread” is a form of religious legitimacy on waste management activities carried out by the congregations. Their obedience to Allah is represented in their behavior to be able to manage waste wisely. Wise waste management is carried out by keeping the environment clean and free from waste, sorting waste into its types, managing waste banks, and even becoming plastic waste volunteers. Therefore, any kind of waste management activity can be interpreted as channels used by the divine cosmos power to interfere with human life. Church leaders are also an extension of the divine cosmos power in the world.

Finally, religious legitimacy has a very big power to strengthen a social reality. The ecotheological values taught in the Rehobot Church as a religious institution become a source of religious legitimacy that is able to connect realities defined by humans with a fully universal and sacred reality. In this stage, various ecotheological constructions born by the Rehobot Church which are vulnerable and temporary have obtained resolution and permanent stability.

Internalization Process

The internalization process in the context of ecotheological-based waste management in the Rehobot Church congregations happens through their world understanding as an interpretation of social fact.

After going through this internalization process each individual becomes a member of society. The internalization process occurs when the Rehobot Church congregations absorb the ecotheological-based waste management and transform it into objective world structures. The internalization process is carried out in a mechanism known as socialization. The socialization process in the context of theological-based waste management in the Rehobot Church congregations happens through two stages, namely primary socialization occurring during childhood, and secondary socialization occurring later.

Internalization is a lifelong process, and it is practiced continuously through the socialization process. In the context of the congregation's life, future generations will imitate the various behaviors of other significant people such as parents, teachers, and close relatives in managing waste. The activities carried out by the congregations will naturally be embedded in the children's minds, and this becomes a stream of experiences, where continuous experiences will be collected to form knowledge. This will be used by the children as a reference in their daily activities. Therefore, the behaviors of the congregations when managing household waste that they have produced every day will be imitated by their children. As can be seen from the interview with KD, who says:

“My kid is very happy. He is even the most eager to sort waste and change it to the waste bank. Kids around here, since there is a waste bank seldom litter, they even collect it if they find any. Those who litter are usually adults, small kids are more responsive when they are informed. Furthermore, they are also taught to love the environment at school.” (KD, Bakunase, 19/9/2021)

From the results of the interview, the researcher can describe that the children of the Rehobot Church congregations little by little become used to being friendly with the environment. The activities of managing waste carried out by influential people repeatedly in the end will form a habit followed by children. This internalization process in children is what is called by Berger “primary socialization.” The internalization process in the first stage happens because of an identification effort. Children of the Rehobot Church congregations experience an internalization process by accepting the role and the behavior of the influential people so that it becomes their own role. By internalizing the roles of parents, teachers, and close relatives, these children are able to identify themselves, so they gain a coherent and logical subjective identity. Because of that, these children become an entity that reflects the roles and behaviors of influential people toward their self-entity. The primary socialization that happens to the congregations' children creates a bigger abstraction awareness that can be seen from the roles and the behaviors of the influential people, in this case, parents, teachers, and close relatives compared to the roles and behaviors in general.

In the first socialization stage, the socialization process in the Rehobot Church congregations' children does not face a significant challenge. This happens because the children of the Rehobot Church congregations have not been able to reject the various values held by influential people such as parents, teachers, and close relatives. The internalization processes these children gain happens quasi-automatically from influential people. Therefore, various values adopted by parents, teachers, and close relatives in the first socialization stage will be firmly entrenched in the children's consciousness, compared to the values that they will gain in the further internalization process.

In the context of waste management carried out by the congregations, secondary socialization is conducted very strongly by the religious institution, namely the Rehobot Church. The socialization carried out by the Rehobot Church through its administrators, especially the pastors, will influence the behavior of its congregations. Since the waste management program through the waste bank was established, the behavior patterns and activities of the people little by little change. In the end, the habit of waste management that is influenced by ecotheology is formed strongly as a result of waste management activities that have been carried out continuously and strengthened by a religious institution so that it becomes an institutionalized custom. In the interview, SD, a church congregation, says:

“Various programs of waste management that are carried out by the church and the government have certainly helped us to be more aware of the importance of keeping the environment clean. Concerning socialization, at that time the government and the church carried out socialization on waste banks and also training on making compost from our household waste. We were happy, at last, we learned how to make use of waste, besides converting it into fertilizer, we can also convert waste to become savings. They said we can take it anytime we need, such as for school fees for our children. Nowadays we have become accustomed to sorting waste. In the past, we burnt our waste, or sometimes we threw it away

into a waste container, although there was only one container in this area, on the street. Finally, the waste accumulated and sometimes produced a bad smell. Usually, it was taken every morning by the waste officer, but still, it was very disturbing, especially when the waste officer did not turn up. Now we have become accustomed to becoming wiser in managing waste, even sorting waste has become our habit. If we don't do it, we feel there is something wrong. (SD, Bakunase, 19/9/2021)

From the interview above it can be described that the success of secondary socialization on wise waste management is very much influenced by the church institution that takes part in helping the government to tackle waste problems in Kupang City, especially in the area around the Rehobot Church. The success of socialization certainly very much depends on a symmetrical relationship between the community's objective world and the individual subjective world. Therefore, the internalization process in the church congregations can be said to be isolated totally, when the meaning of ecotheological-based waste management can objectively enter the subjective world of its congregations. Socialization will probably fail if there is a high asymmetrical level where each individual is not able to accept minimally the most important meaning of ecotheological-based waste management that is constructed by the church congregations, causing the congregations unable to maintain the ecotheological-based waste management. As a result, there will be deinstitutionalization in the habit of ecotheological-based waste management.

As a result, primary socialization will also fail when the influential people carry out internalization of the objective fact differently to the individual child of the congregation. If the congregations' children find different roles and activities among the influential people, some of whom are ignorant with waste problems and do littering, such gap will influence the children's knowledge and social reality. The construction model of ecotheology in managing waste in the Rehobot Church congregations, Kupang City, can be seen in the following figure.

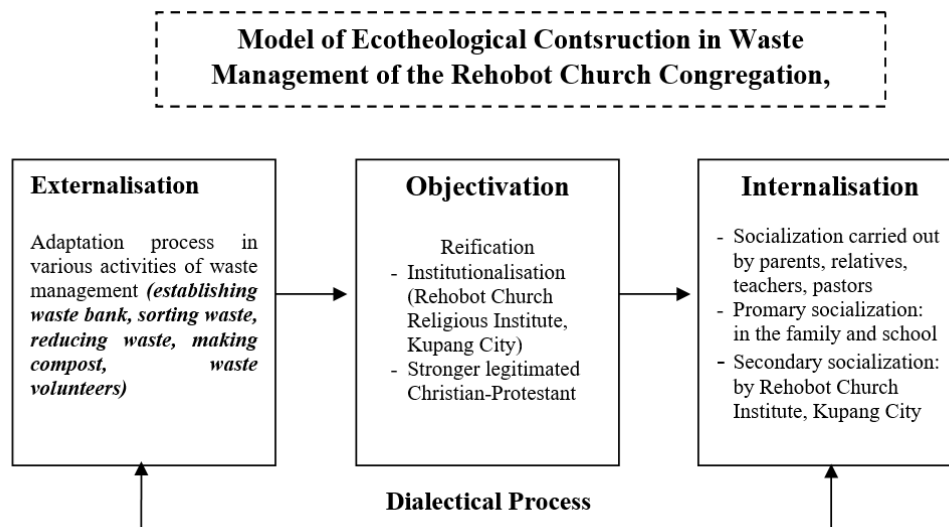


Figure 1. Model of Ecotheological Construction in Waste Management. **Source:** Researcher's modification from the Social Construction Theory by Berger and Luckmann

CONCLUSION

This study aims to find out the process of the social construction of ecotheological-based waste management in the Rehobot Church congregation. The results of the research show that there is a correlation between waste management and the congregation's beliefs, in that the congregations interpret activities of waste management as a form of their obedience to Allah. As God's servants, humans must be able to overcome waste, one of the community's social problems, by converting waste to become bread. Waste is considered a challenge by humans, and if it can be managed well, it can become a blessing that is beneficial for life.

The congregation's waste management activities are the results of social construction occurring through three dialectical phases. The externalization phase started with the commitment of the Rehobot Church of Kupang City to participate in overcoming various community social problems, one of which is the

waste management problem in Kupang City which cannot be solved up to now. This problem has triggered the church management through church leaders and church administrators to make efforts to carry out activities to overcome the waste problem. The essence of the externalization phase is how the individual congregation of the Rehobot Church in Kupang City is encouraged to be able to adapt themselves to their sociocultural life in the form of waste management activities which are influenced by their own stock of knowledge. Various waste management activities are carried out by the congregations such as managing waste with a waste bank, sorting waste, converting waste into compost, forming waste volunteers, and reducing once-used plastic waste. In the end, the various products of activities is attended by the congregation continuously so that they become a habit.

The objectivation process happens when the products of waste management activities in the externalization process can last long in the objective processes, which finally undergo an institutionalization process. The institutionalizing comes from a habitual process of various activities of waste management carried out by the congregations. Every activity of waste management that is carried out repeatedly will become a pattern that will be followed in the future. The institutionalization itself according to Berger has a real nature or historical and objective fact. The objectivation process carried out by the congregation happens when the waste management activities that are carried out continuously gain an objective nature. The product of the activities undertakes an institutionalization through a reification means. The waste management process by the Rehobot Church congregation has undergone an institutionalization process (objectivation level 1), strengthened by religious legitimacy. Religious legitimacy functions to form an objectivation of “first-level” which has been institutionalized, to become objectively available and subjectively logical.

The internalization process happens when there is an absorption process of the various activity products of waste management by the congregation which has been objectivated into the subjective awareness structure. The internalization process starts from the socialization process about waste management by significant people and is strengthened by absorbing various products of waste management activities which are continuously internalized through the church. In the end, it can be said that the social construction of waste management carried out by the Rehobot Church congregation through the three dialectical processes, namely externalization, objectivation, and internalization occurs simultaneously.

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