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**The Church as an Ecological Community: Olang Mangsari Festival and the Evangelical Christian Church
in Timor (GMIT) Elim Dadibira, Alor**
Yakomina Mangmah, Dr. Jonathan D. Smith
Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2026 | Diunduh dari http://etd.repository.ugm.ac.id/

ABSTRACT

The increasingly complex ecological crisis demands the involvement of various social actors, including religious institutions, in building contextual environmental awareness and practices. On Pura Island, Alor Regency, the GMIT Elim Dadibira responds to socio-ecological challenges through the Olang Mangsari Festival, a festival that integrates Christian faith, local culture, and environmental concerns. This study aims to analyze how the Olang Mangsari Festival was formed as a church response to the socio-ecological challenges of the Pura Island community, how the integration between Christian faith and local culture is negotiated in the festival, and the extent to which this festival contributes to the formation of ecological awareness in the community. This research uses a critical ethnographic approach with thematic analysis. Data were obtained through participant observation, in-depth interviews with various actors, including local communities, Heads of *Adat* and church officials, and document analysis during fieldwork in Pura Utara Village. The research findings indicate that the Olang Mangsari Festival emerged from the church's response to the ecological crisis, economic vulnerability, and the fading of local cultural knowledge on Pura Island. The festival evolved into a space for encounters between local traditions and Christian faith, enabling negotiation, reinterpretation, and religious creativity within church ministry practices. The research also found that the festival serves as an integrative space, bringing together cultural, ecological, economic, and spiritual dimensions while simultaneously encouraging social and ecological transformation within the community. Although its impact is still gradual and uneven, the festival contributes to strengthening ecological awareness, revitalizing local knowledge, and developing community-based sustainability practices. This research contributes to the development of ecotheological studies in Indonesia by demonstrating that cultural festivals can be a contextual form of ecotheological practice and a space for religious creativity in responding to socio-ecological crises. These findings broaden understanding of the church's role in integrating faith, culture, and environmental concerns through practices rooted in the lived experiences of local community.

Keywords: Ecotheology, Olang Mangsari Festival, GMIT Elim Dadibira, Ecological Awareness, Religious Creativity.

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INTISARI

Krisis ekologis yang semakin kompleks menuntut keterlibatan berbagai aktor sosial, termasuk lembaga keagamaan, dalam membangun kesadaran dan praktik pelestarian lingkungan yang kontekstual. Di Pulau Pura, Kabupaten Alor, Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor (GMIT) Elim Dadibira merespons tantangan sosial-ekologis melalui Festival Olang Mangsari, sebuah festival yang mengintegrasikan iman Kristen, budaya lokal, dan kepedulian terhadap lingkungan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana Festival Olang Mangsari dibentuk sebagai respons gereja terhadap tantangan sosial-ekologis masyarakat Pulau Pura, bagaimana integrasi antara iman Kristen dan budaya lokal dinegosiasikan dalam festival tersebut, serta sejauh mana festival ini berkontribusi terhadap pembentukan kesadaran ekologis masyarakat. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan etnografi kritis dengan metode analisis tematik. Data diperoleh melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam dengan berbagai aktor masyarakat dan gereja, serta analisis dokumen selama penelitian lapangan di Desa Pura Utara, Kabupaten Alor. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Festival Olang Mangsari lahir dari upaya gereja merespons krisis ekologis, kerentanan ekonomi, dan memudarnya pengetahuan budaya lokal di Pulau Pura. Festival ini berkembang menjadi ruang perjumpaan antara tradisi lokal dan iman Kristen yang memungkinkan terjadinya proses negosiasi, reinterpretasi, dan kreativitas keagamaan dalam praktik pelayanan gereja. Penelitian ini juga menemukan bahwa festival berfungsi sebagai ruang integratif yang mempertemukan dimensi budaya, ekologi, ekonomi, dan spiritualitas sekaligus mendorong transformasi sosial dan ekologis dalam masyarakat. Meskipun dampaknya masih bersifat bertahap dan belum merata, festival ini berkontribusi pada penguatan kesadaran ekologis, revitalisasi pengetahuan lokal, serta pengembangan praktik keberlanjutan berbasis komunitas. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan kajian ekoteologi di Indonesia dengan menunjukkan bahwa festival budaya dapat menjadi bentuk praksis ekoteologis yang kontekstual serta ruang kreativitas keagamaan dalam merespons krisis sosial-ekologis. Temuan ini memperluas pemahaman tentang peran gereja dalam mengintegrasikan iman, budaya, dan kepedulian lingkungan melalui praktik-praktik yang berakar pada pengalaman hidup masyarakat lokal.

Kata kunci: ekoteologi, Festival Olang Mangsari, GMIT Elim Dadibira, kesadaran ekologis, kreativitas keagamaan.