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**FPI AND IDEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF ISLAMIC MEDIA
IN INDONESIA**

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ABSTRACT

This research purpose is to reveal the comparison of the discourse that is constructed by Islamic media in this case, Republika and Duta Masyarakat in their news about FPI (Front Pembela Islam). As a nation with the majority population in Islam, the presence of FPI in Indonesia then becomes controversial that separates Islam in some point of views. Republika is known as the modern Islam newspaper and Duta Masyarakat is traditional Islam and regional newspaper. How the Islamic media see FPI and their point of views are appropriately to be asked then ?

The research method is discourse analysis by Theo Van Leeuwen model that will explore how a group or someone be marginalised. The Leeuwen model sees how actors are shown in media news through the process of exclusion and inclusion. The result of this research show that Duta Masyarakat marginalizes FPI and the fundamentalists as a threat of nasionalism. Republika assumed the existence of FPI is just alike other Islamic organizations, must be adaptable to the law and cultural context as regard to pluralism in Indonesia. Both do agree that Islam doesn't allow violence but must contribute to nation building.

Keywords : Islamic Media, FPI, Ideological Perspective

INTRODUCTION

The dissolution of Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) appeared in around February 2012. Anarchism performed by FPI causes antipathy and hostility which arise not only among minorities but also in the Muslim community. The violence which has been done by FPI often uses religion to abolish the rights of other groups that have opposite views and different belief. The discourse of the dissolution of FPI then emerged in the media.

This research aims to know the discourse behind the news in two newspapers that represent Islam as their values. The media are *Republika* and *Duta Masyarakat*. *Republika* is a national media that has Islamic values as the basis. This media was founded by Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI) in the era of B.J. Habibie as the president. *Republika*, which was first published on January 4, 1993, then is known as the barometer of the largest Islamic media in this country. On the other hand, *Duta Masyarakat* is a local media in Surabaya founded in 1970s and identical to Gus Dur, a major figure of *Nahdathul Ulama* (NU). Social and political movements in the country cause the rise and fall of this media which now becomes an Islamic media industry that is quite well-known in the local community.

The news about the discourse of dissolution of FPI becomes interesting when we analyze texts published in these two media, considering FPI as an Islamic community organization whose existence and maneuver are controversial for Indonesian societies. The published texts are also rich of perspectives related to Islamic

values; *Republika* represents modern Islam and *Duta Masyarakat* represents traditional Islam. The questions arise: how do media construct the discourse of the dissolution of FPI through the news? Then, how do media define Islam believed by FPI as a community organization which exists in a country full of diversity like Indonesia?

The reality here is not understood as a set of facts but the result of certain views from reality construction. In the process of establishing the reality, there are two points concerned by Stuart Hall namely language. The reality can be marked differently on the same events. Different meanings can be put on the same events. Second, the political signification, namely, how social practices form meaning, control and determine the meaning. Hall's point of concern here is the role of media in signaling events or reality in particular view and showing how the power of ideology plays here: the ideology becomes a field where the battle of existing groups within the community happens (Eriyanto, 2001 : 29-31). How the media construct the news about the news discourse of FPI is highly relevant to the struggle among the Islamic communities in seeing and interpreting the violence of FPI which uses religion.

PROBLEM

Based on the above explanation, the research question of this study is:

How is the discourse emerged in *Republika* and *Duta Masyarakat* to the news of the dissolution discourse of FPI as the Islamic community organization?

OBJECTIVES

1. This study aims to determine the discourse of *Republika* and *Duta Masyarakat* in reporting on the dissolution of FPI which incidentally is the Muslim community organization that is currently controversial in some groups.
2. The study also aims to identify the media construction of Islam in the news related to FPI and Islamic media ideologies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Media Discourse as an Ideological Battle

A critical view sees media not only as the tool of the dominant group, but also as the product of the dominant ideology. Media helps dominant groups to spread their ideas, control other groups and form consensus among the community members. Through media, dominant ideology, what is good and what is bad are settled. (Barrat in Eriyanto, 2001:36) In a critical view, media is also seen as a form of ideological battle between groups in society. Here, the media is not a neutral tool that displays the power and groups in society as it is but the group and the dominant ideology are the ones that will appear in the news. (Woolacott in Eriyanto, 2001:37)

Stuart Hall (in Scannell, 2007:203) views that media is an entity that has a close relevance to the ideology. Hall sees that media is not an empty space without intervention. Media becomes the fields for the birth of ideas and discourse developing in the society. The diversity of social groups in the society also determines the diversity

of perspectives on an object. At this time the fight among classes happens. In the end, not all parties are able to survive in the war of discourse in the media. Media refers to a particular class of groups that manage to dominate other groups.

Media through the choice of words and language makes a social construction of a news object. The construction built refers to an ideology that ultimately aims to gain power, including the power of ideas and knowledge as the dominant group. Citing what was stated by Hodge and Kress (in Matheson, 2005: 9) as follows,

“In order to sustain these structures of domination, the dominant groups attempt to represent the world in form that reflects their own interests, the interests of their power. But they also need to sustain the bonds of solidarity that are condition of their dominance”

The number of community media based on religion or belief has basically had loyal readers who have the same understanding with the belief of the readers. The media represents streams of a religion or belief in the community. Not only Islam, among Christians, they also know that *Kompas* and *Suara Pembaruan* have referred a lot of their writing and news to the values adopted from the Bible. Pluralism happening in Indonesia is a fertile field to cultivate the perspective of diversity which is then captured by the media industry. Which perspective is correct? Each perspective offers an ideology in addressing and assessing an event.

FPI and the Streams of Islam

Islam is a religion professed by the majority of population in Indonesia. The streams within Islam in Indonesia are basically divided into two namely traditional and modern. In practical terms, these streams are represented by Islamic organizations such as *Nadlahtul Ulama* (NU), which represents traditional Islam, and *Muhammadiyah* as a symbol of Islamic modernity and intellectuals.

There are several theories that have addressed the emerging fundamentalism in the Islamic world. The most widely cited is the failure of Muslims against the flow of modernity that has been regarded as cornering Islam very much. Because of the helplessness in facing the flow, the fundamentalist groups seek religious arguments to "entertain themselves" in a world that has been imagined as not being contaminated. If it is only for "entertaining", probably it will not cause many problems. However, once they develop the political clout to resist modernity through a variety of ways, the clash with Muslim groups who disagree with the ways can not be avoided. This does not mean that Muslims who oppose their ways are lost in modernity. The opposition is also critical in facing this flow of modernity, but the way taken is guided by the power of reason and clear judgment, though it is not always successful. Another theory says that the growing wave of fundamentalism in many Muslim countries is mainly driven by a sense of solidarity against the fate that befell their brothers in Palestine, Kashmir, Afghanistan and Iraq. The third theory, specifically in Indonesia, the rise of fundamentalism in the archipelago over the country is caused by the failure to realize the

aspiration of independence namely the social justice and the creation of equitable prosperity for all people. (Wahid, 2009)

FPI or Islamic Defenders Front is a community organization, established on August 17, 1998 at Pondok Pesantran Al Um, Utan Village, Ciputat South Jakarta. At least there are three reasons behind the establishment of this community organization known as a radical organization, namely the first, the founders and followers of FPI view the regime and the members of the military force in Indonesia have violated human rights of Muslims. Second, they assess the rampant immorality has occurred in all sectors of life in society. Third, according to them, Muslims are obliged to keep and maintain the dignity of Islam. As an Islamic organization, FPI action is known destructive and controversial. The maneuver performed by FPI not only is opposed by non-Islamic groups, but also gets criticism from the Islamic community. The question emerged frequently is which Islam they represent. As a symbol of militant Islam, the struggle of FPI is considered as not representing Islam as a religion that loves peace and upholds humanity. In the history of Indonesia, FPI is not the first organization that is identified as a militant organization. In the New Order, the government took actions against some militant organizations when they tried to replace the Republic of Indonesia with the *Khilafah Islamiyah*.

Related to the implicit claims of the militant activists, they claimed that what they were doing was actually based on the scripture. They were born as God's representatives who have the correct understanding of the teachings of scripture. They argued that the imposition and maneuverability aimed to put Islam in a right

position, but the imposing attitude was questioned both theologically and politically. In turn, Islam became a pretext and a political weapon to discredit and attack anyone whose political view and religious understanding are different from theirs.

METHODOLOGY

The method of this research is discourse analysis. Theo van Leeuwen introduced discourse analysis model to detect and study how the position of a group or a person is marginalized in a discourse. Here there is a relation between discourse and power. Power is operated not only through formal paths, law and state institutions with their power to forbid and punish, but also through a set of discourse to define something or a certain group as not right or bad. (Eriyanto, 2001:171)

Van Leeuwen gave the analysis model or analysis outline to explain the discourse of news. In the first level, identification of who is the social actor, the actor who is removed or hidden (exclusion), and conversely, who is appeared (inclusions). In the next level, exploration is conducted on how the strategy of media does that.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Dissolution Discourse of FPI in *Duta Masyarakat*

Based on the researcher's findings, there were 11 articles about the dissolution discourse of FPI written by *Duta Masyarakat* in

February 2012. There was news in this media about the acts done by FPI in February 2012. In accordance with the limitations of this study that only saw the media coverage about the dissolution discourse of FPI, some articles that were not relevant on the issue of dissolution of FPI were not part of this research analysis. Here are the news' titles related to the dissolution of FPI which were published in *Duta Masyarakat*.

Table 1. The news of FPI in *Duta Masyarakat*

| No | Date | Title |
|----|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | 12 Feb 2012 | Dayak people reject FPI |
| 2 | 12 Feb 2012 | Islamic organizations are Wiser |
| 3 | 13 Feb 2012 | Time for FPI to Do Introspection |
| 4 | 15 Feb 2012 | Actions Rejecting FPI Expanded |
| 5 | 16 Feb 2012 | Suggested to Improve Quality of Struggle |
| 6 | 17 Feb 2012 | Officers Must be Firm, Islamic Organizations More Alert |
| 7 | 18 Feb 2012 | Must Leave Paradigm of Violence |
| 8 | 19 Feb 2012 | Preaching Should Consider Local Wisdom |
| 9 | 21 Feb 2012 | Who is allowed to act on behalf of Islam |
| 10 | 27 Feb 2012 | Political thuggery More Dangerous |
| 11 | 29 Feb 2012 | Muhammadiyah Supports the draft law of community organization |

Sources: researcher's data (2012)

Based on the analysis model of Theo Van Leeuwen, the findings in this study showed that FPI always appeared in *Duta Masyarakat* in the context of religious violence. In the model analysis offered by Van Leeuwen, it was clearly identified that FPI was the violent actor who made religion as an excuse to act anarchism. This inclusion was consistently written by *Duta Masyarakat*. News constructions in *Duta Masyarakat* related to social and religious relations were explicitly clear that religions including Islam teach brotherhood and unity so that it opposes the behavior of FPI. These values are essentially adopted from the principles of NU that follow *tawassuth* (the middle ground/moderate), *tawazun* (balanced), *tasamuh* (tolerant) and *i 'tidal* (fair/straight). As a media founded by the major figures of NU, NU values become the parameter in assessing actions as well as activities of Islamic organizations in Indonesia.

In some news, *Duta Masyarakat* also brought in resource people from other Islamic organizations such as NU and *Muhammadiyah*. Statements of both organizations were raised as a differentiation strategy or a comparison between FPI, NU and *Muhammadiyah*. There is a dichotomy in the interpretation of Islam between these two groups. The presence of NU and *Muhammadiyah* that started Islamic organizations in Indonesia indicates that they have been doing activities for the nation. In the history of Indonesia, they are identified as Progressive Muslim who was born as a new generation that the fighting spirit is more in the substantialism of Islam not in the formalization of Islam.

This is in opposition to the intensity of the emergence of FPI that is always identified as a source of anarchy and the cause of disintegration of the nation. Repeatedly, *Duta Masyarakat* wrote a statement of *Muhammadiyah* chairman, Din Syamsuddin, about the institution's attitude toward the action of the FPI. The following statements of Din were written in two separate articles,

“Even many religious organizations such as NU, Muhammadiyah and other religious organizations have existed before the country existed and have done for the country and, therefore, let us view that we place a positive thing for the country,” he explained (Duta Masyarakat, 13 February 2012)

Din Syamsudin's statement was preceded by a statement of KH Salahuddin Wahid about the objections of FPI in a number of areas in East Java and Central Kalimantan precisely in Palangkaraya. According to Salahuddin, rejection indicated that it was time for FPI to do introspection and reflection on a number of actions.

“The incident showed some resistance in some places. FPI should have done introspection and learned from it, ”said Gus Solah, the leader of Tebuireng Pesantren Jombang, Sunday (12/2) yesterday (Duta Masyarakat, 13 February 2012)

In an article on February 15, 2012, *Duta Masyarakat* wrote an article titled Actions Rejecting FPI expanded. The title was created as a discourse strategy proposed by the media to show that the actual existence of FPI was not desired by the people of Indonesia. This

strategy was presented using the abstraction so that it raised a discourse that the entire Indonesian society actually did not approve the acts of violence in the name of religion that has become the characteristic of the struggle of FPI. In the same article, *Duta Masyarakat* made a long list or a chronology of the actions of FPI in 1999-2012. The chronology objectively explains of each violent action of FPI. This strategy brought impact to the formation of opinion in the minds of the readers that FPI was the source of violence that was wrapped in the form of preaching and religion. Here is the opening sentence of the article on February 15,

“Action denying the existence of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) extends. Not only do the people of Central Kalimantan reject the establishment of FPI but also people in some areas. That is because FPI is considered doing violence under the guise of enforcing Islamic law”
(*Duta Masyarakat*, 15 February 2012)

Furthermore, in the article, *Duta Masyarakat* also brought in several sources that are pros and cons to the existence of FPI. The selection of speakers was also a discourse strategy that shows where the media stands for so that the ideology of *Duta Masyarakat* related to FPI case can be read by the audience. Two people, the Chairman of FPI, Habib Rizieg Shihab and the leader of dayak Seruyan, Haji Budi were brought in as the pro party of FPI. On the other hand, the con party was not described explicitly that they rejected FPI but they stated that organizations convicted of violence could have been suspended and even dismissed by the Ministry of Home Affairs

through the proposed draft law on Community Organizations as the revision of Law No. 8 year 1985. All the interviewees in this section referred to the possibility of FPI to be not only suspended but also dissolved as the following quotation,

“Minister Gamawan Fauzi himself after attending a limited cabinet meeting Menkopolhukam in Jakarta, Monday (13/2) signals the dissolution of FPI. “Currently the Ministry of Home Affairs was to evaluate some organizations that make anarchism. Including FPI, the evaluation is conducted by the director of Kesbangpol Kemendagri,” he said. According to him, the evaluation of FPI has been done since it convicted of violence twice. The first violence was at Monas and the violence was in the office of Kemendagri. All the violence, he said, has caused loss to the state” (Duta Masyarakat, 13 February 2012)

Differentiation strategy was also presented by *Duta Masyarakat* through the article on February 21, 2012 by bringing news about international Islamic organization namely OKI (Organization of Islamic Conference) as a representation of the Islamic world that was presented under the title "Who is allowed to act on behalf of Islam". In the article, the Secretary General of OKI, Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu questioned the behavior of FPI that is always used the name of Islam in their violence. The same construction was done by *Duta Masyarakat* to present NU and Muhammadiyah as the comparison, OKI was also brought in to reinforce the ideology of this media on Islamic values that Islam in no way suggested or ordered violence and coercion as what FPI has done so far,

"Ihsanoglu asserted when someone comes and says 'I do this in the name of Islam', it must be questioned from where they get the permission and who gives the license so that one can act in the name of Islam. Secondly, he added, every action in the name of Islam should be checked against the principles and criteria in Islam as a religion or a culture" (Duta Masyarakat, 21 February 2012)

The growing issue of dissolution of FPI in the society was portrayed as a threat to the existence of FPI. It was written by *Duta Masyarakat* in the news on Monday, February 27, 2012. *Duta Masyarakat* constructed news that FPI basically felt threatened and was afraid of rejection of society. Therefore, FPI requested support from KH Hasyim Muzadi, the former chairman of NU. The coming of FPI accompanied by the activist of Islam, Rhoma Irama and AM Fatwa suggested a discourse strategy by categorizing that NU has a strong influence in building the Islamic discourse in the sociopolitical conditions in Indonesia. This strategy suggested that NU is seen as a big community organization and the party that has credibility in being able to persuade the public.

"AM Fatwa together with a number of DPP leaders of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), visited the residence of former NU chairman KH Hasyim Muzadi. The agenda of the closed meeting was to discuss the current existence of FPI that gets attention from the public" (Duta Masyarakat, 27 February 2012)

The exclusion made by *Duta Masyarakat* was the loss of the state's role in responding to acts of violence committed by FPI. *Duta Masyarakat's* news almost negated the function and role of the state as the party that shall provide protection to all citizens and also has the power to regulate the behavior of entities that are in it through the rule of law.

In *Duta Masyarakat*, February 18, 2012, the news on the government had raised the dialogue between FPI Chairman, Habib Rizieg and Minister of Religious Affairs, Suryadharma Ali and Ani Bagus Putra, a social psychologist who discussed the government indecision. Bagus' statements were not much explored; otherwise, *Duta Masyarakat* stressed that the paradigm of violence in preaching adopted by FPI had to be changed by putting forward a persuasive approach. As a radical Islamic organization, FPI was judged not reflecting the attitude of Islam,

"If an organization preaches in a wrong way, the impact would be broad. Moreover, the organization holds religion and of course the insult would be bigger than any other organizations when making a mistake" (Duta Masyarakat, 18 February 2012)

In the view of Islamic substantialism, a state does not need to officially become a state religion but rather the religious ethics contribute to the roles of state. Religious ethics can provide a foundation in the management of the state. (Rahman in Qodir, 2012: 21). When the state's role in this context was made passive by *Duta Masyarakat*, the relation of state and religion was actually dispensed by the media. The state is man-made where the rights of the people

or the public must be protected while Islam is a belief not the state ideology. The relations of both are nothing more than that a belief or religion should contribute to the nation and state through the behavior and contribution to its followers.

Another strategy is normalization by making violence as a frequent occurrence in Indonesia. *Duta Masyarakat* in their news on February 16, 2012 wrote that even though the anarchist image has been attached to FPI but dissolving FPI did not necessarily solve the problem. FPI can change its form or its name of membership even though the people involved in it are the players and the old membership. Quoted KH Hasyim Muzadi, not only FPI but also foreign organizations that are dangerous for the country are also dissolved.

“Organizations that are pro to foreigners, said Kiai Hashim, are smarter to take the themes of humanity and democracy than FPI that is rough and often not tactical.” (Duta Masyarakat, 16 February 2012)

Suspension Discourse of FPI in *Republika*

In February 2012, *Republika* only wrote three articles on FPI. Here is a list of the news.

Table 2. News on FPI in *Republika*

| No | Date | Title |
|----|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | 14 February 2012 | Interfaith Leaders in Central Kalimantan Reject FPI |
| 2 | 15 Februari 2012 | Beatings in the Demo of Anti FPI |
| 3 | 17 Februari 2012 | Do not Doubt to take Action against Community Organizations |

Sources : researcher's data (2012)

Unlike *Duta Masyarakat*, *Republika* has a certain pattern when constructing the news about FPI. The news in *Republika* was much more neutral compared with *Duta Masyarakat* when bringing in the actions of FPI. Rejection and dissolution of FPI were almost not written in details as well as intensive. Discourse strategies used by *Republika*, among others, were making passive by eliminating the community as a group of actors who performed massively the public rejection of FPI. *Republika* in the title only wrote "Interfaith Leaders". The lost of society clearly gives the discourse that actually the ones who rejected were not the society, but only certain elements of the society namely the religious leaders. The exclusion was also carried by *Republika* on the reasons for refusal without mentioning or identifying the reasons for rejecting FPI. At the time the news was

raised, the audience did not get adequate and comprehensive information concerning the background of the rejection.

“Various community leaders across religions, ethnics, community organizations in Central Kalimantan as well as Regional Leadership Coordination Forum (FKPD) Central Kalimantan agreed to reject the inauguration of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) in the province” (Republika, 14 February 2012)

In further writings, *Republika* mentioned some religious institutions that were rejecting the establishment of FPI branches in Central Kalimantan. Inclusion discourse strategy used by *Republika* was looking at the existence of FPI as an organization that deals with the problem of recognition from other religious organizations. This strategy was used to construct a discourse that the problem of FPI was the problem of inter-faith or religious streams, not about issues concerning the integrity of Indonesia. As extremism, FPI was often rejected because they used religion to force others to follow their interpretation of Islam.

“Various community leaders, religious leaders and leaders of community organizations who took the stand were, chairman of MUI Central Kalimantan, chairman of PW-NU Central Kalimantan, chairman of PW Muhammadiyah Central Kalimantan, chairman of LDII Central Kalimantan, chairman of FKUB Central Kalimantan, chairman of PGPI Central Kalimantan, chairman of the Assembly of the Church of GKE Central Kalimantan, chairman of PGLI Central Kalimantan, chairman of MBAHK

Central Kalimantan, and chairman of GPDI Central Kalimantan.” (Republika, 14 February 2012)

Even in the news, *Republika* explicitly stated that the actions of FPI were oriented towards violence but this media did not express the need for extreme alternative solutions such as dissolving FPI.

“According to her (Helda Worotitjan-coordinator of the Anti Violence Movement without FPI), no religions justify any acts of violence, even Islam. She asserted she did not ask FPI to be dissolved. Only that organization is expected not to promote violence in actions that they do.” (Republika, 15 February 2012)

Beatings done in the anti FPI demonstrations were also written in *Republika* as the form of infiltration of other parties that were irresponsible and deliberately provoked conflicts. By packing it with the title "Beatings in the Demo of Anti FPI", *Republika* reduced the subject or actor who did the beating. This strategy was an attempt to make passive so that it formed the opinion that the beating action is just common demonstration events led to anarchism.

“FPI spokesman, Munarman said the violence at the demo had nothing to do with FPI. “We did not monitor or send our members when the demo took place,” said Munarman when contacted yesterday” (Republika, 15 Februari 2012)

The inclusion discourse strategy raised by *Republika* on February 17, 2012 in its article entitled "Do not Doubt to take Action against Community Organizations" sharpened the categorization of this media to the existence of FPI. Community Organizations

including FPI must follow and obey the law applied in the Republic of Indonesia. Similarly, the government can not simply disband organizations because there are already procedures and laws that govern the mechanisms.

“Budi continued, any organizations that have betrayed their essential role, should get legal action. Organizations, said Budi, are the power of a nation in upholding democracy in the life of the nation” (Republika, 17 February 2012)

Based on the above explanation, it was found that the use of discourse strategies by Van Leeuwen that marginalized a particular group was implemented differently in a text or news in *Republika* as well as *Duta Masyarakat*. Marginalization done by *Republika* put FPI as the Islamic organization whose actions have been considered often ignored the laws and regulations applied in Indonesia. As a nationally-based media for the upper middle-class readers, FPI was constructed not more than organizations that violate the social ethics and the law. Repressive and destructive behaviors had to be taken into actions according to the law. Even though FPI must be dissolved, the government must follow the legal procedures.

Duta Masyarakat put FPI as a group that did not represent Islam, even reducing the values of Islam. FPI was identical with violence that is clearly against the teachings of Islam. If necessary, FPI can be dissolved because it undermines public order and threatens the integrity of the nation.

It was found in the news in both media that both *Republika* and *Duta Masyarakat* emphasized that Islam did not allow any form of

violence and the imposition of the will by using the name of religion. Islam is a religion not a state ideology so that the community organizations that were under the name of Islam should be subjected to the laws and should contribute to national unity.

Conclusion

Ideology of media causes media to construct differently when looking at an issue or phenomenon. Texts or news in media will show clearly the attitude and perspective that are used by the media when capturing an event. Related to the discourse that arises about the dissolution of FPI, it was seen differently by *Republika* as well as *Duta Masyarakat*. *Duta Masyarakat* sharpened that using Islam as a tool to impose will and violence on other parties is an ideology that is opposed to nationalism. When the country (NKRI) is at stake, then the community organizations that bring this ideology need to be dissolved. Implicitly, *Republika* saw that pluralism in Indonesia accommodates the existence of any community organizations as part of democracy as long as they are able to adapt themselves to the socio-cultural context and the applied law.

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