

The Influence of Social Media on Court Decisions in Religious Blasphemy Cases

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melakukan analisis mendalam mengenai pengaruh media sosial terhadap keputusan hakim dalam kasus penistaan agama di Indonesia. Dalam konteks era digital, media sosial menjadi arena utama penyampaian opini publik, berkembangnya diskusi, dan penyebaran informasi dengan cepat. Kasus penistaan agama seringkali menimbulkan gelombang kontroversi dan perdebatan di media sosial sehingga berdampak luas di masyarakat. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif untuk menganalisis bagaimana media sosial mempengaruhi proses peradilan, mulai dari perannya dalam membentuk opini publik hingga kemungkinan pengaruhnya terhadap argumen yang diajukan di pengadilan. Melalui analisis terhadap konten media sosial dan kajian terhadap kasus penistaan agama yang signifikan, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami sejauh mana opini dan tekanan yang dihasilkan oleh media sosial dapat mempengaruhi keputusan hakim. Hasil analisis tersebut diharapkan dapat memberikan pemahaman yang lebih mendalam mengenai tantangan yang dihadapi sistem peradilan dalam menghadapi tekanan dan ekspektasi ruang digital yang semakin dominan, serta memberikan landasan untuk memperbaiki kebijakan dan praktik peradilan yang lebih baik. adaptif terhadap dinamika sosial dan digital.

Kata Kunci: Media Sosial, Penistaan Agama, Putusan Pengadilan, Undang-Undang Informasi dan Transaksi Elektronik.

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of the influence of social media on judges' decisions in religious blasphemy cases in Indonesia. In the context of the digital era, social media has become the main arena where public opinion is expressed, discussions develop, and information spreads quickly. Cases of religious blasphemy often create waves of controversy and debate on social media, widening their impact in society. This research uses a qualitative approach to analyze how social media influences the judicial process, from its role in shaping public opinion to its possible influence on arguments presented in court. Through analysis of social media content and a study of significant religious blasphemy cases, this research aims to understand the extent to which opinions and pressure generated by social media can influence judges' decisions. It is hoped that the results of the analysis will provide a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by the justice system in facing the pressures and expectations of an increasingly dominant digital space, as well as provide a basis for improving justice policies and practices that are more adaptive to social and digital dynamics.

A. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country based on law (Reechstaat), not a country based on mere power (Machstaat), in accordance with article 1 paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia which states that Indonesia is a country of law. A rule of law means where the law determines what must be done and/or what may be done as well as what cannot be done and/or is prohibited. Indonesian's law regulates every action of citizens as stated in various regulations and laws. This regulation is not only applied in daily life, but also regulates ethics in expressing opinions and conveying criticism towards other individuals, the Government and also the State which can be channeled through digital platforms, such as social media. Along with this development, this has also led to changes in social conditions in society which have negative impacts, one of which is the emergence of cases of religious blasphemy amidst the development of this digital era. The development of information technology, especially social media, has changed the legal landscape and introduced new dynamics in the criminal justice process. Religious blasphemy cases, which often raise tensions between freedom of expression and the protection of religion, take the spotlight on social media, creating a stage on which public opinion can quickly and widely develop.

In order to meet legal needs in keeping up with the rapid development of the times, several legal regulations have been created in Indonesia that regulate issues relating to the delivery of opinions and expressions conveyed via digital platforms, namely Law Number 19 of 2016 concerning Amendments to Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions. This Law regulates law enforcement relating to the violations committed by individuals using digital platforms, more specifically discussed in article 27 paragraph (3), article 28 paragraph (2), article 45A paragraph (2), and article 45 paragraph (3) Law No. 19 of 2019 concerning Information and Electronic Transaction's Law.¹ The use of social media as the digital information media most widely used by society is considered to provide many benefits for individuals in various fields apart from being a means of communication, such as marketing media, learning media, and sharing information. Every individual is free to voice opinions and express themselves based on human rights. Various forms of opinions and expressions conveyed by the public via digital platforms include criticism and protests against government policies or other individual actions which are shared on social media. However, in reality,

¹ Nur Rahmawati, Muslichatun, M. Marizal. Kebebasan Berpendapat Terhadap Pemerintah Melalui Media Sosial Dalam Perspektif UU ITE. *Jurnal Pranata*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 2021.

many problems arise in society regarding the ethics of using social media as a means of good and correct expression.

The Information and Electronic Transaction's Law is intended to regulate all information that exists in the digital world, especially information circulating on social media. The presence of regulations regarding freedom of expression for society has a strong constitutional basis because it covers the most basic things for citizens in obtaining information and expressing themselves. This is stated explicitly in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia in Article 28J which provides several conditions for expression, namely that restrictions must be implemented on a legal basis (by law), then they must be based on legally valid reasons such as public order, the good of society, local morals and customs and for the public, state security, public safety, as well as other individual freedoms that must not be violated. The existence of social media provides a platform that allows information, opinions and public reactions to develop quickly and widely, magnifying the impact of cases of religious blasphemy in society.

Criminal acts in the form of religious blasphemy in Indonesia are regulated in article 45 paragraph (2) of the Information and Electronic Transaction's Law which includes the distribution of online content that is deemed to be defamatory or insulting to religion with a maximum prison sentence of six years and/or a maximum fine of IDR 1,000,000,000.00. Then it is also regulated in article 156 (a) of the Criminal Code (KUHP) with the criminal element "hostility, hatred or insult towards" a religious group. Then the definition of religious blasphemy was expanded in the Presidential Decree promulgated in 1965 PD No. 1/pnps/1965, where blasphemy also prohibits "deviant interpretations" of religious teachings. Perpetrators of the crime of religious blasphemy will be subject to a maximum sentence of four years in prison based on the Criminal Code, and a maximum sentence of five years in prison based on the Presidential Decree.

In connection with the emergence of criminal acts of blasphemy related to the development of the digital world and social media, it has a significant impact on the judicial process, especially in making decisions by judges in cases of religious blasphemy. Judges in blasphemy cases are faced with the difficult task of weighing between an individual's right to express an opinion and the rights of the group or individual who feels insulted by the act of blasphemy. Punishment regulations for perpetrators of religious blasphemy, which refer to the Information and Electronic Transaction's Law and also the Criminal Code, can create tension between freedom of expression and the protection of religious values.

The judge's consideration or Ratio Decidendi is the most important thing for the judge to give his decision. The values contained in the judge's decision must be in accordance with the values of justice (*ex aequo et bono*) and contain legal certainty, as well as include articles of legal rules which are the basis for the decision. In Law Number 48 of 2009 concerning Judicial Power, it is emphasized that no one can instigate or organize the handing down of a judge's decision against a defendant who has committed a crime, including the government. The judge's considerations consist of juridical considerations and non-juridical considerations.² Juridical considerations are the judge's considerations based on juridical facts in the form of a law to convey a decision. Facts based on an examination include:

1. Public Prosecutor's Indictment

Indictment is the most basic thing in criminal procedural law because it is based on the indictment that an examination is carried out at trial. The indictment is read in front of the court for the judge's consideration, containing the identity of the defendant, as well as details of the commission of a crime, including the time and place.

2. Defendant's statement

According to Article 184 Point (E) of the Criminal Procedure Code, the defendant's statement is evidence. The defendant's statement contains a statement describing the crime committed, as well as answers to questions from the prosecutor, legal advisor and judge.

3. Witness Statement

Witness testimony is one of the things that helps the judge in considering his decision because it is categorized as evidence. Witness testimony is a clarification under oath that reveals the occurrence of a criminal act based on what was heard, seen and experiences experienced so that it can be an aggravating or mitigating reason for the defendant.

4. Evidence

Evidence means all objects used by criminals in committing criminal incidents and confiscated by the Public Prosecutor.

² Rusli Muhammad, *Hukum Acara Pidana Kontemporer*, Citra Aditya, Jakarta, 2007, hlm 212-220.

5. Articles in the Criminal Law Regulations

Criminal acts committed by defendants are always linked to Articles of the Criminal Law Regulations. The act must fulfill the elements of a criminal act so that its truth can be stated before the court through examination and evidence.

In considering his decision, the judge examined several matters relating to the defendant in terms of juridical considerations, including:³

1. Defendant's Background

The background of the actions carried out by the defendant is the aspect that gives rise to an intention or desire that drives the defendant to commit a criminal act

2. Consequences of the Defendant's Actions

The consequences of the defendant's actions are one of the things that must be considered because the actions he committed certainly caused victims and losses. These consequences are in the form of a bad influence on people's lives and threaten security.

3. Personal Condition of the Defendant

The defendant's personal condition means the physical and psychological condition experienced by the defendant before committing a criminal act. Physical conditions in this case are age and maturity, and psychological conditions in this case are feelings of depression, messy thoughts, emotional feelings, and social status based on societal labeling.

4. Defendant's Religion

Religious teachings serve as a guide to "Belief in the Almighty God" regarding decisions handed down by judges.

The judge in considering his decision must be able to prove the certainty that a criminal act occurred. In principle, the judge's consideration contains several things, namely:⁴

1. The basis of the problem, the events that are acknowledged, and the reasons that are not denied;
2. The facts proven at trial are in accordance with the juridical analysis;

³ A.A. Sagung Mas Yudiantari Darmadi. Pertimbangan Hakim Dalam Menjatuhkan Putusan Pidana Bersyarat. *Jurnal Unmas*. Vol. 8 No. 2. 2018. hlm. 182-183.

⁴ Raymon Dart Pakpahan, Herlina Manullang, Roida Nababan. Analisis Dasar Pertimbangan Hakim Dalam Menjatuhkan Pidana Kepada Yang Membuka Lahan Dengan Cara Membakar, *PATIK: Jurnal Hukum*. Vol. 07 Nomor 2. 2018. hlm. 132.

3. Pay attention to the Petitem of the plaintiff or victim in deciding the verdict.

Judges in their considerations must also be based on belief and conscience, so that one judge and another can be confident in their views and provide different considerations. If the considerations given by the judge are not in accordance with the law and give rise to a new tail of a case, then the judge's considerations can be annulled by the High Court and Supreme Court.⁵

In addition, public pressure that can be triggered by social media can also influence the judge's decision. Judges are faced with the risk of public opinion and expectations which can affect their independence. This creates a need for judges to consider not only the legal aspect, but also to look at the social and political impact of the decisions the judge makes. So, a careful and wise balance is needed in responding to cases of religious blasphemy in this digital era. The justice system must continue to ensure lawful freedom of expression while maintaining protection of religious rights. A deep understanding of the implications of social media and criminal regulations in the context of religious blasphemy is important so that judges' decisions can reflect justice, proportionality and balance between individual and collective rights in an increasingly digitally connected society.

B. RESEARCH METHODS

This research approach uses a Statuta Approach and a Case Approach. The Statuta Approach is an approach taken by examining all relevant regulatory laws related to the problem being handled. The Statuta Approach is an approach that uses legislation and regulations. By conducting this research, we can see consistency and suitability between one law and other laws and produce arguments that can solve the problem being analyzed.⁶ Meanwhile, the Case Approach in normative legal research has the aim of studying legal norms or rules carried out in legal practice. The main study in the Case Approach is ratio decidendi or reasoning, meaning the court's consideration until finally a decision is given.⁷ This approach usually uses cases that have already received a

⁵ Undang-Undang Nomor 48 Tahun 2009 Tentang Kekuasaan Kehakiman, ketentuan Pasal 5 ayat (1)

⁶ Mukti Fajar dan Yulianto Achmad, *Dualisme Penelitian Hukum Normatif dan Empiris*, Pustaka Pelajar, Yogyakarta, 2010, hlm. 157.

⁷ Johnni Ibrahim, *Teori & Metodologi Penelitian Hukum Normatif*, Bayu Media Publishing, Malang, 2012, hlm. 321.

decision.⁸ In the Case Approach, several cases are studied as a reference for a legal issue, while a case study is a study of various legal aspects. This sources will include various legal documents, including court decisions, legal books, legal articles, and legal analyzes related to religious blasphemy cases. This normative analysis will also include a review of the views of legal experts and previously published legal opinions. By combining normative analysis and a case approach, this research is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the legal factors that influence judges' decisions in religious blasphemy cases in Indonesia.

This research uses materials obtained from literature studies, namely primary legal materials and secondary materials. Legal materials collected in formal legal sources are called primary legal materials, while legal materials collected in material legal sources are called secondary legal materials.⁹ Primary legal materials are legal materials that are authoritative in nature, have the authority of primary legal materials consisting of laws, official records, or treatises in statutory regulations and judges' decisions. The primary legal material¹⁰ in this research is Law Number 19 of 2016 concerning Amendments to Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions, the Criminal Code (KUHP), and the District Court Judge's Decision Number 726/Pid.Sus/2023/PN Plg. Secondary legal materials are materials that provide explanations of primary law, such as draft laws, research results, works from legal circles, and opinions of legal scholars.¹¹ Secondary legal materials are also supporting because they are accompanied by comments on court decisions and other sources related to the research. Tertiary legal materials, namely materials that provide important instructions and explanations related to primary and secondary legal materials.¹² The legal materials used in this research are the Law Dictionary, Articles, Law Journals, and the Big Indonesian Dictionary.

The research focus on analyzing the judge's decision regarding the religious blasphemy case carried out by Lina Mukherjee on social media, Case Study: Palembang District Court No.726/Pid.Sus/2023/PN Plg. This approach involves collecting secondary data from legal sources and related court decision documents. It will conduct

⁸ Peter Mahmud Marzuki, *Penelitian Hukum*, Cetakan ke-11, Kencana, Jakarta, 2011, hlm. 92.

⁹ Soetandyo Wignjosebroto, *Hukum Konsep dan Metode*, Malang: Setara Press, 2013, hlm. 67.

¹⁰ Bambang Sunggono, *Metode Penelitian Hukum*, Raja Grafindo Persada, Jakarta, 1997, hlm. 83.

¹¹ Soerjono Soekanto dan Sri Mamudji, *Penelitian Hukum Normatif*, Cetakan ke-13, Rajawali. Pers, Jakarta, 2011, hlm. 13.

¹² Bambang Sunggono, *Metodologi Penelitian Hukum*, PT. Raja Grafindo Persada, Jakarta, 2003, hlm. 116.

a normative analysis of laws, regulations, and legal precedents related to religious blasphemy in Indonesia. This analysis will provide the theoretical and legal foundation necessary to understand the legal context surrounding these cases. This case study will involve collecting and analyzing the judge's decision document No. 726/Pid.Sus/2023/PN Plg, with a focus on the legal considerations used, interpretation of the law, and the legal arguments underlying the judge's decision. It will note any differences or consistencies in the approaches taken by judges across cases, with the aim of identifying patterns and trends in judicial decisions regarding religious blasphemy.

Determining conclusions using a deductive method, which start from a general understanding whose truth is already known and ends in a conclusion that is more specific. The results of this research are general propositions which are then connected to the problem to obtain more specific conclusions to answer the problems raised in this research.¹³ The sentences written will draw a conclusion that can be drawn to provide answers to the research's problems.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

According to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI), blasphemy means insulting; humiliating; lower (level, etc.). The crime of blasphemy refers to acts or actions that directly or indirectly insult or demean the teachings, beliefs or values of a particular religion. Blasphemy often involves the use of words, writings, images, or other actions that could be considered insulting, demeaning, or insulting to a religion. The criminal act of blasphemy can trigger controversy and conflict in society because it is closely related to religious values which are considered very sensitive by most communities. Its subjective nature and close connection to cultural and religious values means that the boundaries between freedom of expression and protection of religious values are often difficult to measure.

The criminal act of blasphemy refers to acts that are deemed to insult, insult or degrade the religious values of an individual or group. Blasphemy is a sensitive and complex issue, often giving rise to debates around freedom of expression, human rights, and the protection of religious values. The definition of blasphemy varies across legal jurisdictions, and in many countries, this criminal offense is enforced as part of the

¹³ Bambang Sunggono, *Metodologi Penelitian Hukum*, PT. Raja Grafindo Persada, Jakarta, 2007, hlm. 10.

criminal code. In some countries, religious blasphemy may be a criminal offense subject to severe legal sanctions, including imprisonment, fines, or other measures in accordance with applicable law. Religious blasphemy can take various forms. Starting from writing, speeches, images, videos, to comments on social media or other online platforms. This action is often seen as an attack on the spiritual values or beliefs of a person or group, which has the potential to cause social unrest and conflict in society.

Countries have different approaches in responding to criminal acts of religious blasphemy. Some countries may have regulations that stipulate legal sanctions against perpetrators of religious blasphemy, while there are countries that may be more based on the principle of freedom of expression and choose to protect religious values through an educational and dialogue approach. It is important to note that the concept of blasphemy varies widely across countries and cultures, and the assessment of certain acts as blasphemy may be influenced by local values, social norms, and the local legal context. One important aspect in assessing the crime of religious blasphemy is the intention of the perpetrator. Courts often consider whether the perpetrator had the intention to intentionally attack or denigrate a religion or whether the action arose as part of legitimate criticism or healthy public debate. This assessment plays an important role in determining the offender's level of culpability and the extent to which the punishment given is commensurate with the severity of the offense.

Religious blasphemy cases in Indonesia are the criminal acts that attract public attention, and in some cases, social media also plays a role in influencing judges' decisions, such as the case of religious blasphemy committed by Lina Mukherjee. This case is an example of a case that was uncovered with the help of people who use social media or what are often called netizens. This can be an input or disturbance to the ongoing legal process, because this interference can have an impact on the judge's considerations when examining the case, and also on the results of the judge's decision. However, law enforcement against Lina Mukherjee as the perpetrator of the crime of religious blasphemy has received a court decision, with a prison sentence of two years and a fine of IDR 250,000,000.00 subsidiary to three months in prison.

Before making a decision regarding criminal imposition, the Panel of Judges must know the legal facts obtained during the trial, so that later the decision does not become a debate among law enforcement officials, academics and the wider community. By the absence of debate regarding the decision made by the Judge, it can be interpreted that all Indonesian citizens agree with the decision and can fulfill a sense of justice for all Indonesian citizens. Apart from legal facts, the judge's legal considerations are also very

important in a decision. There are at least 2 (two) legal considerations that must be considered by the judge before making a decision, namely considerations in terms of legality and considerations in terms of justice. Consideration in terms of legality, meaning that the Judge in deciding the case considers the legal basis or statutory regulations relating to the case being examined. 43 Bearing in mind that the State of Indonesia is a State of Law, in accordance with the provisions in Article 1 Paragraph (3) of the Constitution Republic of Indonesia 1945, so everything must be done guided by the applicable legal rules.

The judge's second consideration is considerations from the perspective of justice. In this consideration, the judge in deciding the case must consider things that can create justice in society. Justice is a very important aspect to consider, considering that the aim of the law itself is to create justice for society. A person's responsibility capacity is also important for the Panel of Judges to consider to find out whether or not a person can be held responsible for the actions they have committed. Regarding what form of criminal responsibility can be given, the judge must first carry out an analysis by looking at the mistakes committed by the defendant.

A judge's consideration in deciding a criminal case of religious blasphemy is a complex journey that involves a deep understanding of legal values, justice, and the balance between individual rights and group rights or religious values. As an initial stage, the judge must be able to properly understand the facts revealed in the trial. This involves analyzing the evidence presented, including the content deemed to constitute blasphemy, as well as the goals or intentions of the perpetrators involved. An accurate understanding of these facts is a crucial basis for fair and objective decision making.

The next aspect that is the focus of the judge's attention is testing the relevance and validity of evidence related to religious blasphemy. The judge must ensure that any evidence presented meets applicable legal standards and can be accounted for. In the context of religious blasphemy, this aspect often involves an assessment of the material deemed blasphemous and whether it meets the legal criteria to be categorized as blasphemous. Furthermore, judges must assume the role of careful interpreters of the law. This includes assessing whether existing laws contain clear provisions regarding religious blasphemy or whether there are legal interpretations that have been developed through previous precedents. Accurate decision making requires a deep understanding of the legal framework governing religious blasphemy, as well as an understanding of the limits of freedom of expression.

In responding to religious blasphemy cases, judges must also be able to consider the social impacts and potential unrest that could arise as a result of their decisions. This indicates that judges must have sensitivity to the developing social context, as well as the impact that may occur in society. These considerations create a dilemma, where judges are faced with the obligation to maintain freedom of expression while respecting and protecting the religious values held by some members of society. Apart from that, the aspect of balance between individual rights and group rights or religious values is a central point in the judge's considerations. Judges must be able to determine to what extent individual expression is protected by freedom of expression and where the boundaries lie when it comes to religious values. A mature understanding of human rights principles and the protection of religious values will guide judges in achieving a fair balance in their decisions.

Psychological aspects are also taken into consideration by the judge. The tension generated by a religious blasphemy case can influence a judge's decision making. Judges must have calm, neutrality and impartiality to ensure that the decisions taken are not influenced by emotional factors or external pressure. Furthermore, the judge must consider the long-term impact of his decision on society and possibly also on the life of the perpetrator of religious blasphemy. This includes consideration of rehabilitation, the potential for resocialization, and the role of punishment as an instrument for preventing similar acts in the future. Finally, judges must also consider the community's readiness to accept and respect judicial decisions. In the context of religious blasphemy, where religious sensitivity can be a source of conflict, judges need to ensure that their decisions are accepted and respected by society, even if there is dissatisfaction from one of the parties.

Overall, the court decision is the final case examination process carried out by the panel of judges, the court decision is a statement of the judge as an authorized actor of judicial power, it needs to be explained that what is meant by the decision in this description is the first level of *judex factie* decision and not an appellate level decision or cassation, because of the decision relating to the case examination techniques is only a first level decision. Although the decision at the appellate level includes *judex factie*, the examination at the appellate level is only a correction of the course of the case examination at the first level, namely that the criminal procedural law was carried out correctly in the trial process, and whether the correct procedural law was applied. A deep understanding of the legal and social context is the key in ensuring that the decisions

taken can create justice, maintain freedom of expression, and protect religious values in a balanced manner.

Social media is an online platform that allows users to interact, share content and connect with others globally. This enables individuals, groups or organizations to create, access and share information and content quickly and easily. Social media provides various features, such as social networking, microblogging, photo and video sharing, discussion forums, and others, that expand communication networks and social interactions. As a rampant phenomenon in the digital era, social media has drastically changed the landscape of human communication and interaction. Social media has opened the door for public involvement and participation in various social, political and cultural issues. Social networks enable individuals to mobilize support, rally for action, and spread awareness about a variety of issues. Social campaigns, online petitions and activism movements often originate from social media, highlighting its role as a tool for social change. Discussions regarding particular cases, including views on justice, appropriateness of punishment, or court decisions, can spread widely and quickly via social media platforms. Meanwhile, the speed and scale of verbalization in disseminating information on social media sometimes makes it difficult to control or supervise the information that is spread. Information that is sensitive or not fully verified can spread widely for a short time before it can be controlled or verified.

Along with the development of the digital world, the influence of social media in the context of judges' decisions in cases of criminal acts of religious blasphemy has become an increasingly complex dynamic. Social media as a platform that allows the rapid exchange of information and opinions has a significant impact on the judicial process. Religious blasphemy cases, which often create tension between freedom of expression and religious values, create new challenges for judges in maintaining integrity, independence and justice. In the realm of social media, information and opinions develop quickly, creating narratives that can influence public perception of a case. Cases of religious blasphemy are often in the spotlight in the digital space, where comments, fake news, and subjective interpretations can become part of the online atmosphere.

The influence of social media on court decisions includes several dimensions that need to be understood comprehensively. First, social media creates public opinion pressure that can influence judges' decisions. Opinions, support, or criticism expressed on social media can create psychological pressure on judges, who must decide between freedom of expression and the protection of religious values. Judges must be able to maintain a balance between responding to social pressures and applying fair legal

principles. Second, social media can also potentially be a source of evidence in trials. Posts, comments, or other digital content can be used as evidence to support or cast doubt on the arguments of either side. Judges also need to consider the matters relating to the validity and relevance of this digital evidence, while ensuring that its use is in accordance with applicable legal regulations.

In addition, social media plays a role in shaping public understanding of regulations regarding religious blasphemy.¹⁴ Information presented on social media can shape perceptions about the limits of freedom of expression and the limitations that exist in cases of religious blasphemy. Judges must understand that public opinion formed on social media can create certain preconditions that influence people's attitudes and views towards a case. The influence of social media can also reinforce certain behavioral patterns in the judiciary. Advocates and parties involved in a case may use social media as a means to strengthen arguments or influence public opinion. Judges should consider how social media can be a complicating factor in the judicial process and identify ways to minimize such risks. More deeply, the influence of social media can affect the independence of judges. With great exposure to public opinion, judges can feel compelled to make decisions that reflect society's expectations, even if they conflict with the legal principles that should be the primary guide in judicial decision-making. Apart from that, the polarization of society that occurs on social media can also influence the dynamics of trials. Judges may be faced with the challenge of managing disputes and conflicts that escalate in the digital space, which can then affect the course of trials.

In an effort to answer this dynamic, the judges also need to have a deep understanding of the influence of social media. Specialized training, ethical guidance, and collaboration with social media experts can help judges overcome external pressures and ensure that the decisions they make remain in line with the principles of law and justice. The influence of social media on judges' decisions in cases of criminal acts of religious blasphemy is an important aspect that cannot be ignored in modern justice. In facing these challenges, judges need to strengthen their skills and knowledge, while still upholding the values of justice, independence and freedom of expression. With a deeper understanding of the complex interactions between social media and the judiciary, it is hoped that judges' decisions will remain a reflection of true justice and comply with applicable legal principles.

¹⁴ Sulastiana. Peran Media dalam Penyebaran Intoleransi Agama. *Jurnal Ilmu Kepolisian*. Vol. 11 No. 2. 2017. hlm. 114.

D. CONCLUSION

The interaction between the digital world and the judicial space not only enriches legal dynamics, but also challenges traditional judicial principles. First, the role of social media in shaping public opinion and perceptions regarding religious blasphemy cases requires judges to develop wise strategies in deciding a case. The rapid disclosure of information on social media can create an atmosphere where legal truth can be clouded by intense public opinion. In dealing with this, judges must consider the balance between fairness and response to social pressure. Furthermore, social media is not only a source of information, but can also be a source of evidence at trial. The use of digital evidence in court requires the judge's expertise in identifying, assessing and using information from social media appropriately. This ability is becoming increasingly vital to ensure that judges' decisions are based on accurate and relevant facts. It is also important to recognize that social media can influence people's understanding of religious blasphemy laws and regulations themselves. Distorted or erroneous knowledge spread on social media can shape public opinion that is inconsistent with legal reality. Therefore, judges need to consider the long-term effects of a judge's decision on society's understanding of law in general.

Related to this, the polarization and conflict in society that occurs on social media also has an impact on the dynamics of the trial. Judges are faced with the increasingly difficult task of managing social tensions and ensuring that the judiciary remains a neutral space that promotes the values of justice. A deep understanding of these dynamics will help judges to mitigate the risk of external interference that could damage the integrity of the judiciary. In this context, the independence of judges is a key factor that really needs to be maintained. In the face of pressure and expectations from social media, judges must be able to maintain decisions based on the law and principles of justice, without being influenced by public opinion which may be emotional or changeable. Apart from that, the role of advocates and parties involved in cases of religious blasphemy on social media also requires special attention. How the use of social media can shape narratives and arguments can influence how a case is viewed by the public and judges. Judges need to be careful in understanding the role of social media in shaping the dynamics of the judicial space and take the necessary steps to maintain integrity and balance in trials.

The influence of social media on court decisions in criminal cases of religious blasphemy creates new challenges and opportunities in the judiciary. Judges are expected to understand the complex dynamics of interaction between the digital world

and the judicial space, hone their technical skills in assessing digital evidence, and consider the long-term implications of their decisions for society's understanding of the law. Meanwhile, the role of social media in shaping public opinion emphasizes the need for judges to consider the balance between fairness and response to social pressure. In facing an era where social media has become a major force, protecting the independence of judges is a key basis for ensuring that the judiciary remains fair, transparent and in accordance with fundamental values of justice.

In conclusion, if we take a look at the theory and principles, when a court decision is given, there are actually other legal measures that can be taken. In procedural criminal cases, for example, there are legal remedies such as appeal or cassation if the judge's decision was not satisfied. For us as the society and the netizen, social media can be a forum for people who feel that the existing decisions hurt the justice. Then the role of the social media can be a consideration by the judge when deciding the cases.

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