



# Manufactured Uncertainty in a Digital Age: Ulrich Beck's Risk Society and the Perils of Free Speech in Indonesia\*

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## ABSTRACT

Social media has emerged as a contemporary public forum enabling people to articulate thoughts and critiques with freedom and creativity. One of the social media sites is TikTok, which provides a platform for users to access and share information. TikTok has evolved into a platform that engages a broader audience through its diverse features. This story features TikToker Bima Yudho Saputro, a student from Lampung studying in Australia. In his discourse on critical thinking, he articulates his critique of infrastructure, education, and bureaucratic governance in Lampung Province. This study employs the Netnography method alongside Ulrich Beck's risk society theory to examine the hazards associated with freedom of expression in Indonesia's digital society via social media. The research findings indicate that the dangers encountered by content providers render them susceptible to potential prosecution. Social movements that emerge from social media are often characterized by instability. Information disseminates rapidly across the internet; nevertheless, Beck posits that this swift circulation is accompanied by a corresponding increase in risk. Social media, as a manifestation of reflexive modernization, exemplifies this contradiction: while digital platforms enhance democracy by enabling universal expression of opinions, they simultaneously generate a new domain of legal, social, and political risks that adversely affect individuals both personally and publicly.

## Keywords

freedom of speech; democracy; risk society; reflexive modernization; social movement;

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## INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary digital age, social media platforms like TikTok serve as a medium for individuals to articulate their views on diverse subjects. The TikTok platform has evolved into a venue for the dissemination of information and critique. TikTok serves not only as a source of pleasure and a venue for creativity but also as a forum for expressing viewpoints, including critiques of various social, political, and developmental issues. This indicates that TikTok is not merely an entertainment platform, but also possesses significant potential as an instrument for social change. TikTok serves as a useful medium for articulating societal criticism concerning many issues, including developmental constraints in a region (Eun, 2023).

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The platform TikTok has the capability of expanding its reach to include a more extensive audience. Criticism on TikTok is able to fast reach a larger audience because of the accessibility of the platform and the algorithms that facilitate the circulation of material. The TikTok platform serves not just as a source of enjoyment but also as a space for critical discourse that has the potential to influence public policy and increase awareness of major problems. The purpose of this awareness is to create an atmosphere conducive to participation through the exchange of ideas, the promotion of public support, and the promotion of conversation. Using the "stitch" feature in user contributions, as well as through the uploading of videos and comments. According to Firdaus et al. (2023), these characteristics make it possible for users to not only share knowledge but also actively participate in conversations through social media.

By means of uploads on the TikTok platform, a TikToker from Lampung by the name of Bima Yudho Saputro. In his video clip named "Reasons Lampung Gak Maju-Maju," he expresses his harsh critique of the bureaucratic governance, education, and infrastructure in the province of Lampung (Putri & Pratiwi, 2023). Because of the viral nature of his content, he was able to capture the attention and response of viewers. The authorities responded to his video after it went viral by filing a report with the Lampung Police on allegations of breaking the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE). This action indicates that the authorities took action. Based on the study, it was determined that the province of Lampung had suffered a loss of reputation as a result of the incident (Henry, 2023).

The idea of a risk society serves as the foundation for this study, which illustrates the circumstances under which people living in modern times are forced to confront dangers, discomfort, threats, and uncertainties that are brought about by a variety of variables that are inherent to modern life itself. Consequently, modern society is becoming more aware of the dangers and uncertainties that originate from a variety of sources as a result of the numerous changes that have taken place (Kusvianti et al., 2023). By merging the idea of risk society proposed by Ulrich Beck, we are able to comprehend how the expansion of social media platforms brings to an increase in both potential and security risks. Beck contends that contemporary society, particularly in light of the various technical advancements that have taken place, has entered an era in which hazards are decentralized and always present. Technology advancements, modernization, and globalization itself are the primary sources of risk. These factors generate new dangers that are not evident to the naked eye, but they have the ability to do harm not only on a local scale, but also on a worldwide scale (Putra, 2024).

As a result of an unclear circumstance, this risk is the influence and consequence that can be expected. Individuals frequently experience anxiety as a consequence of uncertainty that is interconnected with a variety of implications, which ultimately leads to a situation in their day-to-day lives that is either unpleasant or potentially harmful (Kusvianti et al., 2023). This uncertainty is a potential that may emerge as a result of an event that will lead to the individual suffering in the future. In a setting that is fraught with unpredictability, this demonstrates how susceptible individuals are to the repercussions of their actions in the digital era through the use of social media.

Recognizing that every activity has the potential to create new dangers is essential in this age of interconnected digital technology. When these dangers are not immediately apparent to the individual and they do not feel harmful to them (Kusvianti et al., 2023). According to Beck, there are two categories of hazards: direct risks and social risks. Psychological risks are also included in this category. At the same time, the hazards that materialize are unforeseen and unforeseeable. The use of social media by digital society is appropriate for this phenomenon to be considered. The usage of it, which frequently interacts without taking ethics into consideration. Using social media as an example, there is a lawsuit that has been brought against a brand. According to Almada and Tranggono (2023), this demonstrates that when a phrase is deemed to be defamatory, it can result in a summons being issued. Users of social media platforms are needed to be conscious of the implications of their activities, despite the fact that these platforms allow for freedom of expression. The social media site TikTok, along with other platforms, is a place where these hazards can be found and develop in this setting. It is clear that this circumstance has both beneficial and negative repercussions, as demonstrated by the example of Bima, which will be the subject of discussion in this essay.

As a digital expression of Beck's reflexive modernity, social media presents a new venue for public discourse, but it also enhances the hazards that are associated with it. Without any limitations, individuals are able to simply generate material, communicate their thoughts and perspectives, and engage with the larger community. Consequently, this establishes a platform for the expansion of democratic and inclusive possibilities. On the other side, when individuals use the platform, they expose themselves to a greater danger. These individuals are subject to both social and legal repercussions when they criticize government authority through social media. By taking legal action against individuals, society can be discouraged from expressing their thoughts, which can have a deterrent effect. It is common for Indonesian legal institutions to fail to defend freedom of expression due to repressive restrictions, such as those contained in the regulation of criminal acts of insult or defamation (Ellandra et al., 2022). This is despite the fact that the institutions' primary objective is to safeguard constitutional rights.

Beck's ideas on institutional failure and individual vulnerability are consistent with circumstances involving individuals, such as the case of Bima Yudho Saputro in Indonesia, who, as a result of their criticism of government authority, face dangers on both the social and legal fronts. Despite the fact that social media platforms offer a forum in which criticism can be spoken, this demonstrates that those who dare to express their criticism frequently face severe repercussions to their actions. The susceptibility of their actions to be carried out through social media means. A thorough comprehension of the potential vulnerabilities that may arise is of utmost importance. As we look at the situation involving Bima, we see that the vulnerability is not only experienced by him, but also by members of his family.

## **METHOD**

In order to investigate the potential dangers that digital society poses to the right to free speech on social media platforms, this study employs the Netnography methodology. The research locus and data sources are totally located in the internet realm, which is why the Netnography approach was selected. The purpose of doing research using the netnography method is to explain the behavior, attitudes, and interactions of individuals who are members of online communities (Lessa et al., 2017). This is accomplished by analyzing data gathered from online sources such as blogs, social media, and online forums. In particular, this research makes use of the material, reactions, and interactions that viewers have provided in the comments section of the video that Bima posted on the TikTok platform in which he criticizes the Lampung Provincial Government. Beginning with the creation of a research design, content observation, data collection, data classification (coding), and lastly, data interpretation are the stages that comprise the Netnography methodology that was utilized in this investigation. When researchers use netnography, they are able to investigate, comprehend, and evaluate data derived from online culture as well as interactions and communications. For contemporary research that has a research locus in the digital sphere, such as social media, this technique has the potential to make things much simpler.

Through the use of the Netnography approach, researchers are able to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the interactions and dynamics that take place through the comments column and the many other content that occurs as a response to the content that is produced by Bima (Kozinets, 2010). The risk society theory developed by Ulrich Beck is combined with netnography in order to provide light on the dynamics of social media activism and the inherent dangers that it poses in Indonesia. In the context of this study, the term "social media" refers to the TikTok platform, which serves as a public arena for online communities. In the instance of Bima, the online community emerges as the originator of a new social movement as a means of demonstrating solidarity.

The theory of Beck helps to explain why, in a culture that is prone to risk, social movements that originate online confront particular vulnerabilities. As evidenced by the response of the government of Lampung, these movements are prone to governmental persecution, despite the fact that they are able to quickly mobilize large numbers of people. In this context, Beck's institutional risk arises in the shape of legislation restrictions, such as the Information Technology Act (ITE Law), which aims to control digital expression in order to lower the perceived risk of social disturbance. Researchers want to see how these social risks are then confronted not just by the producers, but

also by their families, and they aim to do this by applying the risk society idea. As was the case with Bima, not only was he reported for violating the ITE Law, but his family also received a number of threats from individuals who were acting as "envoys" of the state.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

According to the results of this study, there has been a rise in the number of social dangers that individuals face, particularly in this particular instance for content providers. The results of this study indicate, more specifically, that the dangers that content creators are exposed to render them susceptible to the possibility of being criminalized, as was the case with Bima here, indicating uncertainty in a digital age. The public debate that was caused by Bima's criticism of the Lampung regional government resulted in the emergence of both positive and negative aspects, as well as a response from the regional government.

The subsequent dispute brought to light bigger questions concerning the state of democracy in Indonesia as well as the liberties of expression. Content creators, pro groups, contra groups, and the regional government, in addition to the central government, were embroiled in social tensions as a result of the debate that took place between the pro and con groups. As an illustration, the problem grew more problematic in the case of Bima because he used contemporary language that was in direct opposition to traditional norms. As a consequence, he was put in a position where he was at risk of being subjected to social sanctions and legal traps.

The findings of this study also revealed that public outrage regarding the dangers that Bima were exposed to eventually evolved into a social movement that aimed to safeguard Bima and fight for their rights through the use of digital media. A great number of people have begun to voice their concerns through social media ever since the video of Bima became viral. These issues have been expressed in the form of recordings as well as written posts. The huge support of the masses, which spurred actual action and attracted the attention of the public, including the attention of the central government, including President Joko Widodo, gave birth to this new social movement. In order to carry out a supervisory function, this social movement was successful in getting the President to go directly to the field to check the performance of the local government. This demonstrates how digital platforms can be a place to voice complaints, and it also serves as a reminder to the ruling elite that the people have the power to exert pressure on the authorities.

On the other hand, this study underscores the fact that social movements that originate from social media tend to be fragile, which is another intriguing point. In the case of Bima, the criticism that he expressed through the video that he made in an instant was able to become a topic of public conversation and elicit a variety of responses. According to Beck, the rapid circulation of information is also followed by a rapid escalation of risk. This implies that information gets disseminated through the internet in a relatively short amount of time. Legal risk is one of the dangers that Bima must contend with. Due to the fact that the word "dajjal" was used, which was considered to have the ability to influence public opinion, it did not take long for someone to report Bima in relation to the ITE Law.

In Indonesia, the filing of legal reports against content authors is not a new phenomenon. This issue then leads to a larger discussion, which is the criminalization of citizens' expression in the use of digital media. The data that was found suggests that about a significant number of content creators are subjected to criminality under the ITE Law on an annual basis. In addition, the evidence demonstrates that the conditions of the right to freedom of thought and expression, as well as the right to a feeling of security, in the digital sphere of Indonesia are not favorable. The results of this study are viewed from the point of view of a society that is prone to risk and that coexists with contemporary dangers that have evolved into worldwide issues.

Ellandra et al. (2022) discovered that there is the possibility of constraints being placed on freedom of thought, the right to communication, and the legal uncertainty that governs freedom of opinion in Indonesia. I concur with the statements made in the essay, which state that the ITE Law is being put into reality to stifle and restrict the freedom of opinion of citizens through the use of digital platforms. Barrosoa and Barroso (2023) investigate the effects that the digital revolution and social media have had on democratic principles and the right to express oneself freely. This article emphasizes how the revolution in access to information has increased public participation, which

can lead to the establishment of social movements. Having easy access to such material, on the other hand, poses a risk that the door to the dissemination of misleading information is wide open. In addition, social media platforms utilize algorithms that can be established by individuals who have interests for their own gain. For instance, these algorithms can be used to split voices, which has the potential to cause polarization in society.

### **Democracy and Social Media: New Risks in the Digital Age**

The use of social media has become an essential component of the democratic system of today, presenting a wide range of benefits as well as significant obstacles. According to Selian and Melina (2018), the freedom of speech is a crucial criterion that must be met in order to successfully enable democracy and public participation in decision-making. In this research, we will investigate the ways in which social media have the potential to either promote or weaken democracy, as well as the new dangers that have emerged in the digital era. Within the framework of this discussion, social media serves as a forum for expressing discontent while also posing new challenges to democratic institutions.

The merging of democracy and social media, according to Beck's idea, results in what he refers to as "artificial uncertainty." However, despite the fact that platforms like as TikTok make public expression more accessible, they also pose unanticipated risks. TikTok, on the one hand, gives users the ability to freely express their criticism, so establishing a forum for the discussion and critique of matters pertaining to the government. Nevertheless, on the other side, this liberty is frequently obscured by the legal and societal hazards that can pose a threat to individual users. In this particular instance, the critical video that Bima posted involves a form of free speech that involves government accountability, which is an essential principle of a democratic society. However, it also serves as an example of how these platforms expose citizens to risks, such as the possibility of being prosecuted for criminal offenses under the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE).

The criticism that was released in the video that Bima uploaded to TikTok and sent to the local government not only demonstrates his unhappiness, but it also symbolizes the human rights that have been granted by the constitution of Indonesia. According to the Constitution of 1945, article 28E paragraph 3, every individual possesses the freedom to congregate, associate with others, and express their thoughts. This is the case. Nevertheless, in spite of this promise, the legal action taken against Bima demonstrates that there are consequences for exercising one's right to freedom of opinion. The ability to criticize is an essential component of democratic government and is a component of the freedom of opinion. "It is important to voice opinions and freedom of opinion in order to realize the principles of transparency and accountability in order to advance and protect human rights," Kamil and Santosa (2023) said. This is true despite the fact that there is a possibility of legal prosecution.

A society at risk It is demonstrated by Beck that in contemporary democracies, the distinction between freedom and control becomes increasingly hazy as a result of the efforts of society to manage new types of risk. Employing laws such as the ITE Law as an example. According to the ITE Law, this is the government's method of exercising control over the digital realm. The manner in which state actors respond to perceived threats by regulating digital space is demonstrated by Indonesia's efforts to suppress online protest. It is in this context that Beck's study of institutionalized risk becomes relevant: the actions of the state create a contradiction in which social media becomes both a tool for democracy and an instrument for state surveillance and control, hence increasing the risks for individuals who participate in critical discourse. To put it another way, individuals risk the possibility of facing legal action if their beliefs are found to be in violation of the ITE Law, despite the fact that they have the freedom to share their opinions on social media.

### **Case Study: Bima Yudho Saputro and the Digital Risk Landscape**

Bima submitted a video on the TikTok platform on April 7, 2023, using the handle @awbimaxreborn as the username. The duration of the video was three minutes and twenty-eight seconds, and it focused on four primary subjects: inadequate infrastructure, inadequate education system, inadequate bureaucratic governance, and Lampung's heavy reliance on the agriculture sector (Riandi & Setiawan, 2023). Bima's film became viral not only because to the substance it included, but also

due to the emotional resonance it evoked in a large number of people in Lampung who had experienced the direct impact of the issues.

In his criticism, Bima pointed out that the infrastructure was not being properly maintained, and that many government projects had been unsuccessful. An illustration of this would be the uneven and deteriorated road conditions in Lampung. The school system in Lampung is plagued with issues, such as cheating in the process of accepting new students and the National Examination answer keys being distributed before the test began or being leaked, as he pointed out. Third, Bima condemned corrupt practices, ineffective bureaucratic governance, and laws that were not implemented. In conclusion, he claimed that Lampung is overly reliant on the agricultural sector, which contributes to the low level of the regional economy and makes it impossible to raise the standard of living of the people. Bima's critique not only expresses individual dissatisfaction with the socio-economic situations, but it also depicts the collective voice of Lampung society in general, which is that of people who feel disenfranchised by the policies of the government.



**Figure 1.** Screenshot of the Bima account and its viral video content (Source: TikTok content - <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSLbMY6Ky/>)

Beck's concept of individualization in a risk society is provided by the case of Bima Yudho Saputro, which serves as a direct illustration of the concept. Bima, in his capacity as an individual, makes use of a digital platform to express his right to freedom of speech; nonetheless, this individual action is loaded with collective risk, not only for himself but also for his family and supporters. This demonstrates that criticism of the government has a wide-ranging impact, which not only impacts the individual who is being criticized but also those who are considered to be closest to them. Personal assaults can be made through remarks, legal reporting, and intimidation, and this risk can manifest itself in a variety of ways.

"The police is coming to my mom's office?? Trying to extradite me? what?," Bima said in the caption on his account video.

The Bima Case, on the other hand, demonstrates the good potential of social media as a tool for collective action and mobilization. There are a great number of other TikTok users that show their support for Bima by either sharing videos that are similar to his or voicing their dissatisfaction (Kamil & Asril, 2023). Another connection can be made between this and the comments made on the video. In addition to feelings of support, gratitude, and sympathy, the contents of the numerous comments also include insults. Some of the comments are insults. Due to the fact that their actions might have an effect on more than just themselves, every person in a society that is full of dangers

is more responsible when it comes to coping with complicated social situations. In order to avoid causing losses that are more extensive than what was initially envisioned, it is imperative that every single person use greater caution when carrying out any activity in digital age.

*keren berani speak up*  
(cool, dare to speak up)

*statement yang bagus dan punya impact yg besar, gini contoh penggunaan media yang baik untuk menyampaikan keresahan*  
(a good statement and has a big impact, this is an example of good use of media to convey public problems)

**Figure 2.** Comments appreciate Bima account (Source: TikTok content - <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSLbMY6Ky/>)

*smangat trus bang buat kmajuan indonesia*  
(support for you for the progress of Indonesia)

*setuju banget kak, semangat kak, q jg orang lampung*  
(totally agree, I support you, I am also a Lampung person)

**Figure 3.** Comments support Bima account (Source: TikTok content - <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSLbMY6Ky/>)

*mulut perempuan, mukanya tengil*  
(female mouth, annoying face)

*gayanya melambai gitu 🤔🤔🤔*

**Figure 4.** Comments insulting Bima account (Source: TikTok content - <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSLbMY6Ky/>)

Beck makes the observation that in a society that is characterized by risk, individuals are required to take on a greater degree of responsibility, work toward the reduction of hazards, and seek certainty in their lives (Haq et al., 2023). When an individual has the courage to express their viewpoint on social media, they may be subjected to a response in the form of personal assaults from certain elements of society. This obligation is made clear for Bima in the fact that he is required to defend himself legally after being reported in accordance with the ITE Law. Not only does the risk pertain to his safety, but it also pertains to his reputation, legal standing, and public image. On the basis of Beck's concept of individual risk that is then externalized to the general public through the use of social media. Consequently, in the context of the situation involving Bima, his actions or behavior have a substantial impact on the larger community, despite the fact that the individual is unaware of the impact.

### **Reflexive Modernization and the Transformation of Civil Society**

When classical industrial society, which was the subject of study by classical scholars such as Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, had a tendency to view the growth of science and technology as a positive progress without being aware of the hazards and dangers that would come later, their perspective was characterized by a tendency to view the progress as a positive development. This occurred due to the fact that the threats that appeared during that age were created by natural elements (external), and as a result, society was not yet aware of the influence that scientific and technical advancement would have. Beck witnessed a fundamental shift in society as time progressed. As a consequence of what Beck referred to as "reflexive modernization" (Beck, 1992), the social structural conditions underwent a profound upheaval.

Reflexive modernization is a concept that originated as a reaction to classical modernization, which was characterized by an emphasis on industry, capitalism, and the exploitation of resources (Rasborg, 2012). In the era of classical modernization, society viewed the risks they faced as coming from external dangers, such as earthquakes, which originated from nature. However, in the era of reflexive modernization, risk was seen from a different angle, specifically as a product of human

action through the utilization of technological advancements. When society reached the stage of reflexive modernization, it started to critique the advancement of technology and the hazards that it posed. Is there a correlation between the growth and advancement of technology and the risks that it could potentially cause? A growing number of people in contemporary society are coming to the realization that the dangers they encounter are distinct from those that are experienced by those who reside and work in the agricultural sector. As a result, contemporary culture is starting to speculate about potential solutions and preventative measures for the problems that are caused by modernization itself.

The concept of reflexive modernization posits that modern civilization perpetually reconfigures itself in reaction to its own development. An illustrative case is seen in the modern public sphere, specifically social media. During the pinnacle of mass communication, the media functioned as a formidable institution exerting significant power and influence over the transformation of individual, societal, and cultural values (Handayani, 2011). Currently, social media has emerged as a platform where communication and engagement occur in real time, devoid of substantial geographical constraints. Modern society creates online communities on digital platforms, emerging from contemporary social dynamics. Social media facilitates public discourse and is intrinsically linked to a country's democratic settings. In this forum, people are afforded the liberty to articulate their views and perspectives. Nonetheless, this freedom does not imply the absence of danger; social media users must ultimately contend with potential adverse effects, including misinformation, hate speech, and legal repercussions. The legal challenges confronting Bima are indicative of the perils inherent in contemporary society. The rise of digital platforms, although democratizing public conversation, also introduces new legal and societal hazards for individuals. Social media serves as a mechanism for public oversight of government operations, enabling citizens to assess governmental performance; conversely, the public's activities on social media are subject to surveillance through various rules.

Many members of the online community voiced their opinions on the pros and negatives of Bima's usage of his social media platform to carry out monitoring functions and evaluate the performance of the administration. The disagreement between those who are in favor of the government and those who are in favor of Bima's criticism has arisen as a result of these pros and negatives. As Beck pointed out, online communities are environments in which risks are both heightened and scrutinized. The reaction of the public to the video that Bima posted, which ranged from encouragement to threats, demonstrates how digital platforms can become battlefields of both solidarity and danger. In this particular instance, social movements that develop as a result of social media are extremely fragile. As a result of the viral nature of Bima's critique, not only has information been rapidly disseminated, but the risks, including legal repercussions, have also rapidly escalated.

In short, the digital world is not a place where content creators like Bima have complete freedom; rather, it is a complex landscape of risk that is molded by the activities of individuals and the participation of the state. As a result of this tendency, Beck's observation that institutions frequently fail to keep up with the development of society remains true.

### **Manufactured Uncertainty in a Risk Society**

Modern civilization confronts both external threats and internal risks, the latter increasingly generated by its own institutions. Beck's notion posits that the hazards generated by modernity are indeterminate. This artificial uncertainty stems from human and technical actions whose consequences cannot be entirely anticipated. The risks posed by new hazards are worldwide disseminated, rendering the challenges faced no longer confined to a specific place, complicating their calculation, measurement, or management (Antonilli, 2022). This created uncertainty will be challenging to address using conventional methods or policies, as its global scope necessitates a novel approach to management and mitigation.

In a global risk society, challenges and dangers emerge from multiple directions and are not solely military; these threats are varied and possess distinct features. The primary element encompasses not only physical violence but also the sense of violence and danger that endangers each individual, therefore instigating the "globalization of terror" (Antonilli, 2022, p. 17). The ITE Law has transformed from a regulatory measure governing digital conduct into a mechanism of

artificial ambiguity, intentionally crafted to instill anxiety. The ITE Law exemplifies how the legal environment engenders ambiguity for those exercising freedom of speech. Bima's attitude to criticizing the Lampung administration exemplifies Beck's notion of created uncertainty. This ambiguity renders individuals vulnerable, prompting them to seek a "safe place" to shelter from the perceived threat of the ITE Law. Bima sought asylum in Australia via a protection visa.

The ambiguity generated by the ITE Law and several rules concerning freedom of expression in Indonesia exemplifies Beck's thesis, which signifies a transformation in the conventional perception of risk and security. This form of risk erodes public trust in state agencies responsible for safeguarding the right to freedom of expression, while the current restrictions function as a double-edged sword. The legislation offers protection; yet, it is accompanied by additional regulations that effectively curtail the people's right to express themselves. Ultimately, the populace appears powerless against the governing elite.

According to data from the Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network (SAFE-net), a minimum of 393 individuals were affected by the ITE Law between 2013 and 2021 (Kajaksana, 2022). Nonetheless, researchers have not identified specific documentation indicating the number of content creators affected by the ITE Law. The 2021 Indonesian Digital Rights Situation report identified 30 criminal cases prosecuted under the ITE Law. 35.7% of the individuals reporting these occurrences were public officials, indicating the utilization of regulations to suppress dissenters and activists (digital repression). The ITE Law subsequently raises issues over the ambiguity of safeguards for thought and expression, posing a risk to users of digital platforms. In a risk society, individuals must traverse an increasingly unpredictable environment where conventional protections—such as legal assurances for freedom of speech—are compromised by novel forms of risk regulation.

Using the case of Bima as an example, Beck contends that modern societies are responsible for the creation of their own risks. The platforms that allow for freedom of expression also expose individuals to legal risks that were before imagined. The dangers that Bima is exposed to are not limited to the individual, but those dangers also spread to her family and friends, and they are experienced by them. In addition to having an impact on the judicial system, this uncertainty also has an impact on the social order, as public people such as Bima become symbols of greater societal arguments about democracy and freedom.

## CONCLUSION

Understanding the dynamics of free speech in the digital age is made much easier by Ulrich Beck's risk society theory, which offers a highly relevant analytical lens. This is especially true when considering the fast shifting social and institutional hazards that present themselves. Beck contends that risks in contemporary society are not only posed by external or physical dangers, but also by human activities and technology itself, both of which are notoriously difficult to anticipate or manage. Social media, as a product of reflexive modernization, clearly demonstrates this contradiction: on the one hand, digital platforms expand democracy by allowing anyone to express their opinions; but on the other hand, these media create new arenas for legal, social, and political risks that harm individuals both personally and publicly.

The situation involving Bima Yudho Saputro is a real illustration of how the area of digital space can become a place where freedom of expression and legal surveillance collide. As a content creator, Bima is subject to legal repercussions for statements that he has made on social media. This demonstrates how the state and judicial institutions have a tendency to perceive digital content as an object that is subject to stringent supervision. Clearly, this demonstrates that the freedom of expression in the digital world is not completely unrestricted by the control of institutions; rather, it is constrained by regulations that regulate expression in the digital realm.

In addition, Beck's understanding of manufactured uncertainty sheds light on the way in which the uncertainty that is consciously or accidentally produced by modern systems has an increasing impact on digital liberties. Because of the conditions that are created by states and technology businesses, individuals are put in a position where they are vulnerable to a variety of dangers, including the exploitation of personal data, the dissemination of false information, and the criminalization of opinions. This circumstance highlights the significance of digital rights as a kind of protection against institutional risks that cannot be avoided, while also promoting talks about

regulation that is more equitable and transparent. In this particular setting, Beck's risk society theory invites us to take into consideration the fact that safeguarding digital liberties is not only about technology or security, but also about social justice and human rights. The risks that are associated with the digital society are not limited to the uncertainty that individual people face; rather, they also include the collective uncertainty that results from the interventions of institutions on liberties. Consequently, the Bima case highlights the significance of adopting public policies that are not just responsive to digital risks, but also proactive in preserving people's fundamental rights in an era of uncertainty that is caused by the system itself.

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