

ABSTRACT

This study examines the persistence of informal traffic directing practices carried out by *Pak Ogah* in Indonesia, drawing on the concept of state forbearance, understood as the deliberate non-enforcement of law in urban governance. Despite clearly violating traffic and public order regulations, this practice operates openly and remains strikingly stable in everyday urban life. The findings show that non-enforcement toward *Pak Ogah* does not stem from weak state capacity. State authorities possess the capacity to enforce existing regulations but refrain from doing so. Instead, non-enforcement emerges from fragmented institutional mandates and the absence of alternative policies capable of replacing this source of livelihood. In practice, the discretion of street-level officials allows the activity to persist despite its formal illegality, while consistent tolerance enables workers to sustain claims over public space and secure meaningful livelihoods. By introducing the concept of ‘forbearance from below’, this study shows that non-enforcement is not only a top-down political strategy but is also produced through everyday administrative practices. Informality and illegality, in this sense, are not external to the state but are actively reproduced through selective non-enforcement as part of routine governance.

Keywords: forbearance; informal economy; street-level bureaucracy; urban governance; Indonesia