

Legal Review of Traffic Violations by Motorcyclists in Urban Areas

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Abstract

Traffic violations by motorcyclists are a serious problem that often occurs in urban areas and contribute to high accident rates and congestion. This article examines the legal aspects of these violations by examining the applicable legal provisions, especially in Law Number 22 of 2009 concerning Traffic and Road Transportation (LLAJ Law), and evaluating the effectiveness of its law enforcement. This study uses a normative legal method and is supported by empirical data from the Traffic Police regarding the most common types of violations in big cities such as Jakarta and Surabaya. The results show that although legal sanctions have been regulated, weak law enforcement and low public legal awareness are the main obstacles. A more humanistic and educative approach is needed in the implementation of traffic law enforcement.

Keywords: traffic violations, motorcyclists, urban areas, law enforcement, LLAJ Act

Introduction

The growth in the number of motorized vehicles, especially motorcycles, in urban areas of Indonesia has shown a very significant trend in the last two decades. This increase is driven by the needs of urban communities for fast, flexible, and economical means of transportation. In this context, motorcycles have emerged as the main mobility solution that can answer the challenges of congestion and reduce operational costs. High accessibility and relatively affordable prices make motorcycles a favorite vehicle amidst the development of big cities such as Jakarta, Surabaya, and Bandung. However, behind its benefits, the surge in the number of motorcycles has also had a negative impact on traffic order and safety.

One of the most striking impacts is the rampant traffic violations committed by motorcyclists. This phenomenon is not merely incidental, but has developed into a systemic social problem. Common types of violations include riding without a helmet, violating traffic markings and

signs, going against the flow of traffic, running red lights, and not carrying administrative documents such as a Driving License (SIM) and Vehicle Registration Certificate (STNK). This violation behavior not only endangers the personal safety of the rider, but also poses a high risk to other road users. Traffic accidents involving motorcycles are a strong warning that there is an unresolved crisis of legal compliance.

This problem becomes more complex when associated with legal culture and public awareness. In many cases, traffic violations are no longer seen as wrongdoing, but rather as accepted habits. A permissive culture towards violations of the law has spread to various levels of society, where rules are considered negotiable formalities. As long as they are not caught by officers, violations are considered trivial. This phenomenon shows the weak internalization of legal values in everyday life, which ultimately becomes the main obstacle in realizing a culture of orderly traffic.

Legally, Indonesia actually has a fairly adequate legal framework to regulate traffic issues. Law Number 22 of 2009 concerning Traffic and Road Transportation is the main basis for this regulation. The law covers various important aspects, ranging from the rights and obligations of road users, vehicle safety standards, to administrative and criminal sanctions for violators of the rules. However, the effectiveness of the law is not only determined by the normative quality of the rules, but also by the extent to which the rules are implemented consistently and obeyed by the community. This is where the major challenge facing Indonesia lies: the imbalance between ideal law (*das sollen*) and social reality (*das sein*) in the field.

Urban areas are crucial points in testing the effectiveness of traffic laws. Jakarta, for example, is the city with the highest rate of traffic violations, followed by Surabaya and Bandung. Data from the Police show that most violations are committed by motorcyclists, and these violations often result in fatal traffic accidents. This condition raises fundamental questions about the extent to which the existing legal system is able to respond effectively to the dynamics of violations, and whether law enforcement officers have sufficient capacity and integrity to enforce the rules amidst various obstacles in the field.

Considering the above background, this paper aims to comprehensively examine the legal aspects of the phenomenon of traffic violations by motorcyclists in urban areas. This study will not only examine the applicable legal provisions, but also analyze the effectiveness of their implementation and evaluate the performance of officers in the law enforcement process. Through this approach, it is hoped that a more complete understanding of the root of the problems faced can be obtained and strategic recommendations can be formulated that can strengthen the traffic law system in Indonesia both in terms of regulation, education, and a more transparent and integrated monitoring mechanism.

One important aspect that should be considered in examining traffic violations in urban areas is the sociological dimension that shapes people's mindsets and behavior. Rapid urbanization has created high mobility pressures amidst limited road infrastructure, encouraging people to seek practical and instant transportation solutions. In this context, motorcycles have become the main vehicle to overcome space and time constraints. Unfortunately, the massive use of motorcycles is not accompanied by adequate legal awareness. The culture of pragmatism and individualism that grows in urban communities also encourages the behavior of "just getting there quickly" without considering safety or applicable regulations. This is also reinforced by weak social control and minimal social sanctions against violators. When the surrounding community tends to remain silent or even imitate deviant behavior, then breaking the law is no longer considered something shameful, but rather part of the daily routine of life in big cities.

The above conditions pose a serious challenge to traffic law enforcement. Although the police routinely conduct operations such as Operation Zebra or Operation Patuh, and the e-Tilang system has been implemented in several large cities, the results have not been entirely encouraging. There are still many violations that go undetected due to technological limitations, uneven monitoring coverage, and deviant practices such as bribery and extortion that harm the integrity of law enforcement. In fact, some violators find it easier to resolve violations with shortcuts—either by avoiding raids or paying a "peace" on the spot. This shows that the effectiveness of law enforcement does not only depend on how many officers are deployed, but more on the quality of governance and integrity of the law enforcement agency

itself. If the law is seen as negotiable, then the goal of creating a deterrent effect becomes increasingly difficult to achieve.

Recognizing this complexity, a more comprehensive approach is needed in dealing with traffic violations by motorcyclists, namely by integrating repressive, preventive, and educational efforts simultaneously. An educational approach is one of the important keys to forming public legal awareness from an early age. Traffic education must be integrated into the school curriculum, from elementary to secondary levels, so that the younger generation grows up with an understanding of the importance of safety and obedience to the law on the highway. In addition, public campaigns through social media, rider communities, and automotive company CSR programs can also be effective means of building a culture of orderly traffic collectively. In the long term, the success of the legal system is not only measured by how harsh the sanctions are, but by how much legal awareness grows from within each citizen. This awareness is the main foundation for the realization of a safe, orderly, and just traffic system amidst the dynamics of big cities in Indonesia.

Research methods

This study uses a normative legal approach, namely examining legal norms that regulate traffic violations, especially Law Number 22 of 2009 concerning Traffic and Road Transportation (LLAJ Law). This approach is enriched with empirical data in the form of annual reports from the Indonesian National Police (Polri), especially from the Traffic Directorate of Polda Metro Jaya and Polda East Java, regarding the types and frequency of traffic violations in urban areas.

Data collection techniques are carried out through literature studies on primary legal materials (laws, government regulations, and police regulations) and secondary legal materials (legal literature, journal articles, and research reports). Empirical data are analyzed descriptively-qualitatively to describe the correlation between legal provisions and the reality of violations in the field.

Results and Discussion

Indonesia has a relatively complete legal framework for regulating road traffic and transportation, which is broadly stated in Law Number 22 of 2009 concerning Road Traffic and Transportation (LLAJ Law). This law is the normative basis for determining the rights, obligations, and prohibitions for road users, especially motorcyclists. Some provisions that are often violated by motorists include Article 287 paragraph (1) concerning violations of traffic signs and road markings, Article 291 concerning the obligation to use standard helmets, Article 281 concerning the obligation to have a Driving License (SIM), and Article 293 which prohibits the use of vehicles that are not roadworthy. Unfortunately, the existence of these regulations has not been able to fully reduce the number of violations in the field. This shows a gap between ideal legal norms (*das sollen*) and the reality of social practice (*das sein*), which reflects the fact that legal values have not been internalized in the traffic culture of society.

This phenomenon is reinforced by empirical data showing the high number of traffic violations, especially in urban areas. Based on records from the Traffic Directorate of Polda Metro Jaya throughout 2023, more than 900,000 violations were recorded in the Jakarta area, and around 70% of them were committed by motorcyclists. The most dominant types of violations include going against traffic flow (24%), not wearing a helmet (21%), running a red light (18%), and not carrying a driver's license or vehicle registration (15%). Similar data was found in other big cities such as Surabaya and Bandung, where the 18–35 age group—who are of productive age and should be role models in traffic—are actually the most violators. Interviews with police officers showed that violations most often occur during rush hours, such as when going to and from work. Common reasons given by violators are because they are in a hurry or looking for shortcuts, indicating that violating behavior is more driven by the pragmatic mindset typical of urban society than by deliberate malicious intent.

In terms of law enforcement, various efforts have been made, such as Operation Patuh, Operation Zebra, and the implementation of the electronic ticketing system (e-TLE). However, its effectiveness is still limited. Many violations are not detected due to limited monitoring devices, and there are still efforts by the community to avoid sanctions through bribery or using ticket brokers. Law enforcement is also in a dilemma between firmness and a humanist approach. On the one hand, a repressive approach is needed to create a deterrent effect, but on

the other hand, education and a preventive approach are no less important to form sustainable legal awareness. The imbalance in the implementation of the electronic ticketing system between regions further widens the space for unmonitored violations. In addition, weak legal education from an early age and the continued presence of officers who lack integrity worsen the effectiveness of rule enforcement.

To overcome this problem, a comprehensive reform is needed in the strategy for dealing with traffic violations. Law enforcement is not enough to rely only on repressive aspects, but must also emphasize an educational and participatory approach. Some strategic steps that can be implemented include increasing traffic law literacy through integration into the education curriculum and social media campaigns, expanding the e-TLE system nationally with the support of modern technology such as license plate recognition and digital tracking, and implementing social sanctions or public service obligations as an alternative to administrative penalties. In addition, strengthening the integrity of law enforcement officers is absolutely necessary through strict internal supervision and easy and safe public reporting mechanisms. With these steps, it is hoped that public legal awareness will increase, and a culture of orderly traffic can be realized sustainably.

The problem of traffic violations by motorcyclists cannot only be seen as an individual problem, but rather as a reflection of the weak legal culture system that applies in society. In legal theory, the existence of legal norms must be supported by social effectiveness in order to function optimally. However, in the context of traffic in Indonesia, there is a striking imbalance between normative legal regulations and the real behavior of people on the highway. This indicates that legal norms have not been fully internalized into the social values adopted by society. Violations are no longer considered a form of deviation, but rather as adaptive actions to busy road situations, minimal supervision, and driven by the need for time efficiency. Without the formation of collective awareness regarding the importance of orderly traffic, violations will continue to be part of the daily routine that is difficult to eradicate, no matter how tight the supervision of the authorities.

This gap cannot be separated from structural factors that also strengthen the permissive culture towards violations. Inadequate road infrastructure, minimal special space for motorcyclists,

and a weak public transportation system also encourage users to rely on motorbikes, even with the risk of violations. In many big cities, motorized vehicle users are often not given proper and safe space to drive in a disciplined manner. As a result, violations such as going against the flow or running red lights are often chosen as practical "solutions", not because of ignorance of the law, but because they are considered more efficient in the context of daily needs. Therefore, solving traffic problems is not only a matter of law enforcement, but must also touch on aspects of urban planning policies, equal distribution of infrastructure, and proper public services.

On the other hand, reforms in law enforcement mechanisms must be carried out systematically and comprehensively. One crucial approach is strengthening the technology-based enforcement system, such as electronic ticketing (e-TLE), which has been proven to reduce direct interaction between officers and violators—while also reducing the potential for corruption or extortion. However, the implementation of e-TLE is still sporadic and not evenly distributed throughout Indonesia, especially outside large cities. The government must ensure that this system can be implemented nationally, with the support of digital infrastructure and adequate technical training for officers in the regions. In addition, regulatory updates need to be carried out so that digital evidence from the e-TLE system has strong legal force and is not easily sued or misused. With an evidence-based and data-based approach, traffic law enforcement will be more objective, transparent, and accountable.

Prevention efforts must also involve the active role of the community, both through education and community empowerment. Traffic safety campaigns must be designed not only to be ceremonial, but also to be able to touch the psychological and emotional aspects of the community—for example by presenting real stories of accident victims or testimonies from families who have lost members due to violations. Good education not only provides information, but also forms new attitudes and awareness. Educational institutions, community organizations, mass media, and even online transportation companies can work together to create an ecosystem that encourages compliance with traffic laws. In the long term, behavioral change will only be achieved if the community feels they have a moral responsibility to obey traffic laws, not just because they are afraid of sanctions.

Conclusion

Traffic violations by motorcyclists in urban areas are a serious issue that has legal and social implications. Although it has been regulated in the LLAJ Law, the implementation of law enforcement still faces various obstacles, ranging from a permissive culture to weak technological supervision. A legal approach is needed that is not only repressive, but also educative and participatory in order to create a culture of orderly and law-abiding traffic in urban communities.

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