

Street-Level Bureaucracy in Migration Governance: Discretion in Preventing Human Trafficking in East Nusa Tenggara

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Abstract

This study examines the practice of street-level bureaucracy in protecting Indonesian migrant workers (IMWs) through the discretionary power of immigration officers at the Class I Immigration Office TPI Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara (ENT). Using a qualitative case study approach with in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis, the research reveals that officers exercise significant discretion in passport issuance to prevent human trafficking (TPPO). Key practices include profiling, risk assessment, service rationing, and legal protection mechanisms. The study argues that discretion operates in a spectrum between protective and exclusionary actions, shaped by resource constraints, workload pressure, and institutional ambiguity. While technology integration (SIMKIM) strengthens data verification, effective prevention requires collaborative governance involving local governments, labor offices, BP3MI (Indonesian Migrant Workers Protection and Service Centre), and law enforcement agencies. The study contributes to street-level bureaucracy theory by highlighting the protective–exclusionary continuum of discretion in a feminized migration corridor and emphasizing the necessity of multi-stakeholder coordination to address structural vulnerabilities in ENT’s migration corridors.

Keywords: Street-Level Bureaucracy, Human Trafficking, Discretionary Power, Migrant Workers, Collaborative Governance