## #8956 Review

Review Form Response

review form

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| The attached article has been submitted for publication in *Journal Government and Politics*.  Would you please review it and recommend acceptance or rejection on the basis of the points listed below. **Please complete this checklist and make your comments on the enclosed comments sheet**. All reviews will be double-blind. Review sheets will be sent to the author(s) anonymously. Please return checklist and comments according to the instructions of the editor(s).    *If you are not in a position to complete the review within the requested period, please notify us or return the manuscript without delay.* |
| Editor(s):  Achmad Nurmandi |
| **Manuscript no**. JGP-14/4/2014  **Entitled:**  Too many Stages, Too Little Time: Bureaucratization and Potential Impasse in the Social Safety Net Program in Indonesia  **Type of article:**  original research |

**Review Sheet: General judgment**

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| No. | Criteria | Yes | No | See comments sheet  (Please check P if the specific comments are provided) |
| 1. | Is the subject of the article within the scope of the journal? | X |  |  |
| 2. | Is this a new and original contribution? | X |  |  |
| 3. | Does the title of this paper clearly and sufficiently reflect its contents? |  |  | X |
| 4. | Are the presentation, organization and length satisfactory? |  |  | X |
| 5. | Are the interpretations and conclusions sound and justified by the data? |  |  | X |
| 6. | Are the key words and abstracts/summary informative? | X |  |  |
| 7. | Can you suggest brief additions or amendments (words, phrases) or an introductory statement that will increase the value of this paper for an international audience? | X |  |  |
| 8. | Can you suggest any reductions in the paper, or deletions of parts? |  |  | X |
| 9. | Are the illustrations and tables necessary and acceptable? |  |  | No tables or illustrations |
| 10. | Are the references adequate and are they all necessary? | X |  |  |
| 11. | Is the quality of the English language satisfactory? |  |  | Much polishing is needed to improve quality of presentation |
| 12. | Is the paper acceptable for publication? |  | |  |
| (a) in its present form? | X | |  |
| (b) with minor revisions? |  | |  |
| (c) the paper should be reconsidered after major revision? | X | |  |
| (d) the paper is unacceptable for publication in its current form? |  | |  |
| 13. | Scientific quality: (Please check by P)  £  High                                                 X-£  Average                                                         £  Low | | | |

\*\*\*  Please continue on page 2 (Comments sheet)  \*\*\*

**14. Please provide general comments or specific suggestions**

(or please kindly send us your separate comments as an attachment)

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| This paper is a descriptive study of the bureaucratization of the social safety net program of Indonesia. It described the various stumbling blocks in the implementation of the program and its potential impasse or deadlock in its implementation. However, in the conclusion, it already concluded that there is an impasse in the implementation which is different from the “potential impasse” in the title.  The study aimed that by mapping out potential obstacles, it can provide a number of key solutions for resolving obstacles in the field. However, the paper focused mainly in the discussion of the convoluted process of implementation without presenting a valid solution to improve the implementation process. It should be noted that the problems mentioned are not different from the problems experienced by the Philippines in implementing its own program for the “poorest of the poor” during this COVID pandemic. But to solve these problems is not enough to describe them. Discussing the obstacles without a thorough analysis their causes is just a mere criticism to the program. The paper should look into the reasons, for example, in the delayed and difficult documentation of recipients, efforts should have been made to find out why or what are the reasons for the delay. If some are already dead and others have erroneous documents or missing documents, the database must be very old or the gathering of information is faulty. The same happened in the Philippines but the documentation was later downloaded to the local governments for information gathering and verification because the local officials know their people. So the documentation process was fast tracked and the documents obtained from the local were inputted into the data base which served as the final data needed in order to enjoy the support provided by the government. In other words, the paper described the problem without looking into their causes in order to present alternative processes or solutions to identified problems. For example, why so many people or authorities involved in the documentation and verification process. Was there an effort to find out what is sufficient because other levels might be redundant and unnecessary. There were 16 items required in the identification of recipients. Why these many? Are some items untrustworthy? Then eliminate it if it is unreliale. There might be some items that can be collapsed and merged into one if both serve the same purpose. If these stages are not necessary, we can recommend alternative courses of actions. Unfortunately, the paper did not come up with recommended alternative courses of actions that would eliminate too much bureaucratization. It ended up with a conclusion without clear recommendations to fast tract the process.  It was asserted by the author that research on social safety net policies must not only look at *how* policies are carried out, but must also look at how policies *should be* carried out, as well as *predict* their impact when they are done. This assertion is true by the paper did not give any predicted impact.  As a part of the methology, policy documents were gathered by the author. But there was no analysis presented regarding the rationale, objectives and procedures set forth in the documents. These are important point in the event that improvements are recommended through policy amendments,  In the case of e-Warung which showed that some of those validated cannot produce the goods required by the policy, what is the recommended alternative to take in order to achieve the intent of the policy? So it is not only the validation process that is problematic but also the capability of the e-Warung to provide what is required, so is it the policy that is at fault? These may not be a part of the study but it could be recommended for further research on the same topic.  In summary it is not enough to pinpoint the bureaucratization of a policy as the problem. The research identify the causes of bureaucratization as a problem. Moreover, knowing the problem is not the only objective articulated in the study. A solution should be identified and recommended for policy improvement.    Dr. David Nadnaden Almarez |