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Too many Stages, Too Little Time: Bureaucratization and Impasse in the Social Safety Net Program in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Since its first announcement in March 2020, the number of positive confirmed patients as well as patients under surveillance has increased exponentially. Recognizing the impact of Covid-19 on the poor, the government reallocated expenditure budget by increasing the amount of aid to the community. This paper focuses on social safety net policies, mainly in *Sembako* Program as non-cash social aid. This aid is actually not any new programs, as it have been around since 2017, but the Covid-19 pandemic is adding to the economic burden of the household so the aid is increased in amount. This paper puts the emphasis on how the actual social safety net policy must be implemented, not only look at *how* policies are carried out, but also look at how policies *should be* carried out, as well as *predict* their impact when they are done. It is undeniable that the problem of bureaucratization always comes up in every policy, with no exception for social aid policy. By mapping out obstacles, this paper provide a number of key solutions for resolving the problem
Keywords: Covid-19, social safety net, social aid, poor family, Sembako Card

INTRODUCTION

On March 2, 2020, at the National Palace, the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, together with the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, Terawan Agus Putranto, announced the first Covid-19 case in Indonesia. Since then, up to April 30, there have been more than 10,118 confirmed cases, with 792 deceased, and 1,522 recovered, and these data are only the confirmed data of people suffering from Covid (Idham 2020). Outside of this data, the missing data numbers are suspected to still be very large. Since its inception,

the number of people with Covid has increased exponentially, and they are spread in almost all provinces in Indonesia, with Jakarta as the epicenter. With so many regions confirming positive patients with Covid, the government has had to take several important policies to stop the spread of Covid, especially in the society.

The government's policy to stop the spread of Covid was not only carried out by the central government, but also the provincial government. Among the various policies taken, one of the most impactful is Large-Scale Social Restrictions, promoted by Minister of Health (2020). This policy, simply speaking, instructs everyone to stay at home, limit all social activities, dismiss schools, close all entertainment venues, limit public transportation, and ask offices to close their activities – with exception to very important things like hospitals, government agencies, food supply stores, logistics, fuel and banking.

With a large-scale social restriction policy in place, which is a continuation of various policies to ask everyone to work from home and learn from home, the impact is immediately felt in the community, especially for the poor whose income is highly dependent on daily wages (Djalante et.al 2020). Preventing greater turmoil in the community, then on March 20, the President of the Republic of Indonesia issued a Presidential Instruction 4/2020 on refocusing activities and reallocation of budgets that focused on the government's efforts to change the portion of the budget, which was initially more towards infrastructure and human resource development, into a budget for disaster management. These budgets will be reallocated to the Covid-19 prevention budget and the provision of social safety nets in the form of social aid, both cash and non-cash.

There are three interesting focuses of this presidential instruction: loosening of interest payments and installments for one year for lower class people who take vehicle loans and stimulus of giving subsidies on interest difference for those taking subsidized home ownership loans. This stimulus policy was taken

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because the impact of Covid which significantly slowed down the economy, in addition to the government's efforts to maintain people's purchasing power. In addition to providing housing credit stimulus, the government also provides a social safety net in the form of direct cash aid and non-cash aid to encourage household consumption (Sugianto 2020). The government provides additional aid with the amount of fifty thousand rupiahs, so that each family who receives a *Kartu Sembako* (Basic Needs Card) will receive two hundred thousand rupiahs per month for six months. In addition, the government has allocated more than ten trillion rupiahs, through the *Kartu Pra-Kerja* (Pre-Employment Card) scheme, where each card holder will get an incentive of one million rupiah per month for three months.

One of the most major policies is the Hope Family Program (*Program Keluarga Harapan*/PKH) and the *Sembako* Program (see Suharto 2015, Suleman & Resnawati 2017). The two programs are actually different, but are interrelated with one another. Both of these programs are implemented by the Indonesian Ministry of Social Affairs as part of the social safety net program intended for poor households in Indonesia. For the Hope Family Program, as of April 15, the government has distributed a budget of 16.4 trillion rupiah, out of a total ceiling of 37.4 trillion rupiah. The distribution of the budget has calculated the additional target families of as many as eight hundred thousand households. As for *Sembako* Program, the amount distributed will reach 14 trillion rupiah, covering the distribution period of May 2020. The budget has also included the addition of targeted families of beneficiaries in the midst of the Covid emergency period (Astuti 2020).

As states in the Regulation of Ministry of Social Affair 10/2017, the Hope Family Program is a conditional social aid program aimed for poor families determined as Beneficiary Families (*Keluarga Penerima Manfaat*/KPM or just simply stated as Family). The Central Statistics Agency stated that the number of poor people in Indonesia in September 2019 numbered to

24.79 million, with the number in urban areas reaching 9.86 million and in rural areas amounting to 14.93 million. In order to receive benefits from the program, the recipient must meet several existing criteria. Criteria for Hope Family Program beneficiaries are intended for the poor and vulnerable families registered in the Integrated Data of Poor People Category Handling Program (Victoria 2020, Putri & Noer 2020).

In addition to Hope Family Program, the state also provides non-cash food aid known as the *Sembako* Program. The program began in 2016, and is effectively running since 2017 by providing Non-Cash Food Aid (*Bantuan Pangan Non-Tunai*/BPNT) to Family, since the beginning of 2020, this program has been developed as a Basic Needs Program (*Sembako* Program). In addition, the Sembako Program expands the types of commodities that can be purchased so that they are not only rice and eggs as in the previous Non-Cash Food Aid program. This is an effort of the Government to provide Family an access to staples with other nutritional content. This condition was later changed based on the latest instructions (Presidential Instruction 6/2020), that the initial aid fund of one hundred fifty thousand per month was raised to two hundred thousand rupiah, including the reallocation of School Operational Aid (*Bantuan Operasional Sekolah*/ BOS) and Village Funds (*Dana Desa*) for handling Covid-19 in the community.

Although it has been done since 2017, moreover with the large amount of aid funds provided, no significant problems should occur in channeling aid to poor families in Indonesia, but the factual condition shows it is not the case. As will be explained further, the social safety net policy, on paper, is very good and beneficial for the poor. But factually, to obtain this aid, it requires one to go through a bureaucracy and very long and tiring stages, so that often the aid is not on target.

This paper focuses on the social safety net policy for poor families, mainly the *Sembako* Program. This paper puts the emphasis on how the actual social safety net policy must be imple-

274   mented. At this point, this paper not only look at *how* policies are carried out, but also look at how policies *should be* carried out, as well as *predict* their impact when they are done. By describing the related policies, the next step is to map the obstacles and problems, especially in the earliest stages of policy implementation: in the data collection process and validation. By looking at these two aspects, this paper will open the perspectives and further research opportunities, that in the efforts to deal with Covid-19, the Indonesian government is still confused and trapped in an impasse over the bureaucratic process which actually makes the problem of poverty to never be resolved.

SOCIAL SAFETY NET, REVISITED

Research on social safety nets can be divided into three categories: how programs are implemented, the role of facilitators, and criticism of programs. The first category, focus on the model of policy implementation and praise that the program is running very well and actually reduces poverty in the community. Nazara & Rahayu (2013), Suharto (2015), Nainggolan & Susantyo (2018), and Sasmito & Nawangsari (2019) for example, their studies support the role of the Hope Family Program as a social protection program, which is very successful in overcoming poverty in Indonesia. With a focus on income support scheme through conditional cash transfer, this program contributes to poverty alleviation, especially in improving access to education and health. This research tends to ignore that not all recipients are poor groups who really need help, because they are more focused on how policies are implemented, how the mechanism for transferring funds, and how the recipients respond to the assistance provided. Another studies by Suryana, Sugiana & Trulline (2016), Marnah, Husaini, & Ilmi (2016), Putri & Noer (2020), and Razali & Putri (2020) examine how program recipients respond in education and health services. In this case, they tend to see two different sides: on the one hand, how beneficiaries use the full potential of the program, and on the other

hand how recipients are actually reluctant to use the assistance they receive. This happens for two reasons: *First*, the recipient's ignorance of all the potential assistance they have, so they do not use the services and facilities provided. *Second*, refusal to use assistance can arise from organizers who carry out discriminatory actions, for example refusing to serve until deliberately slowing down services, so recipients of assistance are reluctant to use the services available.

The second category is research that focuses on field assistance teams. Research by Aminuddin & Sari (2016), Aminuddin & Syirah (2016), and Rahmawati & Kisworo (2017) for example, explains that the program facilitator team must carry out four main points: facilitator, educator, community representative, and have knowledge of various technical matters related to the program. These studies found major obstacles that were often faced by the team, including difficulties in verifying and validating recipient data that had to be done manually, moving locations of assignments that often made the process of adaptation to the new environment, information and/or policies that often changed suddenly, and locations of assistance that were difficult to access.

The third category focuses more on criticism of social safety net policies. Research from Lee & Hwang (2016), Suleman & Resnawati (2017), Restianti (2017), Ayuningtyas & Rahaju (2018), Dehani, Hernawan, & Purnamasari (2018), Miranda, Sunyata, & Arifin (2019), Alexandri (2020), and Wulandari, Muchsin, & Khoiron (2020) criticized the program only as a top-down policy, from the government to the people. As the community is a passive recipient of the policy, so the policy tends to fail to lift poverty in the community. This happens because of the lack of community social participation in implementation and supervision. In beneficiary data collection, for example, although this program has significance in providing access to education and health services, in its implementation many poor families who should receive assistance are missed due to invalid data. Likewise in

276 monitoring and evaluation by the community, because this pro-
gram is not a bottom-up program, there is no participation and
involvement of the community in this program, which, in most
indicators used by the government, can be a successful policy
indicator. On the other hand, some studies tend to blame the
poor as recipients of the program, which still makes the assis-
tance provided be limited to short-term assistance - for example
to pay debts, not in the long term. So, that the process of pov-
erty alleviation is only patching the holes, rather than solving
the root of the problems.

The most crucial issue is, the various studies above missed
one crucial point: bureaucracy. The implementation of the pro-
gram, the process of implementing the social safety net created
by the state, how the executive apparatus implements the policy,
how the policy actually helps the poor, and the obstacles that
arise in the process are the consequences of the bureaucracy.
The critiques that programs are not on target, wasteful in the
budget, lack of community participation in preparing the policy
agenda or overseeing the course of the policy. Such criticism is
indeed necessary, but ignores one fundamental phenomenon:
that a very long bureaucratization process is a universal phe-
nomenon and inherently within policy. So criticizing policies
without understanding how a policy should be carried out, and
how the policy makers and policy implementers respond when
problems arise is careless and arrogant. On the other hand, to
add to the complexity of the problem, this study will look at
how a policy must be implemented in a quick time, especially in
a pandemic such as now, which in a certain degree, will add to
the complexity of the implementation problem of the policy
itself.

Schmidt, Shore-Sheppard, & Watson (2016) note that when
discussing food safety in the social safety net program, it is im-
portant to discuss the technical matters discussed in field imple-
mentation. The study of Mutchler, Li, & Xu (2018) for example,
uses an elderly index, seeing that social safety nets are not very

successful in establishing a stable economy and benefiting the wider community, especially for older people. How does the policy actually close access for the elderly because of the complexity of the bureaucratic issues. At this point, 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. So that the resulting criticism will be able to provide input for improvement, especially when a policy must be carried out immediately.

RESEARCH METHOD

Initially, this research was not actually intended to study the social safety net within the framework of Covid-19, because this research had been carried out since 2018. This research looked at on how the implementation of the *Sembako* Program were being carried out. This program is not new programs that are deliberately created to help the community in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, as the program have been around since 2016 and have started running since 2017. However, the programs are currently in the spotlight, because it becoming the backbone of the social security program for poor people that were directly affected by Covid-19. By making this program as the main social safety net programs, it is important to see how policies are formulated and must be implemented in various regions. To support the research, we collected various policy documents, talked with *Sembako* Program officers and implementers of data verification and validation, and interviewed various stakeholders in four cities: Depok City, Bekasi City, Bogor City, and South Tangerang City in relation to the implementation of this program, before Covid-19 and when the Covid-19 pandemic took place.

SOCIAL SAFETY NET POLICY

Social security is basically an institutionalized intervention designed by the government and the private sector to protect

278   the community from various risks arising from themselves, as
well as from their environment. Conceptually, social security
consists of social aid and social insurance. Social aid, or what is
often referred to as public aid, can be in the form of money,
goods or social service benefits without regard to contributions
or premiums from the beneficiary. While social insurance is a
guarantee that is only given to participants in accordance with
their contribution, namely premiums or savings allocated (Hill
et.al 2017, Hardy, Smeeding & Ziliak 2018). Social safety nets
are general policies taken by the state to protect citizens, both
from the impact of poverty that is structurally present, or pov-
erty that arises as a result of natural disasters that directly affect
the household economy (Brinch, Hernæs, & Jia 2016, Hardy
2016, Basu 2017).

According to the Law 40/2004 on national social security
system, the government is obliged to organize social security pro-
grams, from social health insurance such as the National Health
Insurance (*Jaminan Kesehatan Nasional*), where there are certain
groups whose contributions are covered by the government, to
social security in the form of social aid both cash and non-cash.
The government has various social aid programs, such as Direct
Cash Aid (*Bantuan Langsung Tunai*), which was first given in 2004
to prevent the decline in people's purchasing power as a result
of the conversion of kerosene to natural gas fuel for households.
But this Direct Cash Aid model has drawn a lot of criticism
because it is often not on target. The social aid model currently
used by the government is the provision of conditional social
aid through *Sembako* Program, running by the Ministry of So-
cial Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, and other program
such as Direct Cash Aid – coordinated by Ministry of Interior.
The program target poor families, aimed at maintaining the
economic survival of the family. The *Sembako* Program provides
aid that is converted into food products that can be purchased
at outlets or e-Warung that have been previously designated,
both in terms of place and amount of goods.

The Sembako Program is a nutrition social protection of the community provided in the form of food social aid to Beneficiary Families from low income groups/poor people and vulnerable families. This program is based on nine main regulations, namely:

TABLE 1. REGULATIONS ON SEMBAKO PROGRAM

Regulation Number	Focus
Law 40/2004	National Social Security System
Law 20/2019	State Budget and Expenditure Fiscal
Presidential Decree 63/2017	Distribution of Non-Cash Social
Year 2020 Presidential Decree 82/2016	National Inclusive Financial
Presidential Decree 76/2013 Strategy	Management of Public Service
The Minister of Finance Regulation	Expenditures for Social Assistance for Ministries and Institutions
The Minister of Finance Regulation	Amendments to the Minister of Finance
The Minister of Social Affairs Regulation 5/2019	Integrated Social Welfare Fund Management
The Minister of Social Affairs	Amendment to Ministry of Social Affairs

The main output of the program is food social assistance aimed to reduce the expenditure burden of poor and vulnerable families in meeting their food needs (Ministry for Human and Cultural Development 2020). This program was previously known as *Rastra* (Prosperous Rice/*Beras Sejahtera*) Subsidy, and began to be transformed into Non-cash Food Aid (*Bantuan Pangan Non-Tunai*) in 2017 in 44 selected cities. Furthermore, in 2018 the Rastra Subsidy program was completely transformed into a social food aid program that was channeled through the non-cash scheme and the Rastra Social Aid Programs. At the end of 2019, the food social aid program in all regencies/cities will beimplemented using a non-cash scheme. The Non-cash Food Aid is an effort by the government to transform forms of aid into cash-

280 less through the use of electronic cards given directly to Beneficiary Families. The social aidis channeled by using the banking system, which can then be used to obtain staple food in e-Warung, so that Beneficiary Families can also get more balanced nutrition.

The issue of nutrition becomes very crucial in the provision of social aid. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency, the Food Poverty Line (*Garis Kemiskinan Makanan*) has a major contribution to the formation of the Poverty Line (*Garis Kemiskinan*). In addition, the price stability of staple food affects the reduction in poverty. The existence of the Sembako Program will reduce the burden of spending on poor families in terms of food, so as to ensure that some of the basic needs of the poor are met. On the other hand, the development of the type of food obtained from this program will be able to improve the nutrition/intake of the community, especially children from an early age so that it will have an influence on reducing stunting in the future.

Social safety net programs, in particular the *Sembako* Program, aim to: (a) increase food security at the Family level as well as social protection and poverty reduction mechanisms, (b) increase the efficiency of distribution of social aid, (c) increase public access to financial and banking services, (d) increase non-cash transactions in the agenda of the National Non-cash Movement, (e) increase economic growth in the regions, especially micro and small businesses in the trade sector, and (f) in the long run, prevent stunting by fulfilling nutrition in the First 1000 Days of Life. The *Sembako* Program is not provided in cash, but is transferred to the accounts of each Family. The amount of the benefits of the *Sembako* Program is Rp150.000/family/month. The aid cannot be disbursed in cash and can only be exchanged for food that is determined for the *Sembako* program at the e-Warung. However, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the amount was raised to Rp.200.000/family/month for six months.

The payment instrument used as a medium for distributing

the Sembako Program aid funds is the Sembako Card. The card thus functions as a transaction tool, so that at the time of the utilization of the aid, it must be brought by the recipient of the program. The Sembako Card stores the value/amount of the benefits of the groceries program owned by Family, then they must utilize the entire Sembako Program aid fund, because the Sembako Program aid funds cannot be disbursed in cash. As is usually the case with ATMs issued by banks, Sembako Card also contains the names of Family Administrator, Sembako Card number, distributor bank names, and complains hotline. The usage of this card utilizes Personal Identification Number which is the full responsibility of Family Administrator, because are not allowed to be held and kept by parties other than Beneficiary Families.

HOW THIS PROGRAM *HAS TO BE* RUN?

The social safety net policy through social aid is basically aimed at all poor people in need. However, bearing in mind that this aid is not provided free of charge, but rather conditional aid, there are a number of criteria that must be met so that families, not individuals, are entitled to receive this aid. The beneficiary unit of the social aid program is the Family. However, for distribution needs, the Family must determine one name, especially women, in the Family Card as the Administrator who will be the owner of the food aid account.

The beneficiaries of the *Sembako* Program are the Family with the lowest socioeconomic conditions in the implementation area whose names are included in the List of Beneficiaries (*Daftar Penerima Manfaat/*DPM). This list was established by the Budget User Authority at the Ministry of Social Affairs, sourced from Integrated Social Welfare Data that can be accessed by the Provincial Government and City Governments through the Next Generation Social Welfare Information System (*Sistem Informasi Kesejahteraan Sosial* Next Generation/SIKS-NG) application in the Food Social Aid (*Bantuan Sosial Pangan/*BSP) menu. The list

282 in *Sembako* Program which has been examined and finalized by the Local Government and approved by the Regent/Mayor is reported to the Ministry of Social Affairs through the integrated application.

The implementation of this program is carried out in stages, going up from the neighbourhood level to the central government, and back down to the Family as program beneficiaries. There are two phases so that the Beneficiary Family can receive social assistance, and each phase has its own stages. The first phases is the data collection and coordination carried out at the government level, this phase is carried out within six stages (Table 2)

TABLE 2. COLLECTING AND COORDINATING PHASE

Stages	Task
1	Instruction for the data collection from Ministry of Social Affairs to all
2	The City/Regency ask Social Aid Facilitator to collect the data
3	The collection of data by visit the prospective beneficiaries, the process of collecting and verifying the data begin
4	Prospective beneficiaries provide a number of personal data
5	The Social Aid Facilitator provide all the data to the City/Regency level government, then the City level forward it to Provincial level
6	The Data then collected by the Ministry of Social Affairs
7	The Ministry of Social Affair coordinates with the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Interior, and Channeling Banks
8	The Ministry of Finance transfers social assistance funds

Source: Ministry for Human and Cultural Development (2020)

The collection of Beneficiary Families is conducted at the beginning of the year, starting in January-March. At this stage, the data collection is not only aimed at families who have previously received assistance and are still entitled to receive further assistance, but also to receive new assistance. If the data collection process is carried out for continued recipients, then a validation process is carried out by the social assistance facilitator.
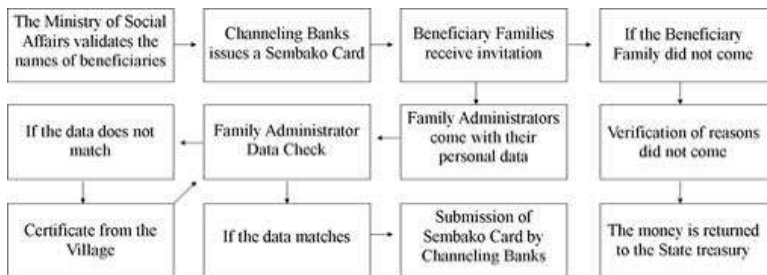
Assuming that the data collection process runs smoothly, all data must have been entered into the Next Generation Social Welfare Information System in March so that the process can proceed to the next stage: coordination at the ministerial, provincial and city level. It is clear that the coordination phase must be carried out in stages and carried out at the latest for three months, starting from April to July, so that the funding needs for social assistance can be budgeted in July, which will be included in the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget submitted in August for next fiscal year. This stage of coordination becomes very crucial, because through this stage policies are made and coordinated with all stakeholders.

In the coordination phase, the first step is coordination at the central government level, carried out between the Ministry of Social Affairs and related Ministries through the Central Food Social Aid Coordinating Team forum and reported/consulted to the Controlling Team. Coordination is done to obtain input and direction related to program implementation policies. In addition, coordination is carried out to ensure the implementation and consistency of legal basis, mechanism and stages of program implementation, as well as various other administrative procedures. After the process is complete, the program is brought down to the provincial level. After that, the provincial government through the Provincial Level Food Social Aid Coordinating Team forum coordinated in stages with the city government level in regards to every stage of managing and implementing the *Sembako* Program in the local community, starting from funding support through city budget, budget ceiling coordination and beneficiary family data verification, socialization, complaints handling, monitoring, and other support needed.

After that, the program was further brought down to the city level through the City Level Food Social Aid Coordinating Team forum coordinate in stages with districts and villages/subdistricts for all stages of program implementation, starting from preparation of regional budget funding and/or Village Funds,

284 verification and validation of candidate data in the Next Generation Social Welfare Information System menu, *Sembako* Card registration and distribution process, checking the existence of recipient, education and socialization, monitoring, and complaints handling. The city government then coordinates with the Channeling Bank to arrange the registration schedule or *Sembako* Card distribution in each village/sub-district and ensure the involvement of village/sub-district officials in the process.

FIGURE 2. DISTRIBUTION OF SEMBAKO CARD PROCESS

Source: Ministry for Human and Cultural Development (2020)

The city government provides support for facilities and infrastructure, education and outreach, ease of permission, exemption or relief of permit fees and tax facilitation to e-Warung in accordance with statutory provisions, and coordinates with the Channeling Bank regarding location mapping and selection of food traders to become the e-Warung. The implementation of the *Sembako* program at the city level is coordinated by the City Level Food Social Aid Coordinating Team. Implementation at the District level is coordinated by the District level Food Social Aid Coordinating Team. Implementation at the village/sub-district level is supported by the local village/sub-district apparatus and social aid facilitators. Assuming that all processes are completed in June, then in July, the entire budget will be submitted to the Ministry of Social Affairs to be submitted as part of the Ministry of Social Affairs budget for the next fiscal year. At the same time, around May-June, the social assistance budget sub-

mitted in the previous fiscal year was transferred from the Ministry of Finance to the Ministry of Social Affairs.

The second phase is the distribution of social assistance from the Ministry of Social Affairs to Beneficiary Families. This phase consists of seventeen stages which can be divided into three parts: verification and re-validation of beneficiary data, the distribution of basic food goods, and reconciliation of basic food goods (Figure 2).

The verification and validation of beneficiary data is carried out for one month, and in the process, there are ten stages that must be passed. It starts with the City level Food Social aid Coordinating Team, village/sub-district apparatus, and Food Social Aid Facilitators facilitating the Channeling Bank during the Sembako Card distribution process to Family. Education and socialization can be done simultaneously during the distribution process. The Family Administrator that must be present from at the time of Card distribution are those who are determined as Administrator, which is the name that is listed as the owner of the food aid account. If Administrator is not present during distribution, the village/sub-district apparatus and Food Social aid Facilitator actively check the existence of Family with special treatments. In order to verify, the Administrator must bring supporting documents such National ID Card, Family Card and/or other documents which may proof the actual identity of person concerned.

During the distribution process, channeling bank officer checks the appropriateness of the data with documents provided. If the data in the *Sembako* Card matches the identity documents, then the Administrator must complete and sign the account opening form provided by the Channeling Bank. If the data on and the identity documents are not appropriate, for example there are differences in the names, addresses and/or identity numbers, the Distribution Bank officers coordinate with village/sub-district apparatus to match the data with the population administration data in their area. If the Administrator is proven

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to be the right person, then the village/sub-district may provide a statement related to this matter. With a certificate from the village/sub-district, the Channeling Bank officer gives a form for opening a food asistance account to be completed and signed by Administrator to obtain a Sembako Card and PIN.

After going through ten stages, which must be completed within one month, the next stage is the distribution of basic food cards. The deadline for the end of the distribution process is determined by the Ministry of Social Affairs, this process is usually determined no later than five weeks. If the Sembako Card distribution exceeds the specified deadline, the Food Social aid Coordinating Team sends a letter of approval request that is accompanied by a report on the reconciliation results of the Sembako Card distribution to the Ministry of Social Affairs. The process of distributing the Sembako Card can be continued after the Ministry of Social Affairs issues their approval. The last stage is data reconciliation. After the Sembako Card distribution process ends, for data reconciliation, the Channeling Banks in the regions submit reports on the results of the Sembako Card distribution to the Regency/City Food Social aid Coordinating Team and the Channeling Bank at the central [headquarter] regarding: (a) List and number of Administrator that have obtained the Sembako Card and its accessories, (b) List and number of Administrator that have failed to be given and its accessories along with the reasons. This process is carried out no later than two weeks. The Sembako Card that are not distributed are deactivated and deposited by the Channeling Bank in the regions, and kept for up to one fiscal year or until the completion of inspection by the audit team.

TIERED DATA COLLECTION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

In term of policy, social assistance is carried out every month by transferring to a Family account that can be accessed by the Administrator, although in practice, assistance is given every two to three months. The issue of social assistance can be traced at

every stage, especially the issue of data collection and coordination between institutions which takes longer than it should, causing an impasse in the process of distributing aid. In this case, there are two impasses that arise: *First*, the data collection process and very long tiered coordination cause the data used as a reference becomes invalid. *Second*, the emphasis is that the recipient must have an Identity Card that practically eliminates poor families without an e-National ID Card to receive assistance.

The first crucial stage lies in the process of registering of Family into the Next Generation Social Welfare Information System owned by the Ministry of Social Affairs. In order for a Family to be registered as a Beneficiary Family, they must record all the information needed. There are sixteen data items that must be owned by each Family, which must be listed in the SIKS-NG (Table 3).

TABLE 3. DATA COMPONENTS THAT MUST BE COLLECTED BY THE FAMILY

No	Data Required
1	Population Identification Number (*Nomor Induk*
2	Administrator ID number in Social Welfare Integrated Data
3	Integrated Database ID number in Integrated Social
4	Social Aid account number, if any
5	Sembako Card number, if any
6	Administrator name (prospective account holder)
7	Family Card Number
8	Place of birth of Family Administrator
9	Date of birth of Family Administrator
10	Maiden name of biological mother of the Administrator
11	Hope Family Program participant number, if any
12	Hope Family Program status, if applicable
13	Name of the head of family
14	Names of other family members
15	Family residence address
16	Area code (province, regency/city, district, village/sub-district)

Source: Ministry for Human and Cultural Development (2020)

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This data collection process must be carried out immediately in February-March so that existing data can be directly inputted into the system. When the Ministry of Social Affairs, usually at the end of January, sends a circular to all social aid facilitators to start collecting data, the data collection process must becarried out immediately. The main challenge begins when the circular which requires the data collection process is often late in the hands of social aid facilitators. Although the circular was signed in mid-January, the letter was only received in mid-February, or even in the beginning of March.

In chasing against the deadline, the social aid facilitator must immediately record all Family in their area. In general, each sub-district has two social aid facilitators as Person in Charge, most of them only have one. The main challenge lies in the size of the work area. Sawangan District, Depok for example. It has 160,856 inhabitants spread across 142 hamlets and 618 neighboourhoods. If each neighbourhood has five poor families, it means that in Sawangan alone there are 3,090 families which must be record, verify, and validate in only 60 days. The problem is even more complicated when the policy requires that the recipient of assistance must be women in the family.

At the very beginning, this social aid was intended for anyone representing the family, but since 2017, the aid has been specifically intended for women as the Administrator. The Administrator is determined in the following priority order: (1) prioritize on behalf of women in the family, either as head of the family or as the partner of head of the family, (2) if not, then a family member of women over the age of 17 years old and have an e-ID, (3) if the Family does not have any female member over 17 years old, then the Administrator is a male head of the family, (4) if there is not any, then male family members over the age of 17 and have an e-ID, (5) if the Family does not have any family members aged 17 years and over and has a population identity document, then the Family can be represented by other family members in one Family Card or guard-

ian who has not been registered, (6) for Family who are Hope Family Program recipients, what is meant by the Family of this program is refering to individuals who have been designated as Hope Family Program Administrator.

Along with the data collection process for new beneficiaries, the data verification and validation process was also carried out for beneficiaries whose names were already in the system. These data are then sent to the Population Data Center of Ministry of Interior. The Family management data that has been registered must then be verified by the existing population system at the Ministry of the Interior, thus data from the Ministry of Social Affairs would be brought over and validated. If the data passes the validation process, then the data will be returned to the Ministry of Social Affairs for verification and validation by social aid facilitator by conducting a field visit. If the Family is declared to have passed verification and validation, then the data will be forwarded to the channeling bank to open the aid account. The data is used as a reference for the channeling bank to open a food aid account for each Family collectively and print a Prosperous Family Card or Sembako Card.

Assuming that data entered into the system is valid and can be processed immediately, this process is often only completed in the mid to late April. Consequently, the coordination time at the ministry level will be delayed because they have to wait for incoming data, which usually only takes place in mid-May. This resulted in setbacks at the provincial and city level also experienced a setback, usually coordination at the provincial level only took place at the end of June, and coordination at the City level in mid-July. The results of coordination at the lower level will be brought back to the ministry level to be included in the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget which must be approved in August, so that delays at the lower levels will have a serious impact on the budget budgeted by the Ministry of Social Affairs.

In line with time, and the difficulty in conducting validation

290   and verification required by the policy, what happens on the ground is that the latest data on beneficiaries are not used because they have not passed the verification and validation stages. This occurs when the data collection, verification, and validation stages are carried out simultaneously, causing confusion of data at the lower level, resulting in data being mixed up in the system. Because the State Revenue and Expenditure Plan had to go to the House of Representatives at the end of July, the incoming data was not validated and verified. This causes double data, the recipient has died, and the family that has entered the welfare category but is still included in the List of Beneficiaries.

THE CURSE OF NATIONAL ID CARD

One of the main obstacles in the process of data collection, verification, and validation actually lies in the basic policy: that social assistance is only given to Indonesian citizens as evidenced by identity cards and is categorized as poor. Both of these prerequisites are basic provisions that must be fulfilled so that the Beneficiary Family can enter the Beneficiary List. The ownership of National ID cards, especially e-ID, is a classic problem in population data collection in Indonesia. One crucial problem is that not all Indonesians have ID, not to mention an e-ID which is the main prerequisite for the Family to be recorded as a List of Beneficiaries. Various studies have shown that although the National ID is mandatory, the ownership, especially in rural areas, is still very low (Nurtjahyo 2014). One of the reasons is the requirement based on marriage registration. The population registration model in Indonesia is based on the assumption that all marriages must be registered, and become one of the prerequisites for making a ID, both for the parent ID card and the Child Identity Card (*Kartu Identitas Anak*/KIA) (Irenes & Setiamadani 2019).

Marriage registration in Indonesia is a classic problem that cannot be resolved, especially with the number of child marriages and marriages that are not recorded (see Grijns et.al 2019).

A serious consequence of unregistered marriages is that the marriage is not recognized by the state, and therefore every child born cannot obtain a birth certificate and cannot be entered into the Family Card. As a consequence, the children cannot obtain their civil rights as well as other rights as citizens. At the family level, unregistered marriages also cause vulnerability for women, one of which is that women, especially from poor families, cannot get social aid.

If the issue of ID cards ownership is still a crucial issue, then another problem that is also similarly serious is that priority is given to residents with ID Cards coming originally from that region. This is inseparable from the data collection model carried out by neighbourhood level in their respective regions. In Depok and Bekasi, for example, housing and settlement complexes are mostly filled by migrants who work in Jakarta. These workers are very rarely at home, even though one of the prerequisites for obtaining aid is verification and validation of the data through face-to-face meetings and interviews conducted by the social aid facilitation team. As a result, because the house is always empty, and because the related neighbourhood apparatus do not want to be bothered with data collection of residents who are migrants from other regions, their names are not included in the List of Beneficiaries. Another scenario is that, even though their names are included in the list, but since at the time of the verification and validation process, which is only one time, it failed to be conducted, the name of the prospective beneficiary is considered not passing the verification and data validation.

The data verification and validation process is a processthat must be carried out by each beneficiary candidate. This process will look directly into the condition of Family by seeing whether they are truly incapable, or as the Law 52/2009 stated as the Pre-Prosperous Family (*Keluarga Pra-Sejahtera*). Pre-prosperous families are families that do not meet one of the six Prosperous Family indicators, or indicators of basic family needs, which in-

292 clude: (1) family members generally eat twice a day or more, (2) family members have clothes that are different for occasions at home, work/school and traveling, (3) a house occupied by the family has good roof, floor and walls, (4) if a family member is sick then he/she is taken to a health facility, (5) if a couple of childbearing age wants to have a family planning - they can afford to - go to contraceptive service facilities, and (6) all children aged 7-15 in the family go to school. If the candidate does not meet any of these indicators, the name will be included in the list to be submitted as a Beneficiary Family.

The problem is, if you follow the six established poverty criteria, it will be very difficult for social aid facilitators to register, because they not only have to visit each house, but make sure each family is truly worthy of assistance by visiting the kitchen, bedroom, and bathroom. In practice, with very limited time, all that is done is checking the physical form of the house and a brief interview that focuses on daily income, daily expenses, and the number of family members. On the other hand, there are many stories of how people outsmart these regulations by making one of the ugliest houses in the neighborhood and claiming it as his own, or making up stories about daily income and routine expenses. Because there is no obligation of the facilitator to check the truth of the story, all the results of the interview, supported by outdated housing, directly make the interviewee's family a poor person who deserves help.

Often families whose names are listed as Beneficiary Lists have died, or no longer live there and are replaced by relatives or others. Initially, in terms of rules, the person could not get help because it was the name of another person that was recorded, but since 2019 there were rules that allowed the change of name of beneficiaries. Although there is a policy that Administrator has the right to be replaced by other family members, or Family can move their domicile, but in practice, the implementation of this policy requires the Administrator to follow the process from the beginning again, which means it will take

a very long time to carry out all stages from the beginning. In some cases, when the validation process was carried out by the social aid facilitator, it was found that the Family was actually able and was no longer entitled to the aid program, but when the aid was stopped the Family raised a protest to the neighbourhood apparatus and the facilitator team, and again, due to reluctance to cause greater commotion, the channeling continued.

THE FRAGMENTED POLICY

The social safety net aid policy launched by the central government through the *Sembako* program is basically aimed at helping poor families to maintain their household financial condition, especially in the current pandemic. But this policy is very bureaucratic, with almost no room for any maneuver. This policy provides a very narrow space for implementers in the field; social aid facilitators only have until the end of April to complete the entire validation and verification process, especially for new recipients. Although *Sembako* Card funds have been transferred from the central government, but in its implementation in the field, it takes two weeks for the fund to arrive from the central to reach the recipients. Thus, it takes more time for Family to be able to get the social aid they really need.

The data verification and validation process is carried out periodically, generally at the beginning of each year. Specifically in Covid-19 conditions, this process is hampered because this process is usually done by gathering several Family recipients or prospective recipients at the neighbourhood level to be interviewed together. After the interview process is carried out, field monitoring is carried out directly to the beneficiary's home. Within the framework of the current Large-Scale Social Restrictions, it is not possible to conduct a validation process at the neighbourhood level, which has an impact on the data validation process at the home level that it cannot be carried out, thus the current *Sembako* Program is using the data from the previ-

294 ous year. Consequently, there are a lot of middle-income vulnerable households, who as a result of Covid did not get any income, actually should be categorized as poor but were not recorded as List of Beneficiaries because the data used was the previous year.

The government is not unaware of this problem. The Ministry of Villages, Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration (2020) has issued a policy to open up opportunities for the use of Village Fund to provide aid. Some municipalities act quickly by relocating village fund budget for social aid. In Depok for example, in each district there are on average more than two thousand names of potential recipients of social aid, both from the reallocation of village fund as well as regency/city social aid program. But the problem goes back to that of data, that the names must be rechecked again by social aid facilitator, because there are overlapping names in the data. The village ministry requires that the beneficiaries are those not registered as List of Beneficiaries who get routine fund aid from Hope Family Program, thus the field officers must list the names registered as recipients of aid for later verification and validation, which if passed the process, then these names will be submitted to the city government for aid.

For social aid facilitators, time is a luxury they don't have. Because all social aid policies in Indonesia are based on invalid and unreliable data, which makes the social aid facilitators to do multiple function, and be the backbone of data collection from below while ensuring aid is channeled to each Family. On the one hand, social aid facilitators are required to administratively be obidient and orderly, by carrying out all administrative procedures in the form of field verification and validation to all beneficiaries. On the other, the Large-Scale Social Limitation policy is an obstacle that appears precisely in the midst of a very narrow time period of verification and validation. This raises problems in the field and opens up the potential for the aid to not be received on time and on target.

In practice, as can be predicted, what happens is overlapping assistance. There is a possibility that someone will get double assistance, a basic food card and Direct Cash Assistance that comes from village funds, and there is also the possibility that someone who is actually eligible will not receive any assistance. In some areas, to facilitate the distribution of aid, assistance is not provided in the form of money transferred into the recipient's account, but is directly converted into a number of items with a nominal equivalent to the amount that must be received by the Beneficiary Family. The policy taken by this local government violates the central government policy, that aid must be transferred to the recipient's account, not converted into food.

To solve the problem of social assistance impasses, there are actually several stages that can be cut. The most important thing is to make several stages of data collection run in parallel, without the need to wait for the process of verification and validation of data at each stage. The Ministry of Interior actually has population data integrated through e-ID data records. Using this data, the Ministry of Social Affairs can immediately begin the process of data verification and validation, without having to ask for the names of recipients deposited by each region. In the same process, the Ministry of Social Affairs can communicate with the Channeling Bank, or through the Ministry of State-Owned Enterprises, bearing in mind that all Channeling Banks are state-owned banks. At the same time, because beneficiary data is in the Next Generation Social Welfare Information System that is connected with the Channeling Bank, it is not necessary to do initial data collection from the neighbourhood level. This will save time up to 45 working days, and greatly save costs, because the data collection is only done for new recipients, not for families who have previously received. If the problem from the Ministry of Social Affairs is to ascertain how the use of social assistance is carried out by aid recipients, the easiest and fastest solution is to consolidate data from a service provider

296   bank. The bank is certain to store expenditure data for each recipient, due to the use of an ATM card system that is only used in certain stores. By consigning data at the local level, it can be seen carefully how the use of the Sembako Cards by Family.

On the other hand, the manual data collection model is intended to see the condition of the recipient directly, which is done through home visits by social aid facilitators. In this case, the main actor is not the Ministry of Social Affairs, but the Ministry of Villages, Underdeveloped Regions and Transmigration and the Ministry of Interior. The Ministry of Villages and the Ministry of Interior, through the Village Consultative Body, annually hold village development meetings. In this activity, which was attended by many elements of the village peoples, ranging from the village government, the community, to religious leaders, could be scheduled to discuss the data collection on the poor in the village. The problem is, in the Village Development Plan Deliberation activities, the subject of discussion is the Village Fund Allocation, which is almost entirely ascertained to be used for infrastructure improvement. If this activity is scheduled to build integrated data on the poor in the village, by ordering all neighbourhood heads to report the poor population in their area, then this will greatly facilitate the social aid facilitators, because all that is left is to request data from the village government. Or if the Ministry of Social Affairs insists that the data collection process must be carried out by the facilitator, then the Ministry of Social Affairs must increase the number of social aid facilitators, not at the village level, but at the hamlet level. So that simultaneous data collection can be faster and easier to do.

So the final problem lies in the policy that social assistance can only be given to those who have an e-ID. The only solution for this is to change the policy, which originated from the Ministry of Social Affairs itself. Without changing its position, it will be very difficult to get out of the legality trap of beneficiaries of

social assistance, even though the Ministry of Interior has openly acknowledged that e-ID data has problems in collecting data. So using data that is clearly problematic will only create potential new problems in policy.

CONCLUSION

So, what can be learned from the impasse in the implementation of social safety net in Indonesia during this pandemic period? At this point, the social safety net policy developed by the government actually faces its biggest challenge ever: time and energy. When the Sembako Card program aid policy was implemented, it was not imagined before that time was a very non-negotiable condition. The data collection model that must be carried out periodically, every social aid facilitator that must carry out formal data collection every year, with various forms to be filled in, pages of documents to be signed, and hundreds of data that must be verified and validated. Each social aid facilitator produces an average of more than one thousand documents annually, and these documents must be kept for cross checking by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Audit Board of the Republic of Indonesia.

Bureaucratization model with tiered stages, both in data collection, implementation, and reporting provides very limited space for maneuver, especially in pandemic conditions that require policy issuance in quick time. This was slowly responded by the state when issuing a social safety net policy. When the President decided to reallocate the budget, what was envisioned as a quick response, turned out to take more than thirty days to be done, and even then with the risk that the aid provided was not necessarily right on target. When the state decides on reallocation, the state often forgets the bureaucratic problems that are actually made by the state itself. Then it becomes an interesting question to explore in the future, how to model the data collection of the economically poor citizens so that when the pandemic happens again, the state does not need to waste a

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long time to provide aid to its citizens.

On the other hand, social assistance policies in Indonesia show a phenomenon that is almost never finished: fragmentation between ministries. Various ministries choose to go their own way, not coordinating let alone sharing data. This causes each ministry to have its own database which is a waste of time and energy. This can actually be avoided, especially in a pandemic like today, where time is a luxury that is not owned by government.

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