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Pandemics, Pantries and Politics

Understanding the emergence of community pantries in the Philippines in the time of COVID-19

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List of Acronyms

COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease of 2019
CPPH	Community Pantry PH (Philippines)
DOH	Department of Health
ECQ	Enhanced Community Quarantine
IB	Institute Board
KI	Key Informant
MECQ	Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine
NCR	National Capital Region (a.k.a. Metro Manila in the Philippines)
US	United States
WHO	World Health Organization

Abstract

This qualitative research, which used in-depth interview as the main data collection method, offers new and interesting information about the community pantry phenomenon in the Philippines that emerged in the time of COVID-19. It provides a fresh perspective on how individuals, groups and communities collectively take new shapes and actions during a protracted crisis situation, focusing mainly on community pantries located in the National Capital Region.

It utilized framing analysis, social movement-related concepts of motivation, solidarity and the Filipino trait of '*Bayanihan*', and resource mobilization theory as analytical tools to explain why COVID-19 is both a public health problem and governance issue, what motivates people from participating in the community pantry initiative, how community pantries are organized and operate locally, what they represent, the issues pantry organizers encounter and the prospects for community pantries in the future.

Relevance to Development Studies

A study on collective action or community-led initiatives and, by extension, social movements and the wider field of Development Studies, remains relevant and interesting, especially at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic continues to ravage the world – challenging global, regional and local economies, straining healthcare systems across the Global North and the Global South, and forcibly changing peoples' habits, lifestyles, customs and traditions… basically, altering humanity's way of life.

This research contributes to the continuously growing body of literature about collective action, solidarity and, to some extent, social movements, with a thoughtful attention on the community pantry phenomenon in the Philippines. This phenomenon is a local, community-led initiative that addresses the shortcomings of the state at a time of deep political polarization in a protracted pandemic situation.

Keywords
'*Bayanihan*', collective action, community pantry, COVID-19, resource mobilization, solidarity

Chapter One
Introduction

*"**Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.**"* – Margaret Mead

Chapter One provides the overall introduction. It has five main sections. Section 1.1 presents the contextual background of the study. Section 1.2 discusses available literature related to the topic. Section 1.3 explains the problem statement. Section 1.4 presents the research objectives. Finally, Section 1.5 highlights the main research question and related sub-questions.

1.1   Contextual background

Approximately 18 months after the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) declared COVID-19 as a 'public health emergency of international concern' on 30 January 2020, more than 190 countries have already been affected by the pandemic. On 28 September 2021, more than 232.4 million infected cases and almost 4.8 million deaths have been reported worldwide (JHU, 2021 and WHO, 2021). In the same period, data on COVID-19 vaccine administration were also reported with more than 6.1 billion doses unevenly distributed to many countries. Of this number, 2.2 billion doses were administered in China alone, 870.8 million doses in India and 389.2 million doses in the United States (US) (JHU, 2021). Many countries in Africa and a few in Central America, South Asia and Southeast Asia experienced COVID-19 vaccine inequality with delays in their vaccination start dates and low vaccine administration rates (WHO, 2021).

In the Philippines, the situation was relatively serious despite immense government attempts to control and manage the pandemic. On 27 September 2021, the Department of Health (DOH, 2021) reported more than 2.5 million COVID-19 cases, one of the highest in Southeast Asia and second only to Indonesia. Of this number, 2.3 million cases had recovered, 37,596 died while 158,169 remained active and were still being treated (DOH, 2021). Additionally, COVID-19 vaccines administered nationally were reported to have reached 43.9 million doses (JHU, 2021); however, official data on the 'percentage of population fully vaccinated' were not available from Philippine national authorities at that time.

Many may have viewed the pandemic as a public health concern that can be adequately addressed through public health science, strategies and interventions alone; but the reality is far from that. The COVID-19 pandemic, combined with severe government responses, have

staggering economic, social and cultural impacts to individuals, communities and societies at large. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic last year, Caduff (2020, pp. 1-2) swiftly investigated how various governments reacted in response to the crisis and concluded that the lockdown measures taken were "massive and unprecedented… [bringing the world to a complete stop]". As a result, millions of people lost their jobs, many frontliners were vilified and attacked and many individuals were trapped as they attempted to connect with their families (Caduff, 2020, pp. 1-2). Lockdown measures were imposed "with governments taking advantage of peoples' irrational fears", which could be attributed to media sensationalism and fearmongering, speculations and assumptions, disinvestments in public health and 'authoritarian longings' (Caduff, 2020, pp. 15-16).

Similarly, many may have assumed that the COVID-19 pandemic would put an end to social movements as governments across the world imposed strict quarantine measures to communities and localities. However, this was not the case. During the early months of the pandemic, it was found that social justice activism was flourishing in many countries, both in the Global North and in the Global South, where social activists took on several roles such as (a) protesting against state abuses; (b) defending human rights; (c) providing mutual aid while promoting solidarity; (d) monitoring state policies; and (e) providing popular education (Pleyers, 2020, p. 2).

Using Pleyers' framework, I performed a more thoughtful analysis of the situation in the Philippines during the early stage of the COVID-19 pandemic for my ISS-4153 Contemporary Perspectives on Social Justice course and found that social justice activism was also thriving. Forms of social justice activism included (a) protesting online against government corruption and abuses; (b) professional health societies issuing statements regarding government's mishandling of the COVID-19 crisis; (c) giving of donations to charitable organizations, including gestures of mutual aid and solidarity; (d) public monitoring of social justice issues like extrajudicial killings, police brutality and state corruption; and (e) public scrutiny of COVID-19 data regularly released by DOH (Concepcion, 2020, p. 2).

Discussions on social reproduction and care, in relation to COVID-19, have also resurfaced, especially amongst feminist scholars. Katz (2001, p. 711) defined social reproduction as "the fleshy, messy and indeterminate stuff of everyday life", which Laslett and Brenner (1989) further described as "the maintenance of life on a daily basis and intergenerationally" (in Gordon-Bouvier, 2021, p. 213). Simply put, these are the structured activities needed to ensure humanity's continued existence and way of life, and include multiple forms of work, either paid or unpaid; taking care of infants, children, people with disabilities, the sick and

the elderly; unpaid and gendered work performed within and outside the homes; and food preparation and distribution (Gordon-Bouvier, 2021, p. 213). Care, on the other hand, "consists of activities, [either paid or unpaid as well], such as physical care and concern for persons… [like] family members, children and the elderly… [including non-dependents]" (Verschuur, 2013, p. 154). Care, as an activity of daily living, therefore, includes going to the market, cooking meals, cleaning the house, washing and ironing clothes, watching over children, gathering firewood and fetching water from the river or well. All these care activities form part of social reproductive work (Verschuur, 2013, p. 154).

Verschuur (2013, p. 155) articulated that "social reproduction is crucial for the understanding of care" but there seems to exist a thin line between these two concepts. Separating domestic chores from care activities, for example, is not easy. However, merging these two concepts is also problematic because of certain limitations. Available care studies discriminated against some social reproduction activities, such as farming and petty trade, and concentrated on certain categories of people, such as dependents and not the total labour force (Verschuur, 2013, pp. 156-157).

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed some sort of a social dilemma because it highlighted the state's surprising call towards a more caring society despite many years of oppressive neoliberal policies and individualism, and its constant devaluation and neglect of social reproduction and care activities over productive labour, which is contradictory and often to the detriment of the family and the female (Gordon-Bouvier, 2021, pp. 213-218). In the United Kingdom, health frontliners were not provided with ample personal protective equipment because of supply issues and manufacturing delays as government prioritized economic growth over public safety (Gordon-Bouvier, 2021, pp. 218-219). Moreover, professionals and managers were allowed to work from home to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection, while those engaged in paid social reproduction and care, such as caregivers and food industry workers, were not given this option (Thomason and Macias-Alonso, 2020 in Gordon-Bouvier, 2021, p. 218). One can sense the continuing devaluation of social reproduction and care by the state itself.

In Lagos, Nigeria, the food markets where women played a vital role in running them functioned as social spaces where productive labour, social reproduction and care interconnected with each other, which also underscored the importance of social networks for market actors to meet their work and care needs collectively during the pandemic (Picchioni, Po and Forsythe, 2021, pp. 31-32). Sadly, there were reports of state abuses and government-sanctioned penalties suffered by market players, especially women, due to strict corona measures

and policies that were inconsistent to the concept and exercise of care (Picchioni, Po and Forsythe, 2021, p. 32).

It is quite fitting to connect the community pantry phenomenon in the Philippines to the concepts of social reproduction and care because the community pantries, individually and collectively, is about the production and distribution of food to communities affected by the pandemic. It is about taking care of individuals and families in local communities who experience undue hunger because of the government's failure to effectively manage the COVID-19 crisis and adequately provide assistance when it imposed strict lockdown measures in several waves. It would be interesting to learn how community pantries in the Philippines started, operated and developed within a violent and restrictive social space at a time of great uncertainty.

1.2 Review of related literature

There is a lot of information available online about community kitchens, soup kitchens, public kitchens, food banks and other similar social spaces where people come together to prepare food and share them with the community at large, including themselves and their families (Singer, 2005, p.481; History, 2009; TCKB, 2016; Singh, 2019; Community Kitchens, 2021; and US History, 2021); however, a clear-cut history on how such social spaces started and developed is not easy to identify.

Based on what was gathered for this research, the concept of community kitchen may be traced back to as far as the 14th century when Ottoman public kitchens, known as *imarets*, were erected throughout the Ottoman empire and provided free meals to individuals (Singer, 2005, p. 481). In the 15th century, the Sikh tradition called *langar* was introduced by *Guru Nanak*, which institutionalized, not only the provision of free meals to the hungry, but also a commitment to social justice and the rejection of inequality (Singh, 2019). Both traditions are deeply spiritual and involve the serving of free food, not only to the poor and the hungry, but to any person who needs nourishment regardless of gender, religion and socioeconomic status.

During the Great Depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s, many in the US lost their jobs and became homeless. Unemployment rose and many of those who retained their jobs suffered from very low wages, while government relief was either non-existent or inadequate (US History, 2021). Religious and charitable organizations started setting up soup kitchens that fed thousands of Americans on a daily basis (US History, 2021); the state and

federal governments followed suit in the early 1930s when people started migrating from the countryside to the cities in search of a better life and better employment opportunities (History, 2009).

Moving into the 20th century, more and more community feeding programs were created. The Community Kitchens of Birmingham in Alabama was established during the recession of the 1980s, when many people were unemployed, to serve the "homeless and [the] hungry" (TCKB, 2016). A decade after, it became a non-profit organization and was able to receive volunteer and financial support from other organizations, academic institutions, business sector and private individuals, which enabled it to reach out to more communities, link with local coalition entities and expand its programs (TCKB, 2016).

In 2004, Australia piloted six community kitchens in Frankston, Victoria "to [improve] the health and well-being of [the] local communities" (Community Kitchens, 2021). The concept of community kitchen was quite innovative because it is composed of individuals who make weekly payments and meet regularly "to plan, cook and share healthy, affordable meals" (Community Kitchens, 2021). Members cook and eat together, share the food with their respective families, develop certain life skills and build new friendships (Community Kitchens, 2021). By 2015, more than 100 community kitchens have been established in Australia and the same concept has expanded internationally to New Zealand and Singapore (Community Kitchens, 2021).

When WHO declared COVID-19 as a global pandemic in January 2020, 'chef activism' was observed in many cities across the US, with restaurant owners turning their businesses into community kitchens or other forms of initiatives to support employees who lost their jobs, overworked healthcare workers and local communities for lesser or zero profit (Leahy, 2020). Examples of such activism were demonstrated by Edward Lee of Louisville who converted his restaurant into a kitchen pantry that served meals and staple goods to unemployed restaurant staff; by Abe Conlon and Adrienne Lo of Chicago who turned their restaurant into a community kitchen to support restaurant workers; by Melissa Miranda of Seattle, Elizabeth Blau of Las Vegas and the couple Heidi and Mark Krahling of San Anselmo in California who started similar initiatives that support low-income families, senior citizens and children in their respective communities (Leahy, 2020).

In India, where many migrant workers were stranded following Prime Minister Modi's declaration of a 40-day nationwide lockdown, community kitchens started opening across cities to supply stranded workers, the poor and low-income households with food and temporary shelter (Srivastava and Nagaraj, 2020). Women self-help groups have also risen to the

COVID-19 challenge, not only running more than 10,000 community kitchens nationwide but, also, producing millions of personal protective equipment and educating people about health, personal hygiene and COVID-19 (World Bank, 2020). These community initiatives do not only provide relief to the hungry, but also improve a community's nutrition and immunity against illness.

'Pantries of sharing' or the *too pun sook* have also sprouted across the 77 provinces of Thailand, providing food and basic items to those who were adversely impacted by the COVID-19 crisis (Mongkol, 2020). The initiative was initiated by a group called Little Brick in five locations around Bangkok and Rayong, which multiplied to more than 600 *too pun sook* nationwide as of May 2020 (Mongkol, 2020). Little Brick encouraged people to organize their own local pantries based on the principle of community ownership and not based on individualism (Bangkok Post, 2020). These pantries are often supplied with fresh and dry goods like eggs and meat, rice, noodles and canned goods (Khaosod English, 2020).

Certain acts of kindness during disasters are also not uncommon in the Philippines, which experiences almost half of the tropical cyclones each year; and because it naturally lies in the 'Pacific Ring of Fire', is more prone to volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and landslides (Santos, 2021, p. 191). In 2019, when strong earthquakes jolted some parts of Mindanao, private individuals, civic organizations, business entities and academic institutions collected donations like food, clothes, water, medicines and temporary shelter for the earthquake survivors (CNN Philippines, 2019). In 2020, the risks associated with COVID-19 pandemic did not prevent many Filipinos from extending assistance to the affected families and survivors of Typhoons Rolly and Ulysses (Rappler, 2020). Volunteers helped track and trace calls for help, which informed the Office of Civil Defense and the Philippine Red Cross in their rescue and relief operations; social media was extensively used for donation drives; youth volunteer organizations came together and consolidated their own rescue and relief efforts helping those who were heavily affected; Filipino art and writing communities raised funds for those affected by Typhoon Ulysses with their open illustrations and written works; and a non-governmental organization offered free psychological and psychosocial support services to the survivors and their families (Rappler, 2020).

The community pantries that rapidly multiplied in the Philippines after *Maginhawa Community Pantry* was created in April 2021 came close to the *too pun sook* that were replicated in Thailand in terms of structure; however, no analysis or evaluation had been conducted so far, therefore, it is difficult to make a comparison of the two phenomena. Whether these community pantries in the Philippines represent an emerging social movement, or not, is of

immense interest to this research. The birth, growth and development process these pantries are experiencing seemed extraordinary given the temporal and spatial conditions that existed when the Philippines was facing a public health crisis. Della Porta and Diani defined social movements as:

> … a distinct social process, consisting of the mechanisms through which actors engaged in collective action: are involved in conflictual relations with clearly defined opponents; are linked by dense informal networks; [and] share a distinct collective identity.

(Della Porta and Diani, 2006, p. 20)

This definition was supported by Tarrow who strongly advocated for a better definition of social movements that would highlight the elements of "collective challenge, common purpose, social solidarity and sustained interaction" (2011, p. 9). The research attempted to find this out.

1.3   Statement of the problem

The COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines is a reflection of what is happening globally in so far as the epidemiologic situation is concerned. The number of confirmed cases continue to rise with thousands of people getting infected daily. On 18 May 2021, the DOH (2021) reported more than 1.1 million confirmed COVID-19 cases and almost 20,000 deaths nationwide. The number of new infections on 18 May 2021 alone was close to 5,000 and most of all the confirmed cases being concentrated in the National Capital Region (NCR) followed by Region 4A and Region 3, both of which border the capital (DOH, 2021).

Instead of concentrating its efforts and resources in halting the spread of the virus while addressing the ensuing economic and social crises that came with it, the national government securitized the situation and imposed stringent lockdown measures and placed police and military checkpoints to control people's mobility (Hapal, 2021, pp. 6-7). The delivery of social subsidies, through the government's social amelioration program was not prioritized and many Filipino families have suffered.

The emergence and rapid proliferation of community pantries in the Philippines may be seen as a form of response or resistance to how the national government has mishandled the COVID-19 situation. The research offers ways of analysing this phenomenon. How the COVID-19 has been framed, the role of motivation in collective action, the concepts of solidarity and '*Bayanihan*', and the resource mobilization theory were used as analytical tools.

This will hopefully add to the existing body of knowledge on the topic of community action, in particular, and social movements, in general.

1.4   Research objectives

The main goal of the research was to examine how social justice activism and collective actions have been affected by and responded to the COVID-19 situation in the Philippines. It attempted to understand and appreciate how individuals, groups and communities have collectively taken new shapes and actions to address the lingering social inequalities experienced by Filipinos that were aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the government's ineffective and inadequate responses to the situation.

The research was interested on how the community pantries started, particularly in NCR, and looking into the various motivations or reasons of the pantry organizers for setting them up in the first place; how the community pantries were organized at the local level; how they operated during the COVID-19 pandemic while the strict quarantine measures were being enforced by the national and local governments; and the resources or forms of support they receive. The research also wanted to know the other actors and networks involved in the creation and running of the pantries; how decisions were made; the issues the pantry organizers encountered and focus on; and what the future would be like for this kind of community-led initiative.

The research had the following objectives:

1. Provide an overview of the growing body of literature about collective action and solidarity in a time of pandemic, with a focus on the Philippines where a makeshift pantry first appeared in NCR on 14 April 2021, following the imposition of corona measures in the capital and its nearby provinces (Hallare, 2021; Gita-Carlos, 2021); and how this community-led initiative rapidly multiplied and turned into a national phenomenon in just a matter of days.

2. Contribute new knowledge to the already extensive body of literature on collective action participation and solidarity, specifically on the distinctive characteristics of community pantries, at a time of deep political polarization and a protracted pandemic situation.

3. Identify if such a community-led initiative could have any wider societal implications that may be applied locally, outside of traditional institutional arrangements, but can be supported nationally or externally.

The research particularly looked at a recent phenomenon that started in NCR when a woman, equipped with just a wooden cart and signboards, put up a makeshift pantry along *Maginhawa* Street in Quezon City on 14 April 2021 so people could line up and get food items and other basic necessities based on their needs; at the same time, so others could give or leave behind any excess supplies they have from their homes (Gozum, 2021; Suazo, 2021). This single act became very popular a few days after it went viral in the news and social media. A week after the first community pantry along *Maginhawa* Street was set up, more than 350 community pantries have appeared in many cities across the country (Ministry of Mapping et al., 2021; Nolasco, 2021) and the number have continued to grow.

1.5 Research questions

To understand the community pantry phenomenon that emerged in the Philippines during the COVID-19 pandemic, the following main research question was raised: **How did community pantries emerge in the Philippines and what has been their role during the COVID-19 pandemic?**

To help find answers for the main research question, the following sub-questions were developed:

1. Who initiated the setting up of community pantries and what are their motivations for doing so?
2. How are community pantries organized, who are involved and what do they do?
3. What do community pantries represent and what issues do they encounter and focus on?
4. What prospects do community pantries have amidst and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic?

Chapter Two
Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

"Never depend upon institutions or government to solve any problem. All social movements are founded by, guided by, motivated and seen through by the passion of individuals." – Margaret Mead

Chapter Two presents the theoretical and conceptual frameworks used in the analysis. It has five sections. Section 2.1 presents the framing theory and how media and organizations, particularly in the Philippines, framed the COVID-19 crisis. Section 2.2 looks at motivation as a means for participation in collective action. Section 2.3 reviews the concepts of solidarity and the Filipino custom of '*Bayanihan*'. Section 2.4 discusses the resource mobilization approach. Lastly, Section 2.5 introduces an analytical framework developed by integrating the different theories and concepts with the findings of the study, which is used to guide the analysis in Chapter Five.

2.1   Framing theory

At the core of framing theory is the understanding that the world works depending on how certain ideas, stories or events are presented to an audience (Goffman, 1986, p. 28; Davie, 2014). It is an important theory because it explains how a certain frame influences people's perceptions, thought processes and actions. Framing is the process of producing meaning or interpretation of significant events and conditions with the goal of rallying support and overcoming opposition (Snow and Benford, 1988 in Benford, 1997, p. 416); while frame is the descriptive outcome of such process (Benford and Snow, 2000 in Rohlinger and Gentile, 2017, p. 16). A frame is what allows an individual, group or community "to locate, perceive, identify and label" events and conditions within their immediate environment and the world in general (Goffman, 1974 in Benford, 1997, p. 415); it also highlights an issue and defines the boundaries of the debate (Rohlinger and Gentile, 2017, p. 16).

2.1.1 Media framing of the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has been framed in many ways. Ogbodo et al. (2020, pp. 258-259) presented nine dominant frame categories, beginning with the five generic frames earlier identified, namely: Conflict, Human Interest, Economic Consequences, Morality and Responsibility in their analysis of the media in Europe (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000 in Ogbodo et al., 2020, p. 258). These frames were further expanded with the addition of

Ethnicisation and Politicisation from an analysis of how media covered the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria (Ogbodo, 2018 in Ogbodo et al., 2020, p. 258). Lastly, two emerging frames, Fear/Scaremongering and Hope, "employed in the reportage of the pandemic," were added (Ogbodo et al., 2020, p. 258).

2.1.2 Framing of the COVID-19 situation in the Philippines

Framing of the COVID-19 situation in the Philippines was a political exercise of sorts. It was not only seen as a public health problem, but also as a governance issue that demanded accountability from the government and its leaders, a national security threat and a continuing violation of certain economic and social rights that should have been promoted and protected by the state even during a crisis.

Like many countries, the Philippines followed World Health Organization (WHO) advice to treat COVID-19 as a public health emergency and a danger to national security (Yiu, Yiu and Li, 2021, p. 96). Moreover, it called for good governance to continue amidst the crisis and emphasized two things: (1) the need for an effective interagency coordination mechanism that is supported by academic and research institutions to ensure evidence-based policies and (2) the empowerment of civil society actors to initiate protection measures that would supplement government interventions to the pandemic (Yiu, Yiu and Li, 2020, pp. 96-97). The Philippines activated the Inter-Agency Task Force for the management of emerging infectious diseases and the National Task Force against COVID-19 in response to such call.

However, the promise of good governance took a back seat as government approaches to the pandemic were seen as: (1) rigid and prohibitive because they were largely directed toward controlling businesses and people's mobility (Talabis et al., 2021, p. 1); (2) inefficient and ineffective, partly because of its underdeveloped health and social protection programs, but also because the fiscal responses implemented by government prioritized infrastructure, defence and peace and order over health and social protection (Albert, 2020; Mendoza, 2020); and (3) 'gender-blind' as policy responses did not reflect collaboration with civil society and experts, thus, neglecting women and their families and worsening gender inequalities (Basuil, Lobo and Faustino, 2020).

Observations made by Talabis et al. (2021, pp. 2-5) were supported by Hapal (2020, pp. 2-3) who revealed how the Duterte administration securitised the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting to the imposition of draconian measures that heavily relied on the military and police apparatus of the state. As a result, policy responses focused heavily on the imposition of

lockdowns and restrictions rather than giving priority to the provision of social support to Filipinos and their families who needed assistance during the crisis.

In late 2020, the United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Children's Fund, in collaboration with the Philippines' National Economic and Development Authority, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of Education and the Economic Research Policy Institute, released a report about the impact of the COVID-19 crisis to households in the National Capital Region, which, historically, enjoyed better economic and social outcomes as compared with the other regions in the Philippines. The report showed increases in poverty and inequalities in the capital with significant increases in unemployment, decreases in household incomes, hunger through reduced food intake and increases in gender inequality as evidenced by increases in time spent for social reproduction and unpaid care, which were affecting more women than men even before COVID-19 came (UNDP et al., 2020, pp. 15-17).

2.2 Motivation as a mechanism for participation in collective action

One of the fundamental social psychological processes pertaining to social movement participation is motivation, with the rest being "social identity, social cognition and emotions" (van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2017, p. 103). Since the research is primarily interested on the role of motivation in people's participation in protests, rallies, demonstrations or other forms of collective action, it will make use of the concept defined by Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans (2017, p. 122) as "the drive to achieve a goal, combined with the energy to work towards that goal". Although the concept has a bias towards European experiences of social movements or mobilizations, it will be used carefully to explain why individuals or groups participate in collective action, such as the community pantry initiative in the Philippines.

There are different types of motivation or motives, which Klandermans (2013, p. 1) categorised as instrumentality, identity and ideology. These were later elaborated by Van Stekelenburg, Klandermans and Walgrave (2019, pp. 376-378) into: grievances, efficacy perceptions, identification, emotions and social embeddedness. For the purpose of this research, motives have been re-categorised into (1) instrumentality motive, which implies a shared goal and a desire for social and political change; (2) identity motive, which brings people together because of their shared situation and grievances; (3) ideology motive, which indicates that one's perception of society is a collective view and valid; and (4) emotions-based motive,

with anger as the prototypical protest emotion, but may also include similar emotions of disappointment, disgust, frustration, rage and resentment (Van Stekelenburg, Klandermans and Walgrave, 2019, pp. 376-378).

2.3 Solidarity and the Filipino custom called '*Bayanihan*'

The concept of solidarity became important when Emile Durkheim used the term to discuss division of labour, social solidarity and the law in the late 19th century (Wilde, 2007, p. 171). Since then, the term has been utilized in a variety of ways and taken on several meanings depending on the basis, theoretical aim, context and scope (Rehg, 2007, p. 8).

As mentioned earlier, solidarity was one of the roles taken by social justice movements around the globe during the early part of the COVID-19 pandemic (Pleyers, 2020, p. 2), which is also true in the Philippines. While Hechter (2001) defined solidarity as the "cementing force that binds individuals based on normative obligations that facilitate collective action and social order" (in Mishra and Rath, 2020, p. 1); Rehg (2007, p. 8) alluded that the term implied human interaction that brings and keeps people together because they collectively recognize and value the same things. Although, Kip (2016) acknowledged that solidarity could be ubiquitous as well, often invoked by the radicals, the conservatives and the Church and in national politics, he also argued that the concept could assume a "shared opposition to a common, excluded enemy to whom solidarity cannot be extended" (in McCrea, Meade and Shaw, 2017, p. 396).

The communal idea of solidarity is synonymous to the Filipino tradition of '*Bayanihan*', an indigenous trait that connotes service and solidarity, with the capacity of being compassionate to people who need help without expecting anything back in return (Ealdama, 2012, p. 7). The word is derived from the Tagalog root word '*bayan*', which means village, country or nation, depending on the scope. The Tagalog words '*bayani*' and '*anihan*' can be drawn from it as well. '*Bayani*' means hero or champion while '*anihan*' refers to harvest, triumph or accomplishment. For a lay person, '*Bayanihan*' simply means people in a community coming together to achieve a shared objective for the common good, with individuals seen as heroes for achieving something without expecting anything monetary in return.

'*Bayanihan*' is widely practiced in the Philippines, especially in the countryside where farmers gather in the field to harvest rice and other produce, or when fisherfolks go out at night to catch fish, or when a family needs to physically move their house using wooden poles to another spot in the village. The custom is not confined to the regular tasks of daily

living alone. It can also be seen during times of crises, e.g., when a neighbour's house catches fire, the village people come together to help put the fire out and move the children and whatever is retrievable to a much safer place. Or when there is a typhoon, people assist villagers move to safer grounds and offer them shelter and food.

As Ang (1979, p. 91) noted in her commentary, the practice is also understood as '*tulungan*', which means helping, or '*damayan*', which means aiding or assisting. She further elaborated that it is "a system of mutual help and concern which has become the backbone of family and village life…" in the Philippines (Ang, 1979, p. 91). This concept is in contrast with the "extreme individualism [promoted under] neoliberal capitalism" (Della Porta, 2020, p. 356). '*Bayanihan*' is basically about people helping people, especially in times of need.

2.4   Resource mobilization approach

The emergence of community pantries in the Philippines came quite as a surprise because of how rapidly it multiplied from one makeshift pantry to more than 350 similar pantries nationwide in a matter of days. Based on a publicly sourced document, there were almost 2,000 community pantries operating in the country as of August 2021.

One theory that could be used to partly explain this phenomenon is the resource mobilization approach, which:

> … examines the variety of resources that must be mobilized, the linkages of social movements to other groups, the dependence of movements upon external support for success and the tactics used by authorities to control or incorporate movements.

> (McCarthy and Zald, 1977, p. 1213)

The theory makes available resources central to the birth, growth and [possible] decline of certain movements and explains why some movements can grow rapidly (Sen and Avci, 2016, p. 127). Resources are either tangible or intangible (Freeman, 1979 in Jenkins, 1983, p. 533) and come in various forms: financial, labour, infrastructure, machine, knowledge, technical skills, communications, legitimacy, support from media and political elites and the support base itself (McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Tilly, 1978; Freeman, 1979 in Jenkins, 1983, p. 533). One major criticism of this approach is the strong emphasis on material resources; however, Edwards and McCarthy (2004, pp. 125-128) provided more clarity in their fivefold typology of social movement resources, namely: moral, cultural, social-organizational, human and material resources.

Starr (2000) interjected that social movements attempt to mobilize human resources or the public at various levels, beginning at the grassroots or local communities, then bringing them together at mid-level or bigger clusters and, eventually, at a much larger national or international network (in Sen and Avci, 2016, p. 127). He further explained that such movements mobilize their constituents and adherents using modern technology such as the Internet for communications and mentioned the relative successes of anti-globalization movements such as the environmental groups and the anti-World Trade Organization movement in mobilizing support using modern telecommunications (Starr, 2000 in Sen and Avci, 2016, p. 127). Although grievance is assumed to play a role in mobilizing resources, McCarthy and Zald (1977, p. 1213) underscored that the resource mobilization approach has shifted more toward the socioeconomic and political theories, rather than on the more traditional sociopsychological basis of collective behaviour. Jenkins (1983, p. 528) further elaborated that this new approach highlighted certain continuities between social movements and institutions, rationality of those involved in the movements, the strategic issues they encounter and their role as agents for social change.

2.4 Analytical framework developed

Analysing the community pantry phenomenon in the Philippines, whether it is a form of social movement or simply another political expression of an already existing, wider social movement, is a challenging exercise. An analytical framework was developed to guide the analysis and, hopefully, assist the research to come up with appropriate, credible conclusions. See Figure 2.1 below for the framework.
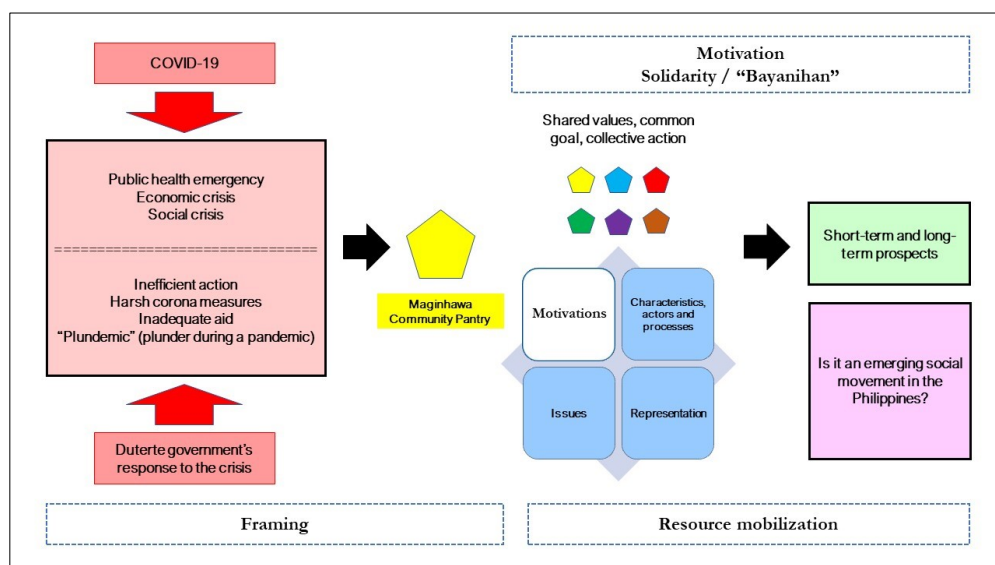
Figure 2.1 Analytical framework developed based on tools used for analysis and the data collected

Chapter Three
Design and Methodology

"I want to understand the world from your point of view. I want to know what you know in the way you know it. I want to understand the meaning of your experience, to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them, to explain things as you explain them. Will you become my teacher and help me understand?" – James P. Spradley

Chapter Three presents the overall design and methodology. It has seven main sections. Section 3.1 discusses the sources of data. Section 3.2 describes the design, method and data collection tool used in the study. Section 3.3 explains the selection of research participants, looking into what selection criteria were used and how sampling was carried out. Section 3.4 describes the in-depth interviews, data processing and observation of data saturation. Section 3.5 talks about the limitations and challenges encountered in the field. Section 3.6 is an acknowledgment of the researcher's own positionality and reflexivity. Finally, Section 3.7 explains the ethical considerations of the whole research process.

3.1 Sources of data

Main sources of data were primary data collected from 15 community pantries in the National Capital Region (NCR) during a fieldwork conducted between July to September 2021. A total of 21 organizers from the 15 sampled community pantries were interviewed. Supplemental information were sourced from journal articles and other publications, news websites and blogsites, YouTube and other online video platforms, and networking sites like FACEBOOK.

3.2 Design, method and the data collection tool

Qualitative research design using a phenomenological approach was adopted to investigate how and why community pantries emerged and rapidly multiplied in the Philippines during the COVID-19 pandemic when strict lockdown measures have been imposed by the national government; especially in the capital where most of the confirmed COVID-19 cases in the Philippines are concentrated (DOH, 2021) and where the harshest lockdown measures have been applied.

Based on the research objectives and questions, an in-depth interview was used as the main data collection method. An interview guide in English was developed for this purpose.

The use of in-depth interview using an interview guide was decided because the research wanted to engage key informants in deep and unstructured conversations about their experiences (O'Leary, 2017, p. 282) as community pantry organizers, particularly in the setting up and running of the pantries in their respective neighbourhoods.

The interview guide was pretested with a pantry organizer based in San Luis, Aurora Province, who was excluded from the sample, before the guide was formally used in actual data collection. A prototype of the data collection tool is provided in Appendix C.

3.3 Selection of research sites and participants

To meet the objectives and answer the questions of the study, research participants were identified from 15 community pantries in NCR. Four selection criteria were used for selecting the pantries and key informants, complemented by a multi-step sampling process for the referrals and referral replacements.

3.3.1 Selection criteria used

The following set of criteria were observed:

1. <u>Location</u> – community pantry was physically located and had operated or is operating in any of the 17 cities and municipalities in NCR.

2. <u>Ownership</u> – community pantry is either individual-led, group-led or community-led, and not an attached agency of the government or a part of any large business entity.

3. <u>Time element</u> – community pantry was set up on or after 14 April 2021 and had either operated or is operating at the time of data collection.

4. <u>Accessibility</u> – community pantry organizers, who were the key informants for the study, were available and have agreed to be interviewed, either face-to-face or online depending on the lockdown classification that was in place at the time of interview.

3.3.2 Sampling technique adopted

A multi-step sampling process was adopted, which was a combination of snowball sampling for referrals, and simple random sampling for referral replacements, in case the referrals were unreachable, unresponsive, or unavailable for an in-depth interview. Figure 3.1 in the next page shows how the process works.
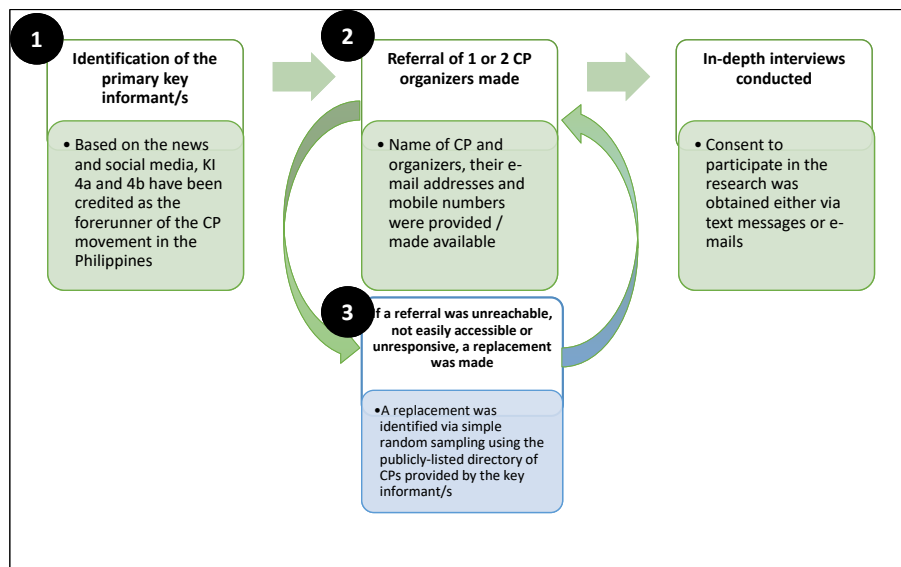
Figure 3.1 Multi-step sampling process; a combined snowball sampling (for referrals) and simple random sampling (for referral replacements)

For the snowball sampling to work, a primary key informant was first identified. This was Key Informant (KI) 4a, who was largely credited in the news and social media as the organizer of the first community pantry in the Philippines during the COVID-19 pandemic (Gozum, 2021; Mongaya, 2021; Suazo, 2021). At least two additional organizers were referred by KI 4a and her co-organizer, KI 4b, for the next in-depth interviews. This step was replicated for each successful KI until a desired number of interviewees was achieved.

As mentioned earlier, when referrals turned out to be unreachable, unresponsive, or unavailable, simple random sampling was performed to replace referrals who were inaccessible. This step was performed with the use of a publicly sourced and accessible registry of community pantries developed and maintained by the Community Pantry PH (CPPH) group, an active online community in FACEBOOK. KI 4a and KI 4b, together with their co-organizers from other community pantries in the Philippines, are recognized as the forerunners of CPPH.

3.4   In-depth interviews, data processing and data saturation

Although the interview guide was developed in English, the in-depth interviews were conducted in both English and Filipino.

A total of 21 organizers from 15 community pantries agreed to be interviewed as KIs. The first five interviews, which were considered the base interviews for observing data saturation, were conducted face-to-face in Week One and the early part of Week Two when NCR was still under a General Community Quarantine category, the lowest level of lockdown by the government. Corona measures were religiously followed with the use of personal protective equipment like face masks and face shields. In addition, physical distance of two meters was maintained between the researcher and each of the KIs. All face-to-face interviews were taped using a digital voice recorder.

When the government placed NCR under an Enhanced Community Quarantine, the highest level of lockdown, beginning 06 August 2021, the remaining interviews were conducted online via Zoom, a cloud-based video communications platform. All interviews via Zoom were directly recorded and saved in the researcher's laptop and not in the Zoom cloud for security. A full list of community pantries and organizers that participated in the research is provided in Appendix A, while Figure 3.2 below shows a detailed diagram on how the actual sampling of referrals and referral replacements were undertaken.
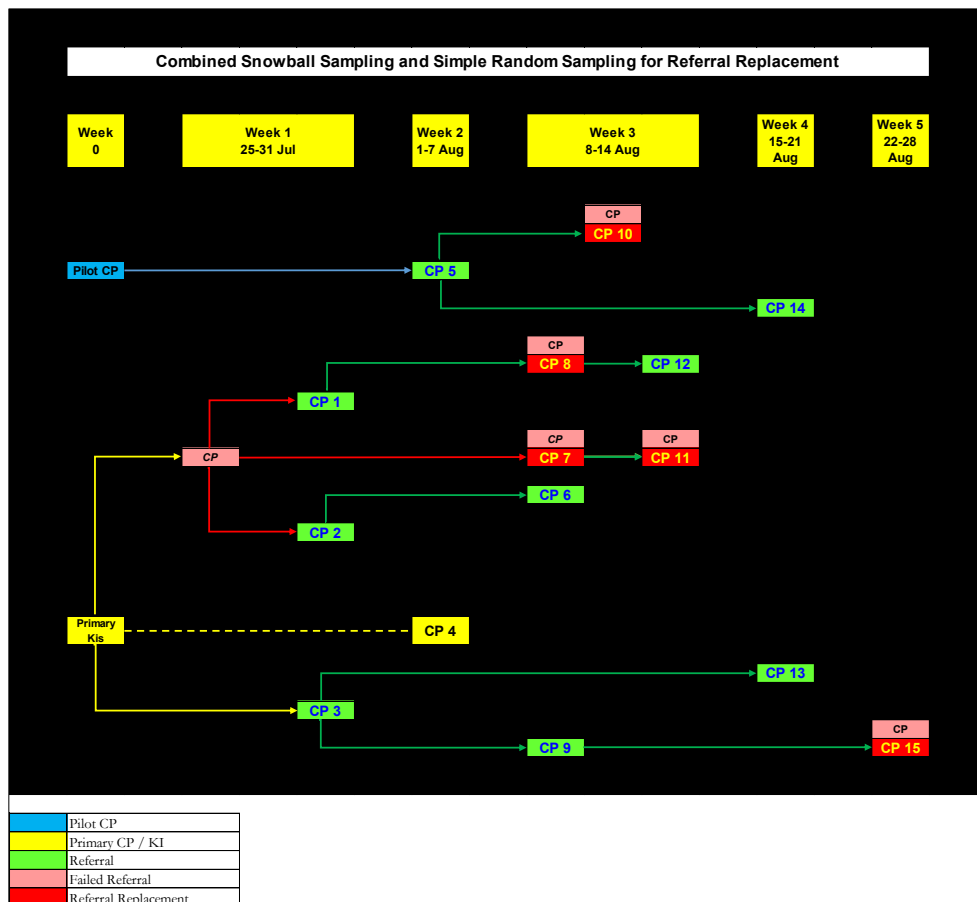
Figure 3.2 Actual sampling of community pantries (and the organizers)
during data collection in NCR, Philippines (July to August 2021)

19

In addition, Figure 3.3 below shows the location of the 15 community pantries in NCR that agreed to be included in the study.
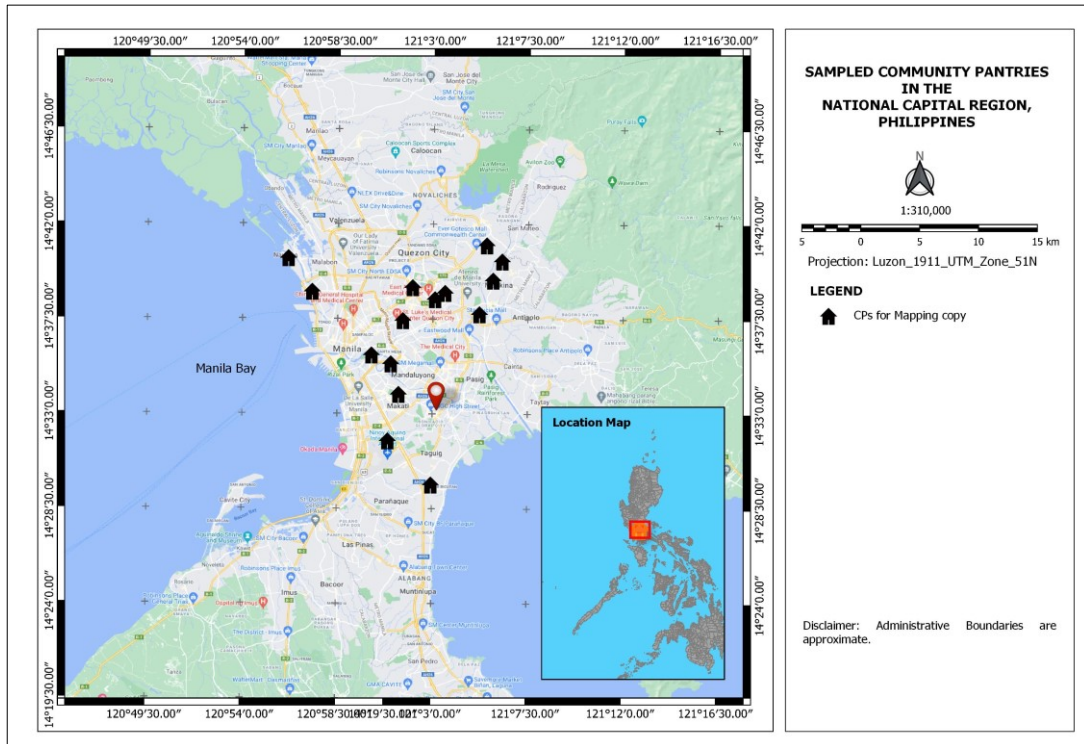
Figure 3.3 GPS-assisted mapping of the sampled community pantries in NCR, Philippines

The four elements of a focused interview (Flick, 2009, pp. 150-152) were conscientiously observed as well:

1. Depth and personal context: the researcher maintained deep conversations with the KIs and allowed them to share their own lived experiences as community pantry organizers.
2. Non-directionality: an interview was guided by a set of different questions; however, flexibility was applied and an open conversation was maintained.
3. Range: the researcher ensured that the research topic was discussed during the interviews, but also allowed for new related topics to be introduced during the conversations.
4. Specificity: the researcher encouraged retrospective inspection, allowing the KIs sufficient time to recall their lived experiences as community pantry organizers.

An Excel-based translation and transcription tool was developed and two experienced research assistants were engaged to carry out the task of simultaneously translating and

transcribing all the interview recordings. The resulting 'table transcripts' were compiled and analyzed by module, which facilitated the systematic coding of responses into basic patterns and further categorization into global themes.

Although the actual number of KIs interviewed exceeded the maximum number that was originally planned, data saturation was still observed using the approach of Guest, Namey and Chen (2020, pp. 5-7) who referred to saturation as "the point during data analysis at which incoming [interview] data points produce little or no new useful information relative to the study objectives". This definition was consistent with what Given (2016, p. 135) pointed out that saturation is reached when "additional data do not lead to any new emergent themes".

3.5   Research limitations and challenges encountered in the field

A major limitation was the conduct of research in NCR alone due to the limited time available for fieldwork and the complications brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. This limited the scope of the research because it automatically excluded community pantries and pantry organizers based outside of the capital from being approached and included in the study.

The possible inclusion of community pantries and organizers from localities outside of NCR would have produced richer data and allowed for some form of comparison in terms of geography, characteristics, operations and politics. As observed on 28 April 2021, close to 800 community pantries throughout the country were mapped based on a crowd-sourced data and around 350 of these are in NCR alone (Ministry of Mapping at al., 2021). Hence, the sampled 15 pantries are not representative of the community pantries in the country, therefore, no generalizations could be made about the phenomenon.

Accessibility of the research participants was also a challenge, not only because of the lockdown measures imposed by the government but also because of politics. The community pantries, especially those based in NCR, have been politicized that led to the red-tagging and harassment of several pantry organizers and their volunteers by the government's military-led anti-insurgency task force and police forces (De Leon, 2021; Deutsche Well, 2021; Gotinga, 2021). Pantry organizers and their volunteers were accused of having links or being sympathetic to the communist insurgency movement. Coordinating and arranging interview dates and venues with the pantry organizers in Week One and early part of Week Two were done very discreetly and patiently to ensure their safety.

3.6   Researcher's positionality and reflexivity

Based on what I learned in my research techniques courses, I paid careful attention to issues concerning my own positionality and reflexivity and the influence of power relations in the entire research process. This encompassed the selection of the research topic, identification of research participants, planning and conducting the fieldwork research, data processing and analysis and writing the report. I seriously reflected on these aspects of the exercise "in order to undertake [an] ethical and participatory research" (Sultana, 2007, p. 374).

3.6.1 Positionality

There are fixed and fluid aspects of positionality that predispose me toward a particular point of view (Holmes, 2020, p. 2), so being aware of what these are, on one hand, helped me understand or know my own biases about the research topic and its underlying issues. I acknowledged my own:

1. Sexuality, as a member of the gay community, and how this may influence my interactions with research participants of similar and different genders.
2. Political views regarding the failures of the Duterte administration and of social activism as a response to such failures.
3. Lived experiences as a carer and performer of social reproduction activities that may lead me to be deeply involved in the conversations.

It is extremely important for me to be aware of my own positionality to remind myself 'not to place the research participants in the same box' and make my own assumptions about their individual beliefs, points of view and lived experiences based on what I know (Holmes, 2020, p. 2).

3.6.2 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is all about self-reflection (Sultana, 2007, p. 376) and self-disclosure (Holmes, 2020, p. 2), two features that assisted me in "critically examining power relations and politics in the research process and researcher accountability in data collection and interpretation" (Jones et al., 1997; Falconer Al-Hindi and Kawabata, 2002 in Sultana, 2007, p. 376).

I made every effort to be 'reflexive' or 'reflective' in all stages of the research process, from the identification of the research topic up to the writing of the report. This made me more sensitive in my interaction with the community pantry organizers; aware of the power relations that exist and influence data collection, data interpretation and knowledge production (Kobayashi, 2003 in Sultana, 2007, p. 376); and cognizant of certain allowances or

disallowances, of what were possible to achieve and unlikely to happen in the context of the existing economic, institutional, political and social realities while I was doing the research (Sultana, 2007, p. 376).

3.7   Ethical considerations

The following ethical considerations were observed throughout the research process:

1. Prior approval for in-person fieldwork was obtained from the Institute Board (IB) of the International Institute of Social Studies. A COVID-19 protocol for fieldwork research was prepared by the researcher, reviewed by the Supervisor and approved by the IB in early June 2021. In effect, a support letter was issued by the Teaching and Learning Support Team on 09 June 2021 after permission was granted by the IB.

2. A fieldwork log was developed, regularly updated and shared by the researcher to the Supervisor to keep the latter informed of the progress of the fieldwork.

3. A two-page flyer was designed and used to inform the KIs about the research background, objectives, questions, methodology and ethics. This was e-mailed to the KIs several days before the scheduled interviews. A prototype of the research flyer is provided in Appendix D.

4. Owing to the current socioeconomic and political climate in the Philippines, the KIs were assured that concerns regarding confidentiality, anonymity, privacy and safety would be upheld throughout the research process. Coordination with KIs and scheduling of interviews were done very discreetly.

5. Before the actual interviews, verbal informed consent to participate and permission to record the interviews were obtained directly from the KIs.

6. The COVID-19 protocol for fieldwork research was observed during data collection, more especially during Week One and the early part of Week Two when the interviews were conducted face-to-face.

7. Careful documentation was observed by taking notes and using a digital video recorder or Zoom recording.

8. Permission for any follow-up meeting with a KI, when necessary, was sought at the beginning and at the end of each interview. Researcher's contact information was shared to all KIs in case they have any concerns about the study.

9. A copy of the interview transcript in English was provided to the relevant KI who requested to be provided with such a document.

10. The KIs were also assured that the final research paper would reflect their beliefs, thoughts and lived experiences in relation to the research topic.

11. Anonymised donations of face masks and either vegetable bundles or cash were provided to the community pantries after the interviews were completed as a form of appreciation to the pantry organizers who took time to share their unique experiences despite the COVID-19 situation.

Chapter Four
Findings

"Magbigay ayon sa kakayahan, kumuha batay sa pangangailangan."
["Give according to one's ability; take according on one's need."]
− Slogan adopted and circulated by Maginhawa Community Pantry,
forerunner of the community pantry phenomenon in the Philippines

Chapter Four presents the study findings. It has five main sections. Section 4.1 introduces the community pantry initiators and their motivations for setting up community pantries in their respective neighbourhoods. Section 4.2 presents the community pantry characteristics, actors, and processes. Section 4.3 discusses the main purpose and representations of community pantries. Section 4.4 highlights the issues that community pantry organizers encounter and focus on. Lastly, Section 4.5 draws attention to the short-term and long-term prospects of community pantries amidst and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. Original interview quotes in the vernacular are provided in Appendix B.

4.1 Community pantry initiators and their motivations to action

4.1.1 Local context

The National Capital Region (NCR), including its nearby provinces of Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna and Rizal, were placed under Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine (MECQ) in April 2021, immediately after they experienced the most stringent lockdown measures while under ECQ a month before (Rappler, 2021; CNN Philippines, 2021). The lockdowns were imposed because of the surge in COVID-19 cases despite government efforts to bring the transmission under control. Many small businesses closed, public utility drivers were no longer able to ply their routes, vendors were no longer able to trade their goods and local farmers struggled to sell their produce at fair prices, which resulted in massive unemployment and loss of income for many daily wage earners. People were terrified and many experienced hunger since the pandemic started in early 2020.

This scenario was supported by data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (2021), which showed the unemployment rate rising to 8.7% in April 2021, with 4.14 million Filipinos without jobs, higher than the previous month when unemployment rate was at 7.1%, with 3.4 million jobless Filipinos (in Rivas, 2021). Additionally, the hunger incidence survey conducted for Quarter 1 of 2021 revealed that approximately 16.8% or 4.2 million families

experienced moderate and severe hunger, which was double the pre-pandemic hunger incidence of around 8.8%, with 2.1 million families affected (SWS, 2021). It is within this frame, timing and conditions that the community pantry phenomenon in the Philippines started to emerge.

4.1.2 'Birth' of *Maginhawa Community Pantry*

The *Maginhawa Community Pantry* (MCP) is regarded by many as the forerunner of the community pantry phenomenon in the Philippines. Its key organizer, who is also the primary key informant (KI) of the study, did not intend to rally public support nor expect for a collective response to come out from what she and her family started. Her reflections on the country's COVID-19 experiences and the government's responses, supervised mostly by the military's top brass, thus, perceived to lack the required science and public health expertise, encouraged her to help her neighbours and other people cope with the pandemic. She said:

> Philippines is one of the countries with the longest lockdown in the world. We call it by a different name ['quarantine'] but it is still a lockdown. Based on what I see in the news, the military generals are the ones managing the COVID-19 response, the approach is not scientific. There is fear. There is hunger as well. Actually, the way I see it, COVID-19 did not worsen our situation, it actually exposed how bad our situation is. The government does not talk about food security nor the struggle of our farmers. (KI 4a, 2021)

A year ago, she was inspired by a local experience from the Visayas region where government aid came in the form of fresh produce instead of the traditional cash aid. It trended in social media and people remarked they wanted to receive the same kind of assistance from their respective local governments. She shared the same sentiment but also thought at that time that it may not be easily realizable, especially in NCR where the strictest lockdown measures have been imposed. She added:

> Last year, I remember one city gave fresh vegetables as relief assistance to its constituents... I can't remember [the city] but it is in the Visayas. It trended and people's comments were 'Sana All' ['Hope it's the same for everyone']... So, I thought that government aid should be like that, but also felt that it's difficult to achieve. (KI 4a, 2021)

The night before the lifting of MECQ in NCR, she had a conversation with her sister, who is based in Washington D.C., about the idea of setting up a makeshift pantry in their village. They talked about the food banks organized by non-profit organizations in the United States. She excitedly pointed out:

I know that I needed to do something but I could not identify what it was exactly. Then I spoke with my sister the night be-fore the lockdown [in NCR] was lifted and told her, "I want to do something… I want to put them [food] on the floor, on a mat, then people will just pick them up. But it should not move around [the village]." Then, we talked about the pantries in the U.S. Suddenly, "Oh, now I know… Okay, bye!" I abruptly ended the call because I was able to see in my head what I was supposed to do. (KI 4a, 2021)

This account was validated by the primary KI's sister in a separate interview, who shared:

Back in April [2021]… my sister [name omitted] messaged me… and she said her baran-gay is basically going into lockdown… this is further restriction than what the QC government or the national government is saying… She was worried, she has a small business… that's not a critical thing to do during a lockdown, so that means no business, no money incoming… We told her… take this time to actually rest… I'll send her food, I'll send her money from the U.S. My mom said the same thing… She also got some aid, which is basically goods coming from the government… When the lockdown actually ended, she had extra food – a number of extra vegetables, extra canned goods, extra rice… So… the night she was coming out of lockdown, she was really excited to basically go out… to give the goods to… but was afraid of COVID… I was like, "Why don't you introduce a pantry?" We've been talking about it… a pantry is you set up a table or shelf somewhere… you drop off goods and then anyone can basically take it. If you set that up, some people might actually give their extra stuff as well… everyone else in your neighbourhood that might be coming out of lockdown. (KI 4b, 2021)

The primary KI's desire to help others and the support and encouragement she received from her family bolstered the idea of putting up a makeshift pantry along *Maginhawa* Street in Quezon City on 14 April 2021. Figure 4.1 in the next page is a photo of MCP, courtesy of KI 4a.

4.1.3 Creation of other community pantries in NCR

A few days after the MCP was created, it became viral in the news and social media, many individuals and groups started organizing their own community pantries locally and partici-pated in what MCP has started – helping their neighbours who were economically affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, including those who did not receive sufficient aid from the government, through food assistance and provision of other essentials that are available.

Figure 4.1 Maginhawa Community Pantry in Quezon City, Philippines. Photo courtesy: KI 4a

Most, if not all, of the community pantry organizers who interviewed declared that they were inspired by MCP and its key organizer. The following KIs shared their views about MCP being an inspiration:

It is so inspiring because there are people like [name omitted] who is always willing to help the poor, to supplement their needs… (KI 1, 2021)

My main inspiration when I was thinking of setting up a community pantry was the very own [name omitted], who is [name omitted], who initiated the Maginhawa Community Pantry. That started it all. (KI 6, 2021)

I saw the community pantry from Maginhawa… I saw it in my news feed… I am already into that kind of activity… we started even before the pandemic. I volunteer to similar initiatives before, going to different places for outreach work. (KI 7, 2021)

> When Maginhawa Community Pantry became successful, with Ate [name omitted], I said to my friends, "What if we do a similar thing in Bicutan?" I saw there was a pantry in Navotas… and those who created a similar pantry… What if Bicutan will also have one… (KI 14a, 2021)

> When another ECQ would be imposed, we knew that many of our neighbours were jobless, many would rely on our feeding program again… So, when we saw the post of Ate [name omitted], we took a risk of setting up our own pantry. We did not expect that in the first two months, a lot of donations would pour in. Actually, up to now, we keep receiving donations. (KI 13, 2021)

While other community pantry organizers were pushed by their personal near-death experience or death of a friend (suicide) in relation to COVID-19. Two organizers shared their stories:

> I actually got sick. I was diagnosed as a COVID-19 case around April [2021]… that was also the time when the community pantry started. I was still in isolation… we were trying to recover when the movement became popular. First thing I thought was to set up a community pantry in our neighbourhood, but it was quite challenging because it was a residential area… it might require a lot of permits before we can operate. (KI 5a, 2021)

> What triggered me to start [a community pantry]… it was quite emotional actually… I lost a friend a month before I started a community pantry here. I realized… actually… he took his own life and I realized how heavy and difficult it must be… the reason is he was finding it extremely difficult to support his own family… he did not know how to take care of his family during the pandemic. I realized that it was possible that many individuals were undergoing the same dilemma and could not feel that there is someone ready to help them. That was etched in my mind. I don't want to lose another friend for the same reason. (KI 7, 2021)

The community pantry organizers also shared the view that pantries served as a social platform to showcase the ancient Filipino custom of '*Bayanihan*', to reiterate, known as "*tulong-gan* or *damayan*, a system of mutual help and concern [that] has become the backbone of family and village life…" in the Philippines (Ang, 1979, p. 91). Applying the '*Bayanihan*' spirit, through the community pantries in the time of COVID-19, was inspiring for them because

it was breaking the old concept of charity and reinforcing the idea of solidarity. As one organizer aptly explained:

> We saw how people help each other. The 'Bayanihan' spirit. Especially the slogan used by [name omitted] that government said was quite leftist – 'Get based on one's needs and give based on one's ability' – it is so inspiring, so motivational. It shows no matter how small or big the contribution is, for as long as it can help others. It breaks the concept of charity… and re-defines the concept of solidarity in the community. (KI 1, 2021)

4.1.4 Motivations to setting up community pantries locally

Setting up a community pantry is not an easy undertaking, especially during a prolonged pandemic. It requires vision, patience, planning skills, resources, flexibility and commitment. No matter how constraining these elements are, these never prevented the pantry organizers from participating and organizing improvised pantries in their own communities. They were driven by various motives. When asked what motivated them to initiating and running the community pantries in their respective areas, for more than five months now, the organizers identified several motives, which are further categorized using Van Stekelenburg, Klandermans and Walgrave four-fold typology (2019, pp. 376-378):

a) **Instrumentality motive**. The pantry organizers realized that a shared goal of helping communities survive through the COVID-19 pandemic was attainable because, based on prior experiences, people were always willing to help other people who were in need. The influx of resources to the community pantries was a material demonstration of that. For some organizers, the pantries were also instrumental in linking communities to other support networks such as the 'community of pantries' in FACEBOOK, the local farmers in the north and non-government organizations that offer non-pharmaceutical services to people. One of the organizers said:

> As we all know, I'm from Marikina and we always experience strong, heavy typhoons every year. Typhoon Ulysses was really bad, we were badly hit. A lot of people from Marikina were affected and then there's the COVID-19 pandemic. When we received monetary donations, me and my sister did not expect that people will also be sending rice, vegetables, canned goods… The donations came from my friends and relatives, but a lot of the donations came from people who I do not personally know… people who wanted to help but didn't have the resources or manpower to do it themselves. They were very thankful that we organized a community pantry here in Marikina. (KI 9, 2021)

b) **Identity motive**. Pantry organizers easily connected with the idea of a community pantry because of that sense of community, their shared grievances on how government was responding to the COVID-19 crisis and a common interest to provide an immediate, alternative, although temporary, solution to such crisis. As one organizer described:

> It was inspired by the Maginhawa Community Pantry. Actually, I am not the only organizer, I have my family, some of the youth and young professionals in the community… and we talked about it… after we have exchanged ideas, we agreed to start a pantry. Around the community, we have neighbours from Pangasinan [province outside of Manila] who sell vegetables… they also help. The way we see it, some of the families use part of their small income so they can contribute to the pantry. So, ordinary things come from ordinary people, but when we put them all together, it was able to serve the whole community. (KI 8, 2021)

c) **Ideology motive**. Even prior to the pandemic and the lockdowns, the pantry organizers have already been critical of what was happening in the communities and the society at large. They understood poverty, what the peoples' needs are. There was a collective consciousness that government responses to every crisis were found to be poorly planned, badly executed and utterly inadequate. As one organizer put it:

> Actually, when I started the community pantry, I spent my own money first. We bought rice, we bought vegetables… we always make sure that we have rice available… You know, Bong [Albert], I am an activist… and being an activist, I already understand what the needs of our fellow Filipinos are… My point is, I know the problems faced by our society… I know there are many poor Filipinos, I know many people lost their jobs, I know others borrow money in order to get by… there are so many interconnected issues that drive them deeper into poverty. (KI 11, 2021)

d) **Emotions-based motive**. Any form of social activism is not without emotions. Community pantry organizers felt disheartened and sometimes angry to see their neighbours and people from other communities leave their homes very early in the morning, line up for hours to be able to receive food assistance from the pantries despite the curfew and the risk of getting arrested by local authorities. As more and more people were accessing the community pantries, organizers felt the need to be more organized to ensure the safety and security of everyone involved. As one pantry organizer narrated:

> As early as 4:00 AM, we already need to set up… Since the curfew ends at 5:00 AM… the system is people line up outside as early as 3:00 AM in the morning to be ahead of the

line… So, we told them, if you get arrested [by local authorities], we will not be able to bail you all out. So, what we did, since we didn't want to make them leave, and we won't be able to stop them from coming here, we advised them to line up by leaving their bags. (KI 3, 2021)

4.2   Community pantry characteristics, actors and processes

At the time of data collection, the 15 community pantries that participated were still operating, although they did not share a common time. At the very least, a community pantry would operate once or twice a week, which usually fell on a weekend.

Community pantries in the Philippines may be described as localized, functional structures that operate in a given community at different levels and in various forms. These structures primarily provide fresh and mostly uncooked food like rice, vegetables, canned goods, instant noodles, eggs, fruits, milk, juices and, sometimes, fish and chicken meat to the public. When donations are scarce, pantries fluidly convert into community kitchens instead, cooking meals and distributing these to the households in their communities. They also give other essential items like face masks, sanitizers, soap, shampoo, sanitary napkins, including toys and books for children, when they receive these as part of the donations.

A single pantry is the most basic functional structure of the community pantry initiative, while a cluster is a group of 25 pantries that are located close to each other and created to streamline communications and collaboration amongst themselves. Examples of a cluster are the Manila Cluster and Quezon City District 5 Cluster in NCR. In practice, when there are more than 25 pantries in a cluster, one of the pantries may take on a larger role and convert into a distribution hub like the *Maginhawa Community Pantry* and *Matiyaga Community Pantry*. However, there is no formal agreement amongst organizers on how a pantry evolves or develops, nor is the experiences of *Maginhawa Community Pantry* and *Matiyaga Community Pantry*, as distribution hubs, prescriptive for other pantries to emulate or aspire for.

A community pantry can also take on different forms depending largely on the available resources or donations, its flexibility to adapt to the changing quarantine guidelines and certain established obligations. There are (a) localized pantries that stay in one area in the same community; (b) localized, rolling pantries that go around a community using a neighbour's cart or borrowed vehicle to distribute cooked food or food packs; (c) localized, mobile pantries that move to different areas within a community or nearby communities; (d) localized, target-specific pantries that give priority to certain vulnerable groups like the senior citizens

and children; and the other types, e.g., outreach type of a pantry that travels to different communities or localities based on a request or as part of an already existing project (e.g., a church project). In reference to the last two forms of pantries, two organizers explained:

> Now, we decided that during this current lockdown, we will close the pantry but [name omitted] got the numbers of the senior citizens… we receive many messages from them… then, [name omitted] prepares the list [of names] and decide who would be given the food items… We no longer have a physical community pantry [temporarily]… it has transcended from physical into some form of aid… [name omitted] schedules them so they don't have to go to the store at the same time. The assistance still continues… with this arrangement, we are able to give food assistance to 20 people a day. (KI 15b, 2021)

> We did it before, since 2018… we started in our church called Radical Love. It is all about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We operate per project because we need to solicit for funds… When we started in our family, it is important that we have the same objective, that we all like what we will do [a project]… We belong to one church. Until now, because of our system in Radical Love, we learned about the system and use it to operate the pantry. Actually, we do not contain ourselves in Dalisay Street or in just one place, we go to other places as well. (KI 12, 2021)

Multiple actors are involved in the community pantry initiative such as the initiators or organizers themselves, the volunteers, non-traditional donors who are mostly private individuals, small and medium businesses, charitable foundations, religious organizations, academic institutions, the so called 'silent politicians' and the local government and barangay officials who are requested to assist in enforcing the safety and health protocols against COVID-19. Voluntarism play a huge role in the operations of a community pantry and the volunteers are usually the family members, relatives, friends, neighbours or employees of the organizers.

Community pantry organizers also engaged in organizational and management processes, although these were more informal compared to what traditional managers from conventional institutions and organizations do in practice. Processes like role delineation and tasking are agreed to by co-organizers; systems that improve pantry operations and interactions with the local communities and 'pantryliners' are discussed and implemented; planning and decision making are done based on consensus and decisions are communicated through informal channels like a simple phone call, text message or a group chat; and fund raising is

done largely through emails and the social media, complemented by a volunteer communications team that prepared social media cards, e-flyers and other publication materials. Accountability is a responsibility embraced by the organizers early on and is demonstrated through simple bookkeeping and reporting in social media and via e-mail so donors and the public are informed on how cash donations were used and how non-cash donations were distributed.

4.3   Main purpose and representations of community pantries

The organizers agreed that the main purpose of the community pantries was the provision of temporary relief, in the form of food assistance and other essentials, to affected Filipino families so they could cope with the lack of adequate support from the government and stay in their homes and be safe during the COVID-19 pandemic and waves of lockdowns. When asked what community pantries deeply represent, the organizers responded that pantries:

a) **Act like social barometers because they reflect the country's current economic, social and political realities**. Government policies implemented during the pandemic contributed to massive job losses and caused hunger to many Filipino families, while the poor continued to be discriminated against by the state's own relief programs. Informal workers protested to show what was happening in their communities, but instead of being heard, they were perceived as violators of the safety and health protocols imposed by the government, as being part of the problem. These are not entirely new issues. These problems have existed for many years because of structural defects and imbalance in power relations that favour the social elites and privileged classes in society. The COVID-19 pandemic and community pantries simply highlighted the failures of the state and inadequacies of traditional institutions that advocate neoliberal and capitalist policies. The community pantry phenomenon should awaken the government to do more for the people especially during a crisis.

b) **Reflect the weaknesses of food systems in the Philippines, specifically in NCR**. As the COVID-19 pandemic ravaged many countries worldwide, it also disrupted their food systems, especially in non-developed countries like the Philippines (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2020 in Ramos, 2020). The Philippine government's rice importation policy and neglect of the agriculture sector over the last five years did not help mitigate the impacts of COVID-19. The pandemic highlighted how food insecure Filipino families have become during a prolonged crisis, especially the poor and affected families in urban or slum areas, with their lack of permanent sources of income and

access to regular, healthy food sources. During the pandemic, it has become more convenient to resort to cheap but unhealthy food like canned goods and instant noodles putting people's nutritional health at risk.

c) **Represent positive Filipino values and national solidarity**. Community pantries provide an acceptable and safe platform where Filipinos can show their genuine concern, kindness and respect for others, especially to those who are in difficult situations, during the pandemic. They are mostly the poor and the marginalized who suffer from incessant neglect by the state and its agencies and discrimination from the privileged few in society. It is a space where Filipinos can demonstrate the '*Bayanihan*' spirit, their solidarity with the people by helping them cope with or survive the pandemic.

d) **Are an alternative form of politics**. The community pantry phenomenon is one way of telling the government that it has continuously failed on its constitutional duty to serve and protect all Filipinos, free them from poverty, provide them with social support and improve their quality of life, including respect for their dignity and human rights. Since the 2022 national and local elections are just months away, the pantries can be an opportunity to raise the political discourse on good governance and public accountability; as well as a venue to educate and empower individuals and communities in terms of selecting new leaders for the country. There were accounts shared by several organizers that the people or 'pantryliners', during informal conversations with them, started asking why the community pantries were able to provide food assistance on a more frequent basis than the government that controls the public largesse.

4.4 Issues that community pantries encounter

There were several issues that organizers encountered and focused on in relation to the community pantries. These could be categorised into social and political consequences, health-related concerns, dependency on donations and volunteerism, and issues related to organizational management.

Red-tagging was a political consequence that is of a major concern amongst all KIs as many pantry organizers experienced it. It was a cause for alarm, given the oppressive character of the current Duterte administration, that many pantries discontinued operations for several days when the red-tagging started in April 2021. According to one of the organizers:

> The red-tagging happened not just to [name omitted] and our family. It happened to dozens and dozens of organizers. It's bad because, basically, we're trying to do something

good here… the issue with red-tagging is people deemed us as basically evil and threatening the safety of everyone involved in it… it's threatening the existence of pantries, it's not letting us feed the people. The worst part in this is that they're doing this without due process. (KI 4b, 2021)

Although not all KIs experienced being red-tagged by the police and military agents, many experienced government interference and police harassment during pantry operations. Many also felt that they have been surveilled. One organizer pointed out:

One challenge we experienced was the interference from the local government and its security forces, because it is a legitimate concern. We did not exactly experience any form of direct harassment from the police, but other pantries experienced it. Although here in Matiyaga [Community Pantry], the local police would make the rounds and sometimes they meddle in our operations (e.g., they dismiss the people who are in the line and tell them to leave). (KI 3, 2021)

Another organizer shared his personal experience on being trolled and red-tagged by the police:

The second challenge is security. I started getting messages from scammers, from trolls… so I would receive messages that I am a communist, that terrorists were my suppliers or donors… that I should be burned… that they know where I live and work… My privacy was at risk. I mentioned to you earlier that I was also red-tagged. I was forced to fill up a form, they [the police] asked me where I get my donations… they really intimidated me because I refused to provide them my personal data. (KI 9, 2021)

Pantry organizers were also concerned about their health status, of being exposed to COVID-19 and getting sick while undertaking pantry operations. They were also concerned about their own mental health and the health of the volunteers and the community at large. To minimize the risk of getting infected, the organizers made sure that health and safety protocols were observed during food distribution. In many instances, organizers sought assistance from local officials to enforce peace and safety protocols and ensure that people who access the pantries maintained a safe physical distance from each other and wore masks or face shields. One organizer said:

When it comes to safety measures, of course, including the health protocols… we still inform and request the local officials that we need the local peace officers to manage the crowd to avoid any disturbance and at the same time enforce the health protocols. (KI 10, 2021)

The organizers also faced management-related issues like identifying venues, coordinating with local authorities and logistics, different operational nature of the pantries, frequent changes in quarantine guidelines issued by the government and unpredictability of the timing and volume of donations or resources that come in. Organizers have to be flexible and adjust to many changes. An organizer shared:

> Our second challenge is looking for a venue when it is rainy… we could not set up the pantry because of the rain; and if there is no coordination with the people, there might be an overflow and we will not be able to manage the situation. Then the vehicle; because of the volume of donations given to us, sometimes we could not pick them up because we don't have a vehicle. (KI 2 , 2021)

Other issues shared by all organizers were related to resources. These were largely on the cash and non-cash donations received from private individuals, small and medium businesses, church and academic institutions, charitable organizations and non-government organizations plus the efforts invested by volunteers to help run the pantries. Organizers were aware that pantries rely largely on donations and voluntarism, and they began seeing donor fatigue and volunteer burnout after two to three weeks of operations. They considered donations and voluntarism as the key resources to sustain the pantries and continue helping people in need while the pandemic and lockdowns continue.

4.5 Short-term plans of and future prospects for community pantries

When asked about what the future holds for the community pantries, the organizers sounded emotional but remained positive of the possibilities. They were unanimous in their view that the pantries offer temporary relief to people and communities that were adversely affected by the pandemic and the lack of government aid during the lockdowns that have been ongoing for almost two years now. However, organizers declared that community pantries will continue to exist and operate for as long as there is a need; and when people, businesses and organizations continue to provide donations, pantries would be able to extend help to affected people and communities. All community pantry organizers emphasized two key resources: material donations and the volunteers.

In the short-term, at least toward the end of 2021, organizers are preparing for the third wave of ECQ in NCR. The COVID-19 situation continued to worsen at the time of data collection. A protracted pandemic meant longer and harsher lockdowns. The government

was already planning to impose granular lockdown measures in many areas in the capital. Calls for donations flooded in social media asking the public to keep the spirit of giving so more people and communities could be supported by the pantries as another ECQ approaches.

In the long-term, the organizers clearly stated that the pantries will continue to engage in other socially relevant activities like voters' education, health and HIV education and testing, health service referrals and promoting gender equality. Last 23 August 2021, the Community Pantry PH, in partnership with the De La Salle Brothers, Inc., Tanging Yaman Foundation, Inc. and several non-profit organizations, launched the 'Adopt a Community Pantry Project' to sustain this community-led initiative that have grown to more than 6,000 pantries nationwide (Mirasol, 2021; Servallos, 2021). It appears that the process of institutionalizing a community-led initiative and its functional structures, to be able to continue providing assistance to people and communities in need, has commenced.

Chapter Five
Analysis

"Mula sa masa; tungo sa masa."
["From the people; to the people."]
– Another slogan adopted by community pantries in the Philippines

Chapter Five discusses the overall analysis of the research findings using the analytical framework developed and found in Chapter 2, Section 2.4 of this paper.

The emergence of community pantries in the Philippines came at a unique time and under extraordinary circumstances. COVID-19 grabbed all headlines in 2020 and became the most significant event of the year. When the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, the world was caught off guard and most countries took WHO's advice to treat COVID-19 as a public health emergency that resulted in severe local and international restrictions. The purpose was to keep the virus responsible for COVID-19 from further spreading to households, in the communities and across borders. Harsh measures were hastily imposed by governments, institutions and organizations. The highly restrictive measures have devastating effects. They did not only expose the poverty and inequalities that already existed in many societies, but also worsened the severity of the socio-economic crises experienced by many countries. The most affected were those who were already vulnerable and are in the fringes of societies who have limited access to healthcare and social services. COVID-19 was then understood as a threat to one's life and the whole of humanity.

In the Philippines, the circumstances were not different as government also followed WHO's advice, although its actions were quite delayed and off when compared to other Southeast Asian countries. The Duterte administration initially downplayed the COVID-19 situation when it was still developing and only acknowledged its associated risks and probable negative impacts close to when WHO declared it as a global pandemic. With COVID-19 being framed, largely, as a public health issue, the government's policy response and decisions placed priority on containing its spread while limiting human mobility and interactions. The government further securitised the pandemic, calling it an existential threat to the Philippine economy and society.

In order to achieve its plans and objectives, a dedicated task force was created and retired military generals were appointed as chief implementers of the government's overall COVID-

19 strategy, sending the message that military rigour would be applied as the country geared up to battle a pandemic. Public health experts were relegated as mere policy advisors to the task force, while the military generals were seen as the strategic enforcers of government-mandated lockdowns and other corona measures. Congress was not helpful either and became complicit to the securitisation of the COVID-19 pandemic when it passed Republic Act 11469, a.k.a. the 'Bayanihan to Heal as One Act', that granted Duterte special powers to address the COVID-19 crisis (Tomacruz, 2020).

A securitised framing of the COVID-19 situation in the Philippines, similar to how some previous calamities and public health emergencies were regarded, is controversial and not easily acceptable because it could again give rise to incidents of corruption and abuse of power by the state and its instrumentalities. Mistrust against the current government remains high amongst civil society, activists and the political opposition who have been demanding for an end to state-sponsored oppression, corruption and misogyny since the Duterte government came into power in 2016.

There is widespread fear amongst Filipinos, not only because of the uncertainties brought by the pandemic, but also because of the ineffective, unresponsive policy interventions crafted by government and its allied agencies and institutions. There were massive job losses and hunger. An overstretched healthcare system, due to decades of government neglect and privatization, limited the country's capability to pursue an effective test, trace and treat strategy. Government aid during the pandemic was found to be inadequate as well despite the passage of Republic Act 11469 and other supplemental legislations, as the country went through several waves and various stages of lockdowns for almost two years now.

The community pantry phenomenon in the Philippines began on 14 April 2021 when Key Informant (KI) 4a organized a makeshift pantry, with the use of a wooden cart and two placards, along *Maginhawa* Street in Quezon City. It was a way of showing solidarity to the hungry Filipinos severely impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, letting them know that KI 4a understood and felt their situation. It marked the birth of the *Maginhawa Community Pantry* (MCP). Four months after that, with its organizing mantra being, "*magbigay ayon sa kakayahan, kumuha batay sa pangangailangan*", more than 2,000 pantries have been established by different individuals and groups in many communities across the country, with more or less 800 of them located in the National Capital Region (NCR) alone. The organizing mantra is a Filipino translation of Karl Marx's popular slogan, "from each according to ability, to each according to need" (Green, 1983, p. 441). Interestingly, the socialist slogan also has deep Christian roots

that could be traced back to the 19th century in the literature written by the followers of Saint Simon (Bovens and Lutz, 2018, pp. 4-5).

The rapid multiplication could be attributed to the visibility afforded by the news and social media to MCP and the other pantries that followed suit. MCP received considerable attention in FACEBOOK and trended immediately within the day. The public also recognized the makeshift pantry as a symbol of hope, an act of courage and a display of compassion for others that came at a very opportune time. Although the intention was more localized and sometimes targeted, the reach became as widespread as possible as people mobilized and started setting up pantries in their respective communities and through their own little ways.

MCP, as the forerunner of the community pantry phenomenon, delivered three simple messages to the public: (a) the COVID-19 pandemic and ineffective state responses to the crisis are putting families in very precarious situations; (b) there are solutions to the hunger crisis being experienced by millions of Filipinos, although they may be temporary or short-term; and (c) the communities rising to the occasion and coming together to address similar grievances against a neglectful government. The fundamental task of a social activist is to clearly articulate a situation of injustice that needs a solution through collective action. MCP and its organizers clearly did not disappoint in delivering that task. The messages were relatable to many Filipinos, regardless of their socioeconomic status, because they corresponded to what they were experiencing during the pandemic.

People are motivated to participate in collective action or community mobilization when they share a common goal and are mutually driven to take action to achieve such goal. The motivations of community pantry organizers and their adherents come from (1) experiences of compassion received from others when they needed help in the past or from prior knowledge of kindness extended by strangers to people affected by disasters or calamities; (2) prior experiences of social activism, leadership or even the management of a local project; (3) being able to relate to the situation and suffering of others because they also experienced hunger, discrimination, neglect, insecurity and poverty; (4) being socially conscious and critical about state oppression and corruption as they lived through these everyday; and (5) being humans, just like the rest, as they also feel disappointments, frustrations and anger about an unjust situation.

All of these are what motivated the organizers to set up community pantries and continue to operate them for several months now because they (1) share the same goal of wanting to alleviate hunger and make a positive change in society, (2) identify with the sufferings

of other people, (3) have a shared consciousness that people are unjustly dismissed or neglected by government over other priorities; and (4) are tired of being disappointed and frustrated while struggling to protect their families and survive the pandemic.

The community pantries are an illustration of collective faith in a government that is supposed to put people first before profit; of shared value for human life above anything else; and a common aspiration for a just and humane society that genuinely cares for all people regardless of age, sex or gender, class, religion and ethnicity. This is what Rehg (2007, p. 8) alluded to that people come together because they value the same things.

Similarly, the Filipino custom of '*Bayanihan*' is also about helping people survive during times of crises or need. It is a trait that had been socially ingrained amongst Filipinos and could also support why community pantries continue to operate despite the many risks. This is solidarity expressed outside of the homes, where Filipinos share not only the time and resources they have, but also the risks of getting infected with COVID-19 and being red-tagged and arrested by the state police. Therefore, solidarity is not just about shared beliefs, values and aspirations, it is also about shared risks.

Community pantries have also expressed their collective solidarity through the networks of community pantries, e.g., the pantry clusters and the Community Pantry PH (CPPH) group, that were later organized as resource bases for other pantries needing support, advice and material resources so they could continue to operate and help people in need. Rising inequalities and deprivation could lead to the strengthening of solidarity and the '*Bayanihan*' spirit; and could potentially explain why community pantries have thrived, for more than five months now, despite the challenges of dwindling resources, as they are not externally funded, and the attendant risks associated with the state-imposed lockdowns and restrictions.

The resource mobilization approach partly explains why the community pantry phenomenon was a huge success in the Philippines despite the limitations and restrictions brought by the COVID-19 crisis. Resources are critical to the creation and continued operations of community pantries and what was clearly observed were the availability of human, moral, material, cultural and socio-organizational resources, based on the typology of resources as explained by Edwards and McCarthy (2004, pp. 125-128) earlier.

Human resources can be internal to the pantries. These are the organizers, who are responsible for setting up, managing and providing leadership to the pantries, and the volunteers, who are operationally involved in terms of packing and repacking of food items and dry goods, setting up the venues and, to some extent, controlling the crowd of 'pantryliners'

to ensure that everyone is safe and protocols are not violated during the operations. Usually, organizers and volunteers already know each other by virtue of existing familial, filial or social relations. Their participation also meant they bring with them their own time, competencies and skills directly into the management and operations of the pantries. Human resources can also be external, like the adherents to the initiative, usually the individuals or entities that provide donations or support.

Moral resources pertain to the legitimacy of the cause that community pantries are fighting for and the amount of public support they receive. Community pantries were very clear about the framing of the problem they wanted to address and the people found it relevant and valid that needed their attention and support.

Material resources are clearly the cash and non-cash donations the community pantries raised or received, but also include the space used as base for their operations or for the storage and repacking of food products and other goods, including vehicles and other modes of transportation, e.g., bicycles, carts, etc., loaned to them so they can distribute their goods. Monetary donations are highly valued resources because they can easily cover costs for procuring food items and other products and costs related to transportation and communication. Pantry organizers and the volunteers do not receive any form of monetary compensation.

Cultural resources refer to specialized knowledge and skills that are widely accessible. For the community pantries, these were immediately available from the organizers themselves who brought with them their own knowledge and skills in planning and meetings, budgeting, fund raising, communicating with potential donors and the public at large, coordinating and networking with other community pantries and their adherents, news agencies and non-government organizations, and using social media for visibility, operational, mobilization and accountability purposes.

Social-organizational resources, in the context of the community pantries, include the social network structures that have been created like the pantry clusters and the informal network of community pantries in the country, which is the CPPH. These resources or structures helped the community pantries streamline their communication and coordination tasks and give them access to other resources available somewhere else. Some of the pantries have their own networks of support organizations as well. Like in the case of the two existing distribution hubs in the capital, *Maginhawa Community Pantry* and *Matiyaga Community Pantry*, their connections with local farmer groups and cooperatives in the northern part of the

Philippines give them access to fairly-priced fresh vegetables and other produce, which they are able to buy in very large volumes and distribute to many pantries in the capital.

All these resources facilitated the emergence, growth and development of community pantries. They helped the organizers in the start-up stage and sustained the pantry operations for several months now. Resources are not permanent nor steady; and the question is, until when can these resources be available and sustain the community pantries and their operations?

Chapter Six
Conclusions

The research began with the main question, **"How did community pantries emerge in the Philippines and what has been their role during the COVID-19 pandemic?"**

In order to arrive at a comprehensive response, the topic was contextualized around COVID-19 being a global pandemic together with the concepts of social justice activism, social reproductive work and community care. Relevant literature regarding when community kitchens and similar social spaces started were traced backed to the 14th century Ottoman *imarets* and the 15th century Sikh *langar* tradition and linked these with modern day feeding programs, food banks and innovative community kitchen initiatives in several countries up to the present-day community kitchens in India, food activism in the Global North, *too pun sook* in Thailand and the community pantry phenomenon in the Philippines when the COVID-19 pandemic happened in 2020 (Singer, 2005, p.481; History, 2009; TCKB, 2016; Singh, 2019; Mongkol, 2020; Community Kitchens, 2021; and US History, 2021).

Several questions were also developed regarding who initiated the setting up of community pantries, their motivations, how they are organized locally, who are involved in the operations, their main purpose and representations, the issues they encounter and their short-term and long-term plans in order to address the main research question.

Framing of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines was useful in understanding how the situation was offered for interpretation by the powerful actors and dominant governing institutions and how the crisis was being securitised to justify government policies and actions. Sharing the same interpretation of the crisis allowed for the formation of collective grievances and consciousness to question ineffective, inefficient and unjust government responses to the pandemic. The social movement-related concepts of motivation, solidarity and the Filipino custom of '*Bayanihan*' were also utilized to ascertain why people participate in collective action or community response such as the community pantry initiative.

Community pantry organizers were driven by various motives such as a shared and attainable goal, a common sense of identity, a collective activist perspective of existing social ills and empathy toward others, having a common injustice frame could bring them together and work toward a single purpose. Solidarity and '*Bayanihan*' reinforced the collective valuing of positive traits or ideals of consideration for others, the common good, helping people who are in need and mutual aid over extreme individualism, which Della Porta (2020, p. 356)

already stressed earlier. Lastly, the resource mobilization theory was also used to emphasize the role of resources to the growth and success of community actions or initiatives.

The community pantry phenomenon in the Philippines would be incomplete without accentuating the story of the *Maginhawa Community Pantry* (MCP), regarded by the key informants (KIs), news and social media, and the general public as a forerunner of the initiative. MCP inspired thousands of individuals, groups and communities across the country to participate in local collective action by setting up community pantries in their own localities to help their neighbours and other Filipinos cope with the difficulties brought by the COVID-19 crisis.

One of the key findings of the study is understanding the utilitarian nature of community pantries. They are localized, functional structures that basically provide, although temporarily, food aid and other essential items to individuals and families who were severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and neglected by the state's own relief programs. They operate at various levels and in different forms depending on their ability to adapt to constant changes in the corona guidelines enforced by the government and the flow of material and human resources.

Although their shared purpose is clear, community pantries also represent deep-seated issues of inequality and discrimination due to the fundamental structural defects of a liberal society, reflect the weaknesses of the food systems in the Philippines and the continuous failure of the state to serve and protect its people especially during a crisis. Just like many movement organizations and institutions, community pantries encounter several issues and a major one is the red-tagging and harassment of pantry organizers by the state through its police and military apparatus. Other issues are health-related, management-related and resource-related.

There were some additional findings from the study. First is the realization that the COVID-19 pandemic is a social paradox of sort. It does not only make people ill or infected, or aggravate existing socioeconomic conditions, or violate people's right to life; it also expands the democratic space for social justice activism to flourish. However, this expansion is contingent on favourable sociopolitical opportunities. It is assumed that there will be attempts by the state, political elite and the non-adherents to thwart the growth of community responses or actions of such space and opportunity. Second is the heavy engagement in management processes, as community pantry organizers brainstorm, plan, strategize and communicate before they execute their activities. Although meetings and decision making are conducted and communicated more informally when compared to managers from

traditional or established movement organizations and institutions. Third is the heavy reliance on (a) modern technologies, such as the Internet and mobile banking to raise funds, and (b) social media, such as FACEBOOK, Instagram and Twitter, in order for community pantries to accomplish their regular organizational or management tasks and keep the operations running. Lastly, which was not tackled considerably in the study, was the role of the youth in a localized initiative in response to a public health crisis. The youth and many young professionals are involved in the community pantry initiative and took on various roles of organizers, volunteers, planners, communicators, fundraisers, mobilizers and capacity builders. Voluntarism also played a massive part in youth involvement.

Although the research is unable to completely pursue and convincingly argue, at this stage, that the community pantries that rapidly multiplied in the Philippines could be a form of a community-led movement, it is fair to point out that the pantry organizers and their adherents share a common purpose and a desire for continuity. At the very least, the community pantries should be seen as an assortment of spontaneous and organized activities, of functional structures run by diverse actors engaged in informal processes that are non-traditional and non-institutional, and still fulfilling the elements alluded to by Tarrow (2011, p. 9) and Della Porta and Diani (2006, p. 20), when they advocated for a better definition of what a social movement could be. It was clear that the community pantries, as a collective, agree on a common purpose, share the same identity, engage in collective action and are in dispute with a common adversary, which is the state.

With regard to future studies, an interesting approach to consider would be the use of mixed methods in data collection, preferably combining in-depth interviews with focus group discussions involving not only the community pantry organizers but also the volunteers and 'pantryliners' or communities in order to appreciate the different experiences of all actors involved in the initiative. This was part of the proposed design but was not pursued due to the corona measures in effect at the time of data collection. A survey of community pantries based on an appropriate sample from different localities, including those from outside the capital, will be interesting and help establish the structural and operational characteristics of the pantries. The survey may be complemented by site visits and brief immersion by the research team.

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Appendices

Appendix A – List of Community Pantries and Organizers

No.	Community Pantry	Organizers / Key Informants	City
1	San Roque Community Pantry	KI 1	Quezon City
2	Batasan Hills Pantry	KI 2	Quezon City
3	Matiyaga Community Pantry	KI 3	Quezon City
4	Maginhawa Community Pantry	KI 4a KI 4b	Quezon City
5	Kalusugan + Kristong Hari Community Pantry	KI 5a KI 5b KI 5c	Quezon City
6	Youthnited Bayanihan Community Pantry	KI 6	Marikina
7	Barrio Villamor Community Pantry	KI 7	Pasay
8	Nagtahan Community Pantry	KI 8	Manila
9	Pantry of Providence	KI 9	Marikina
10	Tangos Community Pantry	KI 10	Navotas
11	Navotas Community Pantry	KI 11	Navotas
12	Dalisay Street, Sta. Mesa Community Pantry	KI 12	Manila
13	Singkamas Youth Organization Community Pantry	KI 13	Marikina
14	Bicutan Community Pantry	KI 14a KI 14b KI 14c	Taguig
15	Reposo Community Pantry	KI 15a KI 15b	Makati

Note: There were 21 organizers from 15 community pantries that participated in the research.

Appendix B – Original Interview Quotes

Key Informant	Interview Quotes	Page
KI 4a, 2021	Ang Philippines isa sa may pinakamahabang lockdown sa buong mundo. Nag-iiba lang iyong tawag sa lockdown, pero lockdown pa rin. Ang napapanood ko sa news ang nagha-handle ng COVID response natin puro generals, hindi scientific iyong approach natin. Nandoon iyong fears ng mga tao. Nandoon iyong hunger. And actually, tingin ko, ang nangyari sa COVID, hindi niya na-worsen ang situation, na-expose niya ang situation na malala na. Hindi napag-uusapan iyong food security. Hindi napag-uusapan iyong struggle ng farmers.	26
KI 4a, 2021	Alam ko may gagawin ako hindi ko pa ma-pinpoint ano. Tapos noong kinausap ko iyong sister ko a night before i-lift iyong lockdown… sabi ko, "May gusto akong gawin… gusto ko parang ilagay sa sahig, sa banig, tapos puwedeng kunin ng mga tao. Kaso, hindi iikot." Tapos iyon, napag-usapan po namin iyong pantry sa U.S. "Ah alam ko na… Okay, ba-bye!" Nag-hang-up na agad ako kasi nabuo ko na siya sa isip ko talaga.	26
KI 4a, 2021	Alam ko may gagawin ako hindi ko pa ma-pinpoint ano. Tapos noong kinausap ko iyong sister ko a night before i-lift iyong lockdown… sabi ko, "May gusto akong gawin… gusto ko parang ilagay sa sahig, sa banig, tapos puwedeng kunin ng mga tao. Kaso, hindi iikot." Tapos iyon, napag-usapan po namin iyong pantry sa U.S. "Ah alam ko na… Okay, ba-bye!" Nag-hang-up na agad ako kasi nabuo ko na siya sa isip ko talaga.	26
KI 4b, 2021	Back in April (2021)… my sister [name omitted] messaged me… and she said her barangay is basically going into lockdown… this is further restriction than what the QC government or the national government is saying… She was worried, she has a small business… that's not a critical thing to do during a lockdown, so that means no business, no money incoming… We told her… take this time to actually rest… I'll send her food, I'll send her money from the U.S. My mom said the same thing… She also got some ayuda, which is basically goods coming from the government… When the lockdown actually ended, she had extra food – a number of extra vegetables, extra canned goods, extra rice… So… the night she was coming out of lockdown, she was really excited to basically go out… to give the goods to… but was afraid of COVID… I was like, "Why don't you introduce a pantry?" We've been talking about it… a pantry is you set up a table or shelf somewhere… you drop off goods and then anyone can basically take it. If you set that up, some people might actually	27

give their extra stuff as well… everyone else in your neighbourhood that might be coming out of lockdown.

| KI 1, 2021 | Sobrang nakaka-inspire because merong mga [name omitted] na always willing to help the poor, to supplement their needs… | 28 |

| KI 6, 2021 | My main inspiration when I was thinking of setting up a community pantry was the very own [name omitted], si Ate [name omitted], iyong nag-initiate ng Maginhawa Community Pantry. That started it all. | 28 |

| KI 7, 2021 | Nakita ko itong community pantry, which is from Maginhawa… nakita ko siya sa news feed ko… Kasi into that… gawain… nag start kami even before the pandemic… Nagbo-volunteer na po ako sa mga ganoong gawain… we go to iba't ibang lugar po na nag-a-outreach program. | 28 |

| KI 14a, 2021 | Noong nag-boom si Maginhawa Community Pantry, with Ate [name omitted], sabi ko, "What if, ano, gawin natin dito sa Bicutan?" Kasi nakikita ko may Navotas… iyong mga una na gumaya doon sa pantry… What if iyong Bicutan magka-roon… | 29 |

| KI 13, 2021 | Pag nag-start ang ECQ ulit, alam namin na maraming walang trabaho, marami ang aasa ulit sa feeding namin, kaya noong nakita po namin ang post ni Ate [name omitted], nag-take kami ng risk para makapag put up ng pantry. Hindi talaga rin po namin in-expect na for the first two months buhos talaga iyong donations. Actually, hanggang ngayon po, tuluy-tuloy naman. | 29 |

| KI 5a, 2021 | Nagkasakit kasi ako, nagka-COVID ako noong April, around April… tapos doon din unang nagsimula ang community pantry. I was still in isolation, nagpapagaling pa kami ng pumutok iyong movement. Una kong naisip baka dito lang sa amin, pero medyo challenging iyong lugar kasi residential… ang dami pang permits masyado na pagdadaanan. | 29 |

| KI 7, 2021 | What triggered me talaga na simulan po talaga iyon is iyong… very drama po iyon, eh, actually… I lost a friend a month before I started a community pantry here. Doon ko lang na-realize… actually… he took his own life, so parang doon ko na-realize na ganoon pala kabigat… the reason is nahihirapan na daw siya to support iyong family niya… hindi niya alam kung saan dadalhin iyong family niya this pandemic. Doon ko na-realize na maraming possible na tao na same ang pinagda-daanan and they cannot feel na there is someone na ready to help them. Parang tumatak iyon sa isip ko. I don't want to lose another friend for the same reason. | 29 |

KI 1, 2021	Nakita natin ang tulungan ng mga tao. Iyong 'Bayanihan' spirit. Lalo na iyong slogan na ginamit ni [name omitted] na medyo sinasabi ng government masyadong leftist – iyong 'Kumuha batay sa pangangailangan at magbigay ayon sa kakayahan' – sobrang inspiring, sobrang motivational siya. Pinapakita niya na kahit maliit o malaking kontribusyon pwede mong ibigay basta makakatulong. Binabasag natin iyong concept of charity… dine-develop talaga natin ang concept of solidarity ng programa.	30
KI 9, 2021	As we all know, I'm from Marikina and palagi kaming binubugbog ng bagyo every year. Typhoon Ulysses was really bad… we were hit bad… A lot of Marikenyos suffered from it… and meron pang pandemic… Noong naka-receive na kami ng monetary donations, hindi namin inaasahan ng kapatid ko na may magpapadala pa ng bigas, gulay, ng mga de lata… Those donations were coming from my friends and relatives, pero marami ring mga hindi ko rin kakilala na talagang gusto lang nilang tumulong pero wala silang resources or manpower to do it themselves. They were very thankful na merong pantry dito sa Marikina.	30
KI 8, 2021	It was inspired by the Maginhawa Community Pantry… Actually, hindi lang ako ang organizer eh, iyong family ko, some youths and young professionals of the community… and while talking about it… nagsamasama iyong mga ideas ng mga youth… sige, let's start a pantry. Around the community, merong mga nagtitinda na Pangasinense nga mga gulay… nagkocontribute din sila. The way we see it… some of the families binabawasan pa iyong maliit nilang kita just to contribute doon sa pantry. So, mga ordinaryong bagay mula sa mga ordinaryong tao, pero noong pinagsamasama namin, nakapagserve siya sa buong community.	31
KI 11, 2021	Actually nagsimula ako, ako mismo ang gumastos… bumili kami ng bigas, bumili kami ng gulay… tinitiyak namin palaging may bigas… Ano ako eh… alam mo aktibista ako, Bong… so iyong pagiging aktibista ko unawa ko na kaagad kung ano ang pangangailangan ng ating mga kababayan… ang aking pinupunto dito alam ko na kung ano iyong problemang kinakaharap ng ating lipunan… alam ko marami talagang naghihirap, alam ko na maraming nawalan ng trabaho, alam ko na iyong iba nangungutang na lang… dikit-dikit na ang mga issues na naglalagay sa kanila sa kawalan talaga.	31
KI 3, 2021	As early as 4:00 AM, kailangan na naming mag-set up. Kasi ang curfew ay 5:00 AM… ang end… So, ang siste ay pumipila na diyan ng alas-tres ng madaling araw… Mauna sila. So sabi namin, pag nahuli po kayo, di namin kayo kayang tubusin lahat. So ang ginawa namin ganito na lang po… ayaw naman namin kayong paalisin diyan… kung hindi namin talaga kayo mapipigilan, iwan ninyo na lang iyong mga bag ninyo.	31

KI 15b, 2021	Now, we decided na during the lockdown we will stop… but [name omitted] got numbers of seniors [citizens] and… ang daming nagme-message… and then ngayon si [name omitted] na karamihan ang nag-aasikaso nga mga pangalan, kung si-nong bibigyan… wala na kaming physical community pantry ngayon eh… nag-transcend na siya from physical naging humihingi na lang ng ayuda… ini-i-schedule na lang ni [name omitted]… para hindi sila sabay-sabay na pumunta sa store. Continuous pa rin… nakaka-twenty a day.	33
KI 12, 2021	We did it before, since 2018, we started in our church called Radical Love. It's all about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Per project po kami eh… kasi we need to solicit funds… When we started in our family, kailangan iisa iyong aming kaisipan, pare-parehong gusto namin iyong ginagawa namin… we are in one church… Until now, because of our system in Radical Love, nakita na po namin iyong system on how to handle it [community pantry]. Actually, we do not contain in one place, like Dalisay Street, we go outside.	33
KI 4b, 2021	The red-tagging happened not just to [name omitted] and our family. It happened to dozens and dozens of organizers. It's bad because, basically, we're trying to do something good here… the issue with red-tagging is people deemed us as ba-sically evil and threatening the safety of everyone involved in it… it's threatening the existence of pantries, it's not letting us feed the people. The worst part in this is that they're doing this without due process.	35
KI 3, 2021	Iyong isang challenge na nakita namin, eh, iyong panghihi-masok ng local government and security forces kasi legit con-cern iyon, eh. Hindi man namin naranasan dito na talagang binatas kami ng pulis or whatever, pero ibang pantries na-ex-perience nila iyan, eh. Although dito sa Matiyaga, dinadaan-daanan kami ng pulis, tapos minsan nangingialam sila (e.g., pinapaalis ang mga tao).	36
KI 9, 2021	The second challenge is… security. I started getting messages from scammers, from trolls… so I would receive messages na NPA ka… ganyan… nagsu-supply sa iyo eh mga terorista… dapat sa iyo sinusunog… alam ko kung saan ka nakatira… alam ko kung saan ka nagtatrabaho… At risk iyong privacy ko. I mentioned to you na na-red-tag ako… I was forced to fill up a form, they (police) asked where I get my donations… They really intimidated me kasi I did not really want to provide my information.	36
KI 10, 2021	When it comes to safety measures, siyempre iyong health pro-tocols… nag-aabiso pa rin kami sa barangay na need namin ng tanod na magpapaano ng security, ng peace dito… para	36

maiwasan iyong gulo at the same time iyong health protocols eh masunod.

KI 2, 2021   Iyong second challenge namin is iyong venue po, kasi maulan po… hindi po kami makapagtayo ng pantry kapag maulan; kapag walang coordination sa mga tao, baka dagsain po kami. Tapos iyong vehicle po ang mahirap kasi sa sobrang dami po ng nagdo-donate hindi po namin makuha lahat dahil wala kaming sasakyan.   37

Appendix C – Interview Guide

Interview Guide for Community Pantry Organizers (a.k.a. the Key Informants)

INTRODUCTION	
Thank you	First of all, thank you for taking the time to meet with me today.
Self-introduction	I am Albert Concepcion from the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) in The Hague, The Netherlands, which is part of the Erasmus University Rotterdam system.
Purpose of the research	I would like to talk to you about your experiences as the organizer of _____ Community Pantry. Specifically, I am interested to understand everything about your community pantry, how it started, its current condition or situation, what it represents and what future direction it is trying to take.
Duration and how the interview will be conducted	The interview should take around 60 minutes to 90 minutes, depending on our conversation. Although I will be taking some notes, I would like to get your permission to allow me to record the interview. I don't want to miss any part of your story. Please be sure to speak up so I will be able to record everything.
Confidentiality, anonymity and data privacy	I also want to assure you that all the information you will share in the interview will be kept confidential and the research paper I will write will not in any way identify you as a respondent. You also don't have to respond to any of my questions if you feel uncomfortable. This interview will be about your own story as a community pantry organizer so there is no correct or wrong answer. You may also end the interview at any time, just let me know.
Opportunity for questions	At this point, do you have any questions about what I just explained?
Consent	Now, are you willing to participate in this interview and have our conversations recorded? _Reminder to the interviewer: For every module, there should be no more than 5 questions; ask for facts before opinions; use probing as needed._

MODULE 1	MAIN QUESTIONS
	1. Tell me about your community pantry story. How did it all begin? 2. What are your reasons for initiating or setting it up? 3. What inspired or motivated you in setting up the community pantry? ✓ Connect questions 2 and 3; assess if reasons are similar to motivations

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MODULE 2	MAIN QUESTIONS

	4. Can you tell me how your community pantry is organized at the grassroots level?
	
	   o Ask about its exact location, is it easily accessible
	   o Its operating days or hours
	   o What items or products are available
	   o Who are the recipients and where do they come from
	   o What external support does the community pantry receive – ask for donations / donors, volunteers, etc.
	   o How are the COVID-19 measures enforced during the community pantry operations
	
	   ✓ Connect the different points shared

MODULE 3	MAIN QUESTIONS

	5. Who else are involved in the setting up and operations of the community pantry? ("actors")
	
	   o Is there some form of internal structure or hierarchy?
	   o How are decisions made?
	
	6. What other "activities" or "services" does the community pantry offer
	
	7. As the organizer, do you coordinate or network with other community pantries from nearby areas or in NCR? How does that happen and what is the dynamics like?

MODULE 4	MAIN QUESTIONS

	8. What do you think is the main purpose of the community pantry? What does it want to achieve?
	
	9. In your opinion, what does the community pantry represent in light of the current socioeconomic and political situation in the country?
	
	   o Ask how does he see community pantries as a collective amidst the COVID-19 pandemic?
	
	10. What issues does your community pantry encounter and focus on; and how do you deal with the issues?
	
	   o Ask to identify at least 3 issues / concerns / challenges

MODULE 5	MAIN QUESTIONS

	11. What prospects do the community pantries have amidst and past the COVID-19 pandemic?
	
	   o Any short-term future plans
	   o Will the initiative last
	   o Any long-term plans

CLOSING	
Additional comments	Before we end the interview, is there anything that you would like to say or add?
Next steps	Just in terms of next steps, I have two experienced research assistants who will be simultaneously translating and transcribing the interview. They will be sending me the transcript of our interview and if you wish to have a copy of the transcript, let me know via e-mail and I will send you a raw copy. I will be using the transcript for further data processing and analysis.
Remind KI about your contact information	You already have my e-mail address and mobile number. You may contact me anytime if you have any concern regarding the interview or the research. You can also text me anytime and I can always respond or give you a call.
Thank you	Again, thank you so much for your time.
END OF INTERVIEW	

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Appendix D – Research Flyer

PANDEMIC, PANTRIES AND POLITICS

Understanding the emergence of the community pantry movement in the Philippines in the time of COVID-19 pandemic

Keywords: collective action, community pantries, COVID-19, social change, social movement, solidarity

ALBERT ANGELO CONCEPCION

GRADUATE STUDENT PROFILE

Albert, or Bong to his family and friends, is currently a graduate student at the Erasmus University Rotterdam's International Institute of Social Studies (EUR – ISS) taking a Master of Arts degree in Development Studies, major in Human Rights, Gender and Conflict Studies: Social Justice Perspectives (SJP).

Albert has more than 20 years of work experience in project management, public health program management, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and data quality audit. He was previously connected with PwC Philippines, United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) in Myanmar and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community based both in New Caledonia and Fiji.

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BACKGROUND

It has been more than a year since the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 as a public health emergency of international concern (WHO, 2021). More than 190 countries have already been affected by the pandemic, registering more than 176.3 million infected cases and almost 4.0 million deaths worldwide (as at 15-06-2021, 11:21AM) (JHU, 2021).

Global and national responses to the COVID-19 pandemic have been unprecedented and severe (Caduff, 2020), with governments imposing strict lockdown measures that restricted people's mobility. We have seen that government responses also have serious economic, social and political consequences; that the COVID-19 pandemic is not just a public health concern at all.

Despite these measures, social justice movements are found to be thriving globally (Pleyers, 2020) and, similarly, social activism is also thriving in the Philippines in the forms of online protests, political statements from professional and civic organizations, mutual aid and solidarity, public and online monitoring of social justice issues affecting Filipino society and monitoring of public health and COVID-19 data released by the government during the pandemic.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To examine how new social movements in the Philippines have been affected by and responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically looking into the community pantries as a new form of social movement in the context of COVID-19.

Note: The Maginhawa Community Pantry is the first informal community pantry recognized in the Philippines

Photo Source: CNN Philippines (2021)

Source: Vatican News (2021)

Source: Manila Bulletin (2021)

Source: Philippines Tatler (2021)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What are informal community pantries and how did they emerge in the Philippines during the COVID-19 pandemic?

1. Who initiated the setting up of informal community pantries and what are their motivations for doing so?

2. How are informal community pantries organized? Who are involved? What do they do?

3. What do informal community pantries represent and what issues to they focus on?

4. What prospects do informal community pantries have amidst and past the COVID-19 pandemic?

METHODOLOGY AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Methodology
- Primary data collection will be conducted from August to September 2021
- Chain referral sampling (a.k.a. snowball sampling) will be used to select research participants
- Key informant interviews (KII), of around 10 to 12 community pantry organizers, will be conducted using an interview guide
- One or two focus group discussions (FGD), of around four to six community pantry organizers per group, will be conducted using a discussion guide
- Saturation point will be monitored to determine adequacy of the number of research participants
- All KII and FGD will be recorded; conversations transcribed and translated into English
- Data collected will undergo qualitative data analysis (QDA) with the use of Excel or Atlas.ti

Ethical Considerations
- Informed consent will be obtained from all research participants
- Confidentiality, anonymity, data privacy and "do not harm" principles will be observed throughout the whole research process
- Permission will be obtained to record the conversations and take notes
- COVID-19 quarantine measures will be observed during the data collection period
- Donations to selected community pantries will be anonymized

Appendix E – Research and Fieldwork Implementation Plan

Research and Fieldwork Implementation Plan

Month / 1st Day of the Week	May 3	May 10	May 17	May 24	May 31	Jun 7	Jun 14	Jun 21	Jun 28	Jul 5	Jul 12	Jul 19	Jul 26	Aug 2	Aug 9	Aug 16	Aug 23	Aug 30	Sep 6	Sep 13	Sep 20	Sep 27	Oct 4	Oct 11	Oct 18	Oct 25	Nov 1	Nov 8
Tasks / Weeks	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
RP Design Development																												
Design outline preparation	▓																											
Literature search	▓	▓	▓																									
Problem / Qs, objectives, methods	▓	▓	▓																									
Frameworks, concepts, background information, etc.	▓	▓	▓																									
Draft submission			▓																									
Draft presentation																												
Draft revision				▓	▓	▓																						
Final design submission							▓																					
Preparation for Fieldwork																												
Revision on frameworks, concepts, etc.						▓	▓	▓	▓																			
Revision on related literature						▓	▓	▓	▓																			
Development of data collection tool/s						▓	▓	▓	▓																			
Pilot							▓																					
Initial contact with Interviewee No. 1 (CPO1 - community pantry organizer 1)								▓	▓																			
Travel to Manila via HK										▓	▓																	
Mandatory quarantine										▓	▓	▓																
Fieldwork / Data Gathering / Analysis																												
Planning / coordinating the interviews										▓	▓	▓																
Conduct of KII														▓	▓	▓	▓	▓										
Data processing / trancribing (1)														▓	▓	▓	▓	▓										
Conduct of FGD (if possible)																			▓									
Data processing / trancribing (2)																			▓	▓	▓							
Data analysis																					▓	▓						
Writing of initial RP draft report																						▓	▓					
RP draft seminar outline preparation																							▓					
RP Presentation / Revision / Submission																												
RP draft seminar and feedback																								▓				
Revisions																									▓	▓		
Proofreading																										▓		
Buffer																											▓	
Final RP submission																												▓