

Community Pantries Phenomenon in the Philippines

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Abstract

Some businesses have closed down and many workers have been laid off, and the poor have become poorer due to the prolonged coronavirus pandemic. The Philippine government has been indecisive, if not insensitive, to the plight of the people. Thus, community pantries emerged and were established in response to the starvation of the people. The community pantry is a complex phenomenon so multiple perspectives are needed in order to understand it as a phenomenon. It started with a personal initiative by a single person, and then through the media, the news about the pantry circulated and multiplied in different areas of the country. Other leaders and organizers mobilized their capitals to these pantries. The initial personal initiative has transformed itself into a collective behavior or action of different groups. This paper explores the emergence of community pantries in the Philippines at the height of the coronavirus pandemic as a phenomenon, its challenges, the political consequences of initiating this pandemic response, and how such initiative permeated the consciousness of the Filipinos.

Keywords

capital, collective behavior or action, coronavirus pandemic, lockdown, personal initiative

“Pagod na ako sa inaction.” (I’m tired of inaction.)
Ana Patricia “Patreng” Non

Introduction

This paper explores the phenomenon of community pantries in the Philippines. The phenomenon seems to be simple since Filipinos, in times of emergency, instinctively help those in dire need and when others see their fellow Filipinos' admirable efforts, also try their best to replicate them as long as they can contribute to the amelioration of their suffering. Filipinos call this communal cooperation “bayanihan,” which many witnessed being practiced during the pandemic lockdown. Filipinos did their best to share whatever they could to help the needy in their own neighborhoods, especially those who lost jobs and other sources of livelihood.

The prolonged community quarantine due to the pandemic (Cudis; Cabico)¹ forced several businesses to close down, leaving many Filipinos unemployed. Without jobs and income, and forced to stay home because of the lockdown, Filipinos felt trapped, desperate, and hungry. Some, when they can leave their homes, have begged on the streets. Meanwhile, the Philippine government repeatedly claimed that the subsidy for those hit the worst by the pandemic has been depleted due to its prolonged occurrence (Paroccha; Esquerra).

During the height of the coronavirus pandemic, food became not just a basic need but a very urgent one. Many Filipino families cannot provide food at home nor did they have the means to buy what they urgently needed. Around this time, businesses were forced to suspend operations unless their services were deemed essential, and in turn, their employees were also forced out of work. Suddenly unemployed, these Filipinos comprised the majority who relied on the promised subsidy from the government, whose repeated insistence was that the budget allotment was insufficient to sustain them throughout the pandemic. These were the conditions that the first community pantry saw and responded to.

The author gathered the materials both from observations and from online references. Since there are complexities that surround the existence of these community pantries, one concept or even theory cannot capture or represent them. Thus, the author looks for relevant literature dealing with such a phenomenon. This literature is coming broadly from the social sciences, such as a social organization that deals with personal initiative, social psychology that focuses on social identity and leadership, political science that pays attention to social movements and protests, media studies that investigates the circulation of news in social media, popular culture that explains the ordinary behavior of Filipinos, and social theory that makes sense of various kinds of capital. The author only deploys the concepts pertinent to the data gathered from the observations in the field and the news on the websites to build a set of explanations, if the data warrant them. This multidisciplinary approach can explain the different complexities and can account for the dynamics of the community pantries as a phenomenon. The author uses concepts from different authors and theories without assuming or presupposing their grand narratives.

The Emergence of the Community Pantry

The answer suddenly came when a certain lady named Ana Patricia “Patreng” Non set up a simple bamboo cart beside a tree filled with basic foodstuffs (Grana).² That first known pantry was located at Maginhawa Street in Quezon City. The name of the street is very appropriate because for Filipinos, *maginhawa* implies ease, comfort, convenience, relief, and peace. When you have food on the table, you are already comforted at least for that day because you are momentarily relieved of hunger. People have started lining up in the pantry to pick out available food items.



Fig. 1. Photos of Patricia Non and her community pantry posted by Coconut Manila.

That one community pantry soon became so popular that it multiplied by the day in different parts of Metro Manila and provinces in the Philippines. (“List: Community Pantries”). In Metro Manila alone, the same community pantry that Non set up was replicated by other individuals and groups, until it was further replicated by the next communities. Citizens have seen the practical value of the initiative, for it remedied the urgency of the increasing hunger situation during the pandemic. These pantries and their organizers took it upon themselves to care for their respective communities (Suson). Volunteers have started donating meal for the needy just to help them get by for the day. More and more Filipinos in need have benefited from these pantries and have been consoled by the presence of these pantries in their communities (Suazo).

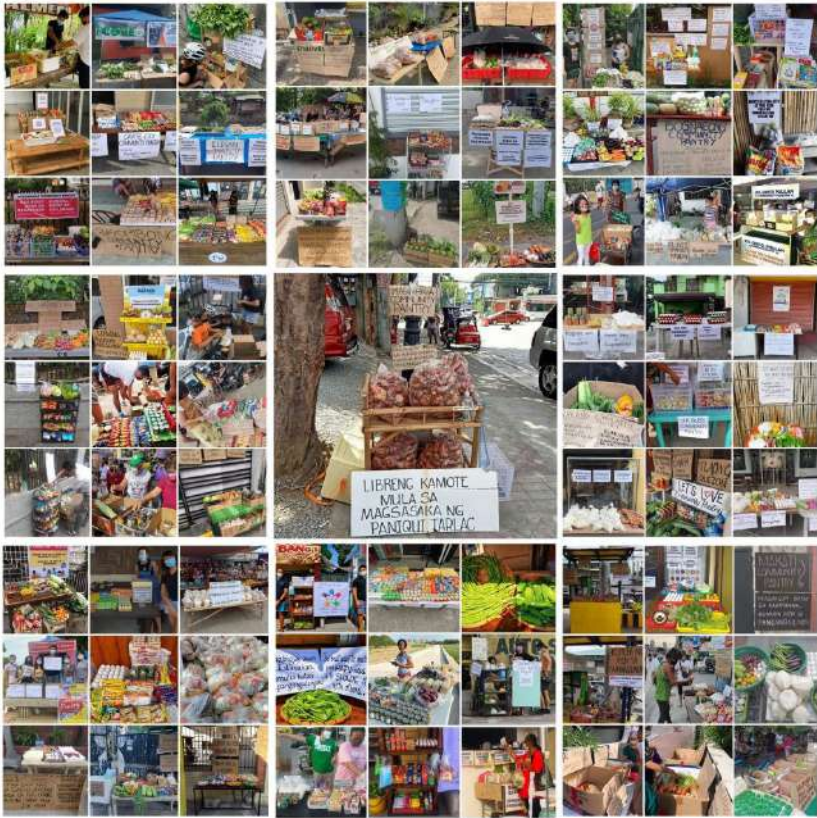


Fig. 2. Photos of various community pantries around the country posted on Facebook by Margo Hannah de Guzman Quadra.

Since the people are frustrated about the government’s ineptitude in providing for the needy, they mobilize their own initiatives and bonded together in responding to the situation. The government has shown indecision or inaction to their plight and has not allotted emergency subsidies to the poor. Filipinos have become exasperated and resigned with the government’s inaction. People are left with their own strategies for survival.

Concerned citizens have devised ways and means to feed the hungry in their respective communities. Inspired by the initiatives of people from

Maginhawa Street, Quezon City, people followed suit by creating their own community pantries. They were willing to help, and they were just looking for a venue. They were given the idea when the first pantry was put up on Maginhawa Street as a model. The community pantry has sprouted in their own communities. In doing so, they can at least help in alleviating the suffering of the starving people. That kind of generosity and kindness has touched many other citizens to put up their own community pantries. They share whatever they have and sacrifice their interests for the sake of the impoverished members of their respective communities. People can share in the making of the community pantry by donating goods or cash, volunteering in its management, communicating about its operations on social media, and soliciting donations from generous donors in the area. This cooperative effort facilitates the community pantry in serving the needy members of the community. This cooperation cascades into social solidarity (Rivera).

Disambiguating Community Pantry

The media calls the phenomenon as “community pantry.” People just follow and call it that way. But if you look into the meaning of pantry, you will discover that it is a food storage room or food preparation room.³ Originally, the pantry refers to as the bread room. As we know the Europeans eat bread instead of rice as their staple food. For well-to-do Filipinos, their houses have a storeroom, kitchen, and refectory, but not a separate bread room, food preparation room, and food storage room. These rooms are found in big restaurants in cities.

The media recontextualizes the pantry into a community setting. The room is no longer locked in the house but is already opened, or moved from the household, to the open space along the roadsides where people can bring or get food. Thus, the restricted place of the room in the pantry is transgressed or collapsed into the open space of the community. The food is no longer confined to an exclusive place of the family in the home but is brought out into an inclusive space for anyone.

The open space in a community pantry shows the solidarity of people in helping those in dire need of basic assistance. In the pantry, people move the

food from a place to a space, from exclusivity to inclusivity, from familiarity to strangeness. The food is shared by the community and is received by the needy. The food brings the community closer to a network where people feel and respond to the suffering of others with kindness and generosity. Through that sharing, the community overcomes individualism and indifference.

Jokes and Euphemisms on Community Pantry

Culturally, Filipinos are natural jokers or joke lovers. They find venues to throw jokes and enjoy laughter in various occasions (Grogan). Even in the midst of their misery, they can still manage to crack jokes about the situation and amuse themselves. These jokes make them feel good for they lighten their burdens. Some observers would say that a joke expresses the Filipino witticism as a coping mechanism in the midst of the pandemic. Aside from coping mechanism, jokes also function as an adaptive defense that transforms the challenging situation into a comical absurdity where people can perceive the comical absurdity in highly challenging situations. In this respect, jokes serve as both a coping mechanism and an adaptive strategy for people in the midst of tragedy (Ancheta 55–56; Palmer 57).⁴

In *Facebook* posts, it is evident that some jokes written on the signages of the community pantries induce joy or fun. Filipinos transform the social media platform into a site of joke or humor production. There are things common among them, such as the presence of giveaway food on the table, but there is also variance among them, such as the inscriptions in the signages (Nelz). Humor has a double purpose, either as pure fun among people or a subtle critique of some behaviors. Pure fun can refer to the coping mechanism or adaptive strategy for people bearing the loads caused by the hardship of the pandemic tragedy. The subtle critique of some behavior is addressed or intended to those beneficiaries or recipients who may take advantage of the community pantries who get more than what they need for their meal unmindful of the needs of others who will also get some items.



Fig. 3. Images via the Facebook pages of Jesse James Joves and Marvin Garcia posted by Sophia Marie Santo.

The pandemic is a serious matter, for it disrupts the normal lives of ordinary people by having them stay home and depriving them of their income. Filipinos use their witticism in their situation for amusement. In the pandemic, they turn the debilitating situation into humor, even if it is a serious experience. Filipinos lighten, not escape, their burdens by throwing and enjoying jokes. By sharing jokes together, they momentarily relieve themselves of their worries. Jokes make serious a situation more bearable. People refuse to be absorbed or immobilized by the situation, so they entertain themselves with jokes. They find the pantry as a way to express this witticism for fun or amusement (Hernandez; Esposo).

Other observers would say that expressing themselves through jokes is how Filipino exhibit their resiliency during this pandemic. Filipinos can still withstand their hunger. Resiliency does not only mean being tough but also being flexible during this pandemic (Richardson 307–21). The pandemic is beyond their control, but people

can minimize its impact through concerted efforts. They find themselves devastated by this pandemic but not powerless. With this situation, they adjust themselves to cope with the crisis. Jokes can relax or entertain them for they lighten the seriousness of this situation (Hechanova et al. 105–31; Yanoria).

Aside from being natural jokers or joke lovers, Filipinos employ euphemism in their remarks on some (mis)behaviors of others. Euphemism is a figure of speech that substitutes offensive or unpleasant word or expression to a polite and acceptable language (Burrige 42–43). The impact of euphemism is tamed or softened because the word or expression is both subtle and funny to people. People are not shamed in public but only warned. However, euphemism still implies the intention of correcting or criticizing a certain behavior (Mercado 234; Tajolosa, 88–92).

Filipinos are ordinarily nonconfrontational and nonaggressive in their criticisms or corrections because they refuse to put the person on-the-spot (Connor 198–99; de Leon). They are tolerant and patient to misbehavior because, as much as possible, they decline to embarrass or shame the concerned person in public. Thus, they use euphemisms to opaquely or indirectly express their disgust and disfavor to such behavior. In the pantry, people use the platform of the social media to express their criticism and corrections. In this way, they do not just use euphemistic language but also use a mediated platform directed to everyone and not singling out anyone.

However, witticism and resiliency should not condone the failure of the government to address this crisis. People should hold the concerned agencies accountable for mishandling this crisis due to its incompetence. While many Filipinos languish in hunger, the government has no concrete plan for hunger alleviation. The government seems to pass on its responsibility to the people themselves or to abandon the starving people on their own initiatives (Manglinong; Sison). It becomes worse when the fund for the pandemic was siphoned through corruption involving the government itself by colluding with private individuals and businesses (Baclig).⁵

Contesting the Community Pantry

The sprouting community pantries all over the country, which show the spirit of voluntarism and altruism of some concerned citizens, were eventually under suspicion and investigation. The Quezon City Police District (QCPD) and the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) red-tagged the community pantry initiative of Ms. Non, being the leader or organizer of that first known community pantry. When she put up that pantry, she wrote a sign on top of the cart saying: “Magbigay ayon sa kakayahan, kumuha batay sa pangangailangan” (“Give according to your ability, take according to your needs”). Moreover, when the media interviewed her regarding her initiative, she exclaimed: “I am tired of the [government] inaction” (Gozum, “Pagod Na Ako sa Inaction” April 17, 2021). From that time on, other leaders and organizers of these spouting community pantries were scared because they will also be red-tagged (Gozum, “Red-Tagging of Community Pantry”; “Politics”). The government agency and the police associate the community pantry with communism and so red-tag the promoters of these pantries. The phrase, “Give according to your ability, take according to your need” echoes the Marxian text, “From each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs” (Bovens and Lutz 1–31; la Viña).

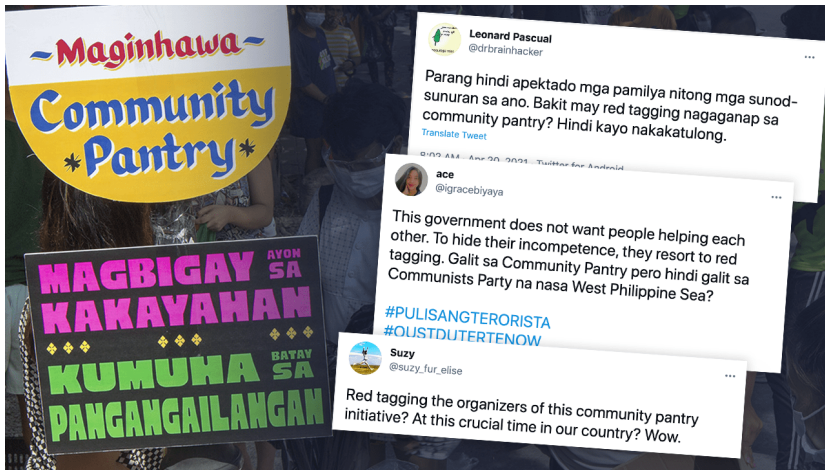


Fig. 4. Iya Gozum's column on *Rappler*

The spokespersons of the Task Force, Antonio Parlade Jr. and Lorraine Badoy, immediately red-tagged and profiled the proponents of the community pantries (Lo). They get the clue from the signages of the pantries that reflect a famous quote from Karl Marx: “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs” rendered into “Magbigay ayon sa kakayanan, Kumuha ayon sa pangangailangan.” Due to the criticisms received by the spokespersons in the name of the Task Force, Parlade and Badoy were given a gag-order with regard to their comments on the pantries (“Esperon Orders”).

The red-tagging strategy of the NTF-ELCAC drew a number of criticisms from the public who defended these community pantries (Reyes). The red-tagging was countered by popular resistance from various sectors of society. NTF-ELCAC failed to undermine the community pantries. In fact, these pantries have continued to grow exponentially across the country. The people found the urgency and relevance of the pantries because they alleviated the starving people due to increasing unemployment rate.

The red-tagging boomeranged against the Task Force. Some senators strongly criticized this strategy and warned the agency for possible defunding. The strategy of the Task Force does not only endanger people's lives but also

uses its budget for futile activities. Thus, these senators recommended the defunding of the Task Force and relocating the fund for people's subsidy (Ramos, "Six Senators").

Due to this red-tagging, the community pantry was temporarily closed. The people who have benefited from it were the casualties. Instead of helping the needy people, the closure would mean abandoning them in their need and worsening their situation (*CNN Philippines* staff). In fact, these community pantries compensated for the failure of the government to deliver the needs of the people. This failure would also reflect the incompetence or negligence of the government on its responsibility to the people. This is the fear of the Task Force: that the pantries could recruit more individuals in the opposition and critics and legitimize insurgency and rebellion in the country.

Since the red-tagging strategy flopped, the Task Force shifted to the simulation of the community pantry. The government has urged government workers, including the police and the military to support these pantries and put up their own ones. For example, the police and the military forces were instructed to organize and replicate the community pantries for humanitarian activities to help these indigent families during this pandemic. The police forces called their version of the pantry as "Barangayanihan Lugawan" (*lugaw* refers to rice porridge) (Luna; Rita).

At this stage, the community pantry has turned into a contested zone of power relations exerted between civil society and government agencies, on the one hand, and the community pantry leaders and supporters, on the other hand. Each party now has different motivations. The original community pantry's purpose is to help the starving people alleviate their hunger, while the government agencies' replication is connected with the counter-insurgency program, no longer waged with arms but with food (Peñalosa; Tan).

As a contested zone, both of them vie for legitimacy in society (Nagel 215–40). The community pantries would lend more credence than their replications since people have proven the sincerity of their proponents compared to the perceived duplicity of their replications. They both target the people as beneficiaries of these pantries, but they have diverging motivations and messages. For civilian community pantries, their message

is a wake-up call to the government inaction, while its replication, it is to holding the loyalty of the people to the government.

Understanding the Community Pantry

As these pantries multiply, explanations of this phenomenon also multiply. We need multiple explanatory concepts or theories in coming to terms with this phenomenon. Some would invoke the Filipino tradition of *bayanihan* (roughly translated as nation helping together) that in times of need, Filipinos can sacrifice their interests and share food to those in need.⁶ They extend their helping hands and reach out to those in need. These acts are occasional gestures of kindness or generosity in this prolonged pandemic. They provide hope for the poor people (Gita-Carlos).

Aside from tradition, scholars also attribute this phenomenon to culture. Filipinos are known for *diskarte* (roughly translated as strategy). In time of difficulties, Filipinos look for ways and means to get out from this tough situation. Being left by themselves without help from the government, people struggle for survival and devise strategies. Concerned citizens put up this community pantry to help people survive this crisis by providing food on their table (Merez).

Social psychology can help explain this phenomenon. Some people can relate to the needs of the people and represent their needs. These people are leaders who typify or exemplify this social vision. Such typification or exemplification can embody or represent their aspirations because the behaviors epitomize the vision of alleviating the suffering of people in our midst during this pandemic. It can also attract people to identify themselves with leaders or organizers and follow their lead or model. Hopefully, the community pantry would last for the whole duration of the pandemic since many people are really impoverished due to job losses. This social behavior epitomized in the community pantry is contagious. People imitate the good behaviors or traits of some exemplary people around them (Hogg et al. 246–76; Hogg 53–80).

Some would argue that these pantries are expressions of criticisms against the government inaction or insensitivity to the needs of people. People were

becoming desperate, for the government's indifference leads to indecisiveness on the plight affecting poor people. Thus, these concerned citizens initiated this community pantry and compensated this inaction of the government. In effect, this community pantry can overcome this desperation and provide hope for the people ("Community Pantries").

Some even argue that this initiative on the community pantries is linked with the communist movement wanting to destabilize the government and support the rebellion against the government. The Communist Party could take advantage of the situation and ride on to this phenomenon. This explanation assumes the collectivist and activist theory that condemns the inaction or indifference of the government to the plight of the impoverished Filipinos. Thus, the government authorities immediately have red-tagged these community pantries and profiled their leaders or organizers to interrupt such a possibility (Bolledo).

It would be far-fetched to call the emergence of community pantries as political activism. This explanation refers to collective action or collective behavior of a group or individuals who forge their efforts in consciously acting and planning for the purpose of social change. Political activism is a direct, confrontational, vigorous, and active engagement or opposition to the government (Norris 628–52). This activism is purposive since it aims at direct political intervention into the problematic situation in order to achieve a common good (Ostrom 186–208). Instead of these theories, the community pantries are efforts or initiatives that address the urgent needs of the people suffering from starvation and in effect, criticizing the government inaction or indecision on the plight of the starving people (Valenzuela).

The growth of the community pantries is a spontaneous action of some unorganized individuals or organized groups who are impatient to the inaction or indifference of the government to the plight of the people and who would like to contribute to the alleviation of the starving people around their communities (Songco). In the beginning, the community pantry was only a personal initiative of a single person like Ms. Non and that initiative has circulated and mimicked in other parts of the country (Frese and Fey 133–87). This personal initiative has developed into a collective behavior or

collective action of organized and unorganized people wanting to help the poor people around them suffering from hunger. The community pantries are expressions of kindness and generosity of some concerned people wanting to help the starving people by providing them food on their table (Ylagan). Collective behavior or action refers to relatively spontaneous and relatively unstructured behavior by some individuals acting with or being influenced by other individuals.⁷ It is unwarranted to say that they are expressions of political activism with some groups. Underneath this phenomenon is the indirect criticism against the indecision or inaction of the government to the desperate people (Almendraz). We can, however, say that this phenomenon can be exploited by some activists or oppositions to criticize and condemn the incompetence of the government on the management of the pandemic (Rivera).

We remember that the IATF formed by former Philippine president Rodrigo Duterte has been criticized by many concerned citizens for their incompetence. First, the head of the IATF is a military man and, as such, he is not suited for the task. Second, the DOH Secretary has been asked by several sectors to resign due to his incompetence. However, former president Duterte has defended and retained his appointee. This explanation of incompetence has been proven by people for more than a year of this prolonged lockdown in this pandemic. This explanation is more and more validated and bolstered every day. The Palace and the IAFT have always dismissed this accusation of incompetence and insisted on their appropriate response. The people, of course, are the judge of this claim and the people have spoken their judgement—incompetence (Vallejo; Ramos, “Abolish IATF”; “Abolishing the IATF”; “Senators: Replace IATF Members”).

Capitalizing the Community Pantry

No doubt, the existence of community pantries is a noble gesture and a helpful endeavor for aiding the starving people during this prolonged pandemic. It is just proper to recognize the initiatives of the many organizers and leaders of these sprouting pantries. The leaders and organizers have tapped their

leadership in pursuing this task. They exercise their agency in this urgent time by intervening with the needs of the starving people.

With the mediation of the mass media like television networks and the social media like Facebook, that first known community pantry from Maginhawa Street, Quezon City has circulated to public knowledge and has been reproduced by others in their respective areas. Without the media, that community pantry could not have spread fast and replicated by others. The model gives others an idea to reproduce.

The mediatization has popularized and reproduced these community pantries in our country. Through these media of communication, some people either have put up their own pantries in their areas or donate some foodstuffs to the already existing pantries (Hjarvard 105–34). Many donations have poured in into these pantries. Surprisingly, not only the rich but also the poor have contributed some foodstuffs to these pantries. In fact, according to the news, the first pantry was transferred to a better location and the excess goods were distributed to other community pantries nearby (Robles and Robles). Thus, this transformation has created a network of community pantries in different nearby areas.



Fig. 5. Mangyan boy donated some sweet potatoes to a community pantry and received appreciation for his generosity posted by Noypi

The emergence and the continuation of these community pantries can be accounted by the various capitals deployed by the actors in these pantries. Using the conceptual framework of capital, we can identify some capitals at work that have facilitated the presence of the community pantries. Traditionally, capital is limited to financial resources. However, we need to expand our concept of capital that includes all forms of resources and assets of people and institutions (Ragnedda 2366–75; Ragnedda and Ruii; Bourdieu 241–58).⁸

First, the personal capital of the leaders or organizers has initiated the emergence of the community pantries (Pedrajas). The stock of personal experiences has developed or accumulated into a personal capital of an actor that can be used in other situations or engagements such as the skills of leadership and teamwork has provided an initial impetus to put up these pantries. The initiators or organizers manifest this personal capital in their leadership and organization skills in their respective communities. They possess the quality of sensitivity and kindness to the needy. Without their audacity and willpower, these community pantries may not have emerged and sprouted.

Second, the digital capital has facilitated the circulation of the news and the eventual popularization of the community pantries. People from different sectors have donated some of their goods and cash (Suazo). These leaders have tapped the media to disseminate their cause or their initiative. Organizers use social media to publicize their initiatives and solicit some donations. They post some message of appeals to the netizens and friends and upload some short videos and pictures that showcase their pantries. Many goods have poured into their pantries, and organizers assured the continuity of their project. Donations have helped more starving people around the areas.

Third, economic capital provides financial resources for putting up these community pantries and purchasing goods from different markets or businesses (Beltran). Leaders and organizers solicit donations from the generosity or kindness of people in their areas. Donors give foodstuffs and monetary assistance to the pantries. These leaders and organizers use

the money in buying food for the people. For example, these organizers buy vegetables from the producing farmers or contact suppliers from the provinces or cities offering discounted or lower prices (Medenilla). They did not just help the starving people in their localities but also help the farmers by buying their harvest.



Fig. 6. Photo of Patricia Non and rural farmers posted by Christian San Jose

Fourth, the social capital of the organizers has supplied them linkages and networks for soliciting goods and raising funds for the community pantries (“How to Lead a Community Pantry”; “List: Community Pantries”). These leaders or organizers have limited resources of their own. To sustain these

pantries, they need help from the outside like their friends and organizations. Their networks that they have built prior to the community pantries enable them to reconnect and sustain these pantries.

Fifth, the political capital is a power relation exerted by the community pantry leaders and their supporters, on the one hand, and the NTF-ELCAC and police agencies, on the other hand. There is an open conflict between these two groups, one is defending the community pantry while the other is red-tagging it. The conflict happens on social media as well as in a face-to-face encounter. Although it is more of a threat, the action of these authorities has a chilling effect on the leaders and organizers of these community pantries. In the end, it is the poor who suffer from this conflict, especially when these authorities temporarily stop the services of these pantries to the people (Reyes).

Conclusion

The community pantry phenomenon seems to be a simple scenario but if you dig deeper into this phenomenon, you will discover its complexity. In order to capture that complexity, we have deployed concepts and theories taken from the social sciences, especially psychology, sociology, and political science to understand it. The phenomenon needs multiple lenses and disciplines to account for it. The community pantry is an emergency solution to starvation. It benefits the people in the community during this prolonged lockdown during this pandemic. The community pantry was started with a personal initiative and this initiative is contagious for it inspires and motivates others to put up their own pantries in their respective communities. The personal initiative develops into a collective action or behavior of different leaders or organizations. These leaders and organizers have deployed different capitals to sustain the community pantries in their areas.

This initiative has been interrupted by the government authorities who suspected the initiative as being a communist front due to the Marxian dictum, "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs," which was written on the signages of the pantries. These community pantries were then red-tagged, and the proponents were profiled. The voluntarism

and altruism manifested by some concerned citizens have been suspected as an anti-government front of the communist or leftist individuals and groups. Due to the criticisms against this red-tagging and profiling strategy, the government authorities shifted its strategy to the community pantry simulation as a counter-insurgency tactic against the perceived communist propaganda.

The community pantry is not just politicized, but it really carries a political message. We have to note that whatever political colors you affiliate with (whether you identify with the administration or with the opposition), the community pantries have political consequences because they criticize the inaction or the indifference of the administration on the plight of the people who are economically suffering from his prolonged lockdown during this pandemic. By initiating and bonding together as a community, people want to bring the political message of the incompetence of the government in its management of the pandemic because it neglects the very people that elected the leader. These community pantries open up a new vista of an alternative communal world of sharing in the suffering of others in their midst. This vista has guided the directions and transformed the perspectives of governance as it announces some potential alternative futures.

Notes

1. The government adopted the phrase “community quarantine” instead of the word “lockdown.” Community quarantine is a medical parlance, but it is equivalent to an ambiguous lockdown.
2. The Catholic Church, through the Caritas Office, provided vouchers to the poor around Metro Manila. The Diocese of Kalookan (DOK) distributed these vouchers prior to the emergence of the community pantries. The Diocese also purchased some vegetables from the farmers in the provinces and received rice donations from rich parishioners. These goods are distributed to the needy around Metro Manila. The Urban Poor Ministry volunteers of the Diocese, of which I am a part being its minister, help in the distribution of these goods.
3. Recently, the media used another phrase to name the phenomenon: food bank. Originally, a food bank refers to a non-profit, charitable organization that distributes food to those who have difficulty purchasing enough to avoid hunger. There are two models, namely, the frontline model, distributing food directly to the hungry, while warehouse model, supplies the food to some intermediaries or organizations like pantries (“Food Bank”).
4. There are various theories on jokes or humors in the Philippine context. In exploratory study among Filipinos using FGD, Rozel Balmores-Paulino has categorized different functions of humor or joke such as humor as intervention,” “humor as social adhesive,” “humor as social commentary/challenging authority/acceptable way of expressing hostility,” and “humor as a manifestation of one’s humanity” (50–52). Humor or joke is even found to be therapeutic in counseling psychology and even in the most tragic situation like the holocaust suffered by the Jews in the concentration camp, humor or joke is used as a defense mechanism (Swaminath 78 ; Ostrower 183–95).
5. The Pharmally scandal is a case in point. In a series of Senate investigations, the committee discovered the corruption scandal involving Pharmally and the Department of Health (DOH). The committee recommended the filing of case against President Duterte for condoning Pharmally (Cepeda).
6. This explanation is mostly the position of the government. In line with the government program, *Bayanihan* To Recover as One Act in RA 11494 (Gita-Calos).
7. Comparatively, collective behavior is based on a noninstitutionalized gathering of people, whereas collective action is based on a shared interest of people. However, the spontaneous gathering of unorganized people can be bonded by shared common interests that they want to pursue. The community pantry shows both the spontaneity of collective behavior and the purposiveness of collective action (Oliver 1–5).

8. Massimo Ragnedda deploys Bourdieu's concept of capital. Bourdieu lists three major forms of capital namely, economic, cultural, and social capitals. Ragnedda expands that list to include personal, political and digital capitals which are more appropriate and relevant to our discussion since the community pantries employ the social media as well as personal initiative of individuals and/or groups. Ragnedda and Ruiu discuss the relevance of these capitals in relation to public policy. See Ragnedda and Ruiu).

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