

Politics of Bungkalan as *Pakikibaka*: A Phenomenological Study on the Post-CARP Land Distribution Scheme on Hacienda Tinang Peasantry of Tarlac Province

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ABSTRACT

In the flux of the resounding discourse within the realm of Political Science, less has been materialized on the deliberated necessity of assessing the impact of the far-established implementation of the 1988 Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL) by delving deeper on the ‘unquantifiable nuances and specificities’ within the purview of its primary stakeholders—the Qualified Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) and their decades of struggle for land ownership and possession. Provided such grounding, this study aimed to fill the existing academic gaps by reinforcing the Qualified ARBs’ experiences, perspectives, and narratives as a manifestation of their collective grapples and materialize such as the primary source and basis of a more grounded framework depicting the sociopolitical situation of the country’s agricultural sector. The Case of Hacienda Tinang of the Municipality of Concepcion, Tarlac bears the novelty badge among hundreds of studies encompassing land dispute through *haciendas* and plantations. Through a phenomenological approach, this study emerged on a Data Triangulation method by conducting Focus Group Discussion, In-depth Individual Interviews, and Documentary Analysis, in further analyzing Hacienda Tinang - Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries’ political praxis of *bungkalan*, as a manifestation of their constant resistance (*pakikibaka*) for land. The study’s results revealed that ARBs’ everyday resistance against deprivation of land ownership and possession helped them develop their full understanding and realization of the concepts of *pakikibaka* within the purview of *Pakikipagkapuwa* and exhibiting Little Traditions phenomena and vice versa.

Keywords: Agrarian Reform, Land Dispute, *Bungkalan*, *Pakikibaka*, Hacienda Tinang.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In the flux of the resounding discourse within the realm of Political Science, less has been materialized on the deliberated necessity of analyzing and assessing the impact of the far-established implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL) of 1988, as well as its Extensions and Reforms (CARPER) in 2009, by delving deeper on the ‘unquantifiable nuances and specificities’ within the purview of its primary stakeholders — the qualified Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs), alongside their coinciding individual and collective struggle in maximizing the ‘opportunities’ outlined in the entirety of the CARL situated within the Post-CARP land distribution scheme since the law’s inception and accomplishment. Although scholars ranging mainly from the fields of Political Economy and Public Policy find an uncontested consensus as to the essentiality of keeping the discussion on agrarian reform afloat¹, initiatives on capturing the lives and narratives of the ARBs to supplement and decipher further the myriad of scholarship and data acquired from such scholarly endeavors, as well as initiatives by government agencies tasked to execute such undertaking ‘from the ground’ (i.e., consolidating Annual Reports in assessing the completion of the CARP components from 1988 up to the present time) find their fair share of scarcity within the existing body of knowledge.² Be that as it may, the plethora of studies done within the context of CARP and the incessant discourse pertaining to its success or failure as an exhaustive agrarian reform in promoting social justice and equity, solely highlights the economic aspect while overshadowing the co-equally significant sociopolitical implications to its immediate and primary stakeholders, which is often being bypassed through the frequent maximization of mere positivist, quantitative research methodologies.

With that being said, pursuing a qualitative, phenomenological approach in the overall assessment of CARP within the purview of the ARBs themselves would potentially pave the way for the acquisition of a more diverse and rich data in extensively outlining their lived challenges and triumphs through their personal narratives. Such an endeavor would necessitate pursuing an extensive exploration and comprehension of an underlying political phenomenon within a recognized Agrarian Reform Community (ARC) — similar to the recent breakthrough of ARBs from Hacienda Tinang Peasantry of Tarlac Province in their collective struggle to fight for the decades-long denial of their rights to the possession of individual Certificate of Land Ownership

¹ Raul V. Fabella, *Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP): Time to Let Go* (Quezon City, Philippines: University of the Philippines - Center for Integrative and Development Studies, 2014), 213-228. Fabella, an Agricultural Economist and one of the National Scientists of the Philippines, revisited the entirety of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) — extending its scope on Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law of 1988 and its Extensions and Reforms of 2009, raising the discourse in the more economic-centric discussion of the loopholes and gaps in the law’s implementation, by which the scholar himself extensively calls for the necessity to explore a more ‘politically-enlightened’ discussion by analyzing the redistribution of land assets and continuation of the provision of support services in the post-CARP Land Distribution Scheme by delving deeper into the pursuit of improving equity of land reform vis-a-vis examining the democratic political dynamics following the rampant semi-feudal interests within the existing tenant-landlord relationship.

² Mary Ann Manahan, “*Thirty Years of Agrarian Reform under CARP/ER: Is There Reason to Celebrate?*” on *Repormang Agraryo at Pagbabago? Narratives on Agrarian Conflicts, Transitions, and Transformation* (Philippines: Focus on the Global South, 2018), 8-21. Manahan, the Research Project Coordinator, emphasizes the project’s inception stems from the need to supplement the growing body of international and domestic studies centered on Agrarian Reform in the Philippines by utilizing qualitative research methodologies (i.e., phenomenology through focus group discussions and interviews) and employing data acquired from the government agencies involved within the said discourse.

Awards (CLOA), that then led them to further assert their rights through the cultivation farming activity locally known as *bungkalan*.

Following the chain of events, the unlawful mass arrest in June 2022 among the ‘Tinang 83’ — composed of 83 Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries, Agrarian Reform Advocates, student journalists, youth activists, and volunteers alike primarily sparked the researcher’s interest in undertaking the foremost aim of unraveling the underlying politics of *bungkalan* by going beyond the surface value of the latter concept perceived as mere collective farming within a given peasant community. Having that in mind, the researcher then maximized previous discussions outlined within the realm of Philippine Political Thought through the integration of the Filipino value of *pakikibaka* (resistance/joining a struggle) in further understanding the lived experiences and narratives of potential research participants within the ARC of Hacienda Tinang through community mobilization from within. Such a decision by the researcher emphasized the necessity to go back to the ground to fathom the occurrences from within. More than ever, the researcher — a *Tarlakeña* herself — undertook such an endeavor by dedicating much time, effort, and knowledge to the life-and-death grapples felt by her *kababayans*.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Through the integration of the indigenized and contextualized Filipino concept of *pakikibaka* induced from the interrelated fields of Social Sciences in the pursuit of situating such to the underlying political phenomenon of *bungkalan* as a communal and collective practice of farming and cultivation among the peasantry, the researcher primarily aimed to create an overarching framework that would extensively depict the existing political structure/hierarchy and processes, as well as that of the underlying political phenomenon of *pakikibaka* through phenomenological means of capturing the lived experiences and narratives of the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) within the chosen locale of *Hacienda Tinang* from the Municipality of Concepcion, Province of Tarlac in their constant struggle for the genuine implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law.

With that being said, the researcher aimed to primarily probe, “*How is the Politics of Bungkalan a manifestation of the Filipino concept of pakikibaka situated within the context of the post-CARP Land Distribution Scheme among the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) of Hacienda Tinang of Tarlac Province?*”. Following the main problem, stipulated below are the sub-problems corresponding to the pursuit of the study:

Sub-problems:

1. What constitutes *bungkalan* as political praxis among the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) of *Hacienda Tinang* Peasantry?
2. What constitutes the politics of *bungkalan* as *pakikibaka* situated within the context of the Post-CARP Land Distribution Scheme among Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) of *Hacienda Tinang* Peasantry within the purview of *pakikipagkapwa* as:
 - a. *Paninindigan* (commitment and conviction);
 - b. *Pakikisangkot* (getting involved); and
 - c. *Pakikiisa* (being one with)?

3. What constitutes the politics of *bungkalan* as *pakikibaka* situated within the context of the Post-CARP Land Distribution Scheme among the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) of *Hacienda Tinang* Peasantry within the purview of the little traditions phenomenon?
4. How is the politics of *bungkalan* as *pakikibaka* perceived by Non-Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (Non-ARBs) situated within the context of the Post-CARP Land Distribution Scheme of *Hacienda Tinang* Peasantry?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

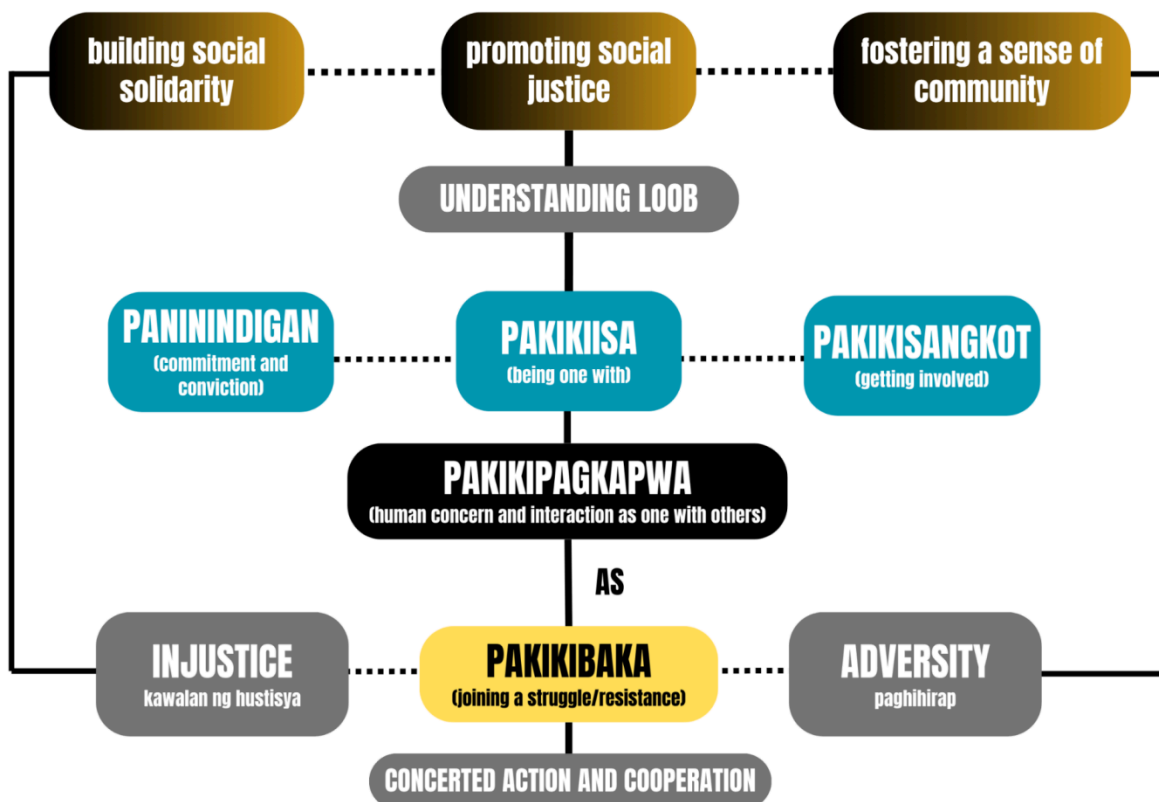


Figure 1. Amalgamated *Kapwa* Theory based on Virgilio Enriquez’s concept of *kapwa* as the core Filipino value from *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, alongside Leonardo Mercado’s concept of *loob* from Filipino Philosophy, and Rev. Fr. Albert Alejo SJ’s concept of *pakikipagkapuwa-tao* from Filipino Anthropology, corresponding to the first of the two-fold theoretical frameworks maximized in this study.

Following the trajectory of the political discourse so far, the researcher ventured on the maximization of two-fold theoretical frameworks in striving to justify and respond to the established research problems vis-à-vis the pursuit of delving deeper on the politics of *bungkalan*: [1] Filipino concept of *Pakikipagkapuwa/Pakikipagkapuwa-tao* (treating each other/person as *kapwa* or fellow human being) as a manifestation of *pakikibaka* (resistance), elucidated by renowned and foremost scholars in the pursuit of indigenizing the field of Social

Sciences — Virgilio Enriquez’s *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, Leonardo Mercado’s articulations within the purview of Filipino Philosophy, and Rev. Fr. Albert Alejo, SJ’s expression within the lens of Filipino Anthropology and [2] Reynaldo Iletto’s explication of the “Little Traditions Phenomenon” within the purview comprehending the notion of ‘history from below’ in making sense of resistance of and by the masses from the ground.

Foremost, the amalgamated *Kapwa* Theory³ mainly encapsulates Enriquez’s conception of the Filipino core value of ‘*kapwa*’ (shared identity/unity of self with others), forming a considerable part of his breakthrough of truly understanding and capturing the nuances of the Filipino behavior, personality, and social interactions vis-à-vis the Filipino language through his *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*. Enriquez presented an exhaustive discussion as to how this core value of *pakikipagkapuwa* has constantly been the cornerstone in further discerning different levels and modes of social interactions founded within and among individuals in each community and/or society.

Following his scholarly endeavor surrounding the concept of *kapwa* can be traced back to Santiago’s prior study centered on examining the levels of social interaction explicated through the language of food-sharing on both “*ibang tao*” (outsider) and “*hindi ibang tao*” (one of us) in a chosen municipality in the province of Bulacan.⁴ This then led to Enriquez and Santiago’s collaborative conception of eight (8) levels of social interaction rendered in a scale of *pagtutunguhan* (interaction) that an individual may potentially undertake under the two (2) categories of *ibang tao* (outsider) and *hindi ibang tao* (one of us), namely:

- [1] *Pakikitungo* (transaction/civility with)
- [2] *Pakikisalamuha* (interaction with)
- [3] *Pakikilahok* (joining/participating with)
- [4] *Pakikibagay* (in conformity with/in accord with)
- [5] *Pakikisama* (being along with)
- [6] *Pakikipagpalagayan* (being in rapport/understanding/acceptance of)
- [7] *Pakikisangkot* (getting involved)
- [8] *Pakikiisa* (being one with)⁵

Derived from this discourse, Enriquez associates these levels of social interaction coherently as a manifestation of the Filipino core value of *kapwa* and thus, identifies the potential relationship between and/or among one’s *kapwa*, ranging from *pakikitungo* (least) towards *pakikiisa* (closest proximity) in striving to understand one’s *kalooban* (inner self/inner feelings). In this regard, Alejo and Mercado⁶ decipher the interconnectedness of the concepts of *kapwa* and *loob*— unraveling the interior dimension of one’s human-heartedness, which in turn opens doors for building a harmonious relationship with one’s *kapwa*. In turn, discerning one’s

³ Rogelia Pe-Pua and Elizabeth Marcelino, *Sikolohiyang Pilipino (Filipino Psychology): A Legacy of Virgilio Enriquez*, *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* 3, 49-71 (2000).

⁴ Clemen Aquino, Mula Sa Kinaroroonan: Kapwa, Kapatiran, and Bayan in Philippine Social Science, *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 32(1), 105-139. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23654689>.

⁵ Virgilio Enriquez, *Kapwa: A Core Concept in Filipino Social Psychology*, *Philippine Worldview*, 42 (6-19). DOI: 10.1355/9789814379021-005. (1986).

⁶ Albert Alejo, *Tao po! Tuloy! Halina sa Loob ng Tao*, *Magisterial Lectures: Archium Ateneo*, (2020); Leonardo Mercado, *The Filipino Mind – Philippine Philosophical Studies II: Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change – Council for Research in Values and Philosophy*, (1994).

loob through *pakikipagkapwa* brings about the fulfillment of three key objectives, namely: [1] building social solidarity, [2] promoting social justice, and [3] fostering a sense of community.

Advancing further to the discourse, Enriquez denotes that the Filipino concept of *pakikipagkapwa* may stand as an outright expression of *pakikibaka*, as he designates:

“...he [Filipino] knows how to resist when he seems utterly powerless. He knows the meaning of cooperation and concerted action. He knows that *pakikibaka* (joining a struggle) is a valid aspect of *pakikipagkapwa* in the face of injustice and adversity.”

Given that proposition, the researcher strived to contextualize the following prior elements of *pakikipagkapwa* as *pakikibaka*, namely: [1] injustice (*kawalan ng hustisya*) and [2] adversity (*paghihirap*) and unraveled the underlying politics of *bungkalan* as *pakikibaka*, and co-equally took on the pursuit of capturing the nuances and dynamics of the potential key informants’ individual and shared perceptions of the given political phenomenon in making much sense of the previously conducted scholarly studies centered on the assessment of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL), as well as that of the community praxis of *bungkalan* among Agrarian Reform Communities (ARCs).

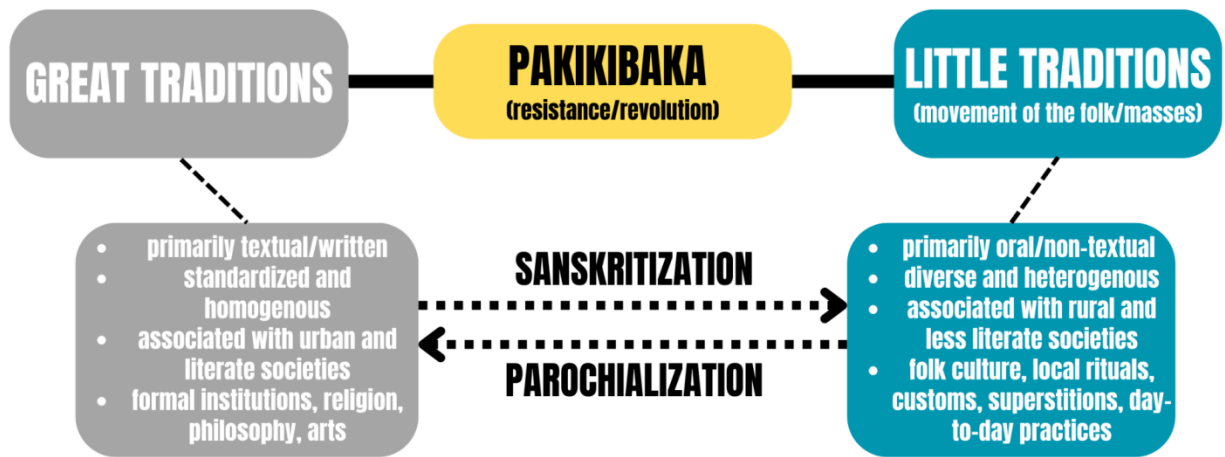


Figure 2. Reynaldo Iletto’s *Great and Little Tradition Phenomenon* in one of his *magnum opus*, “Pasyon and Revolution” depicts resistance through the lens of ‘history from below’ by further examining revolts ignited in rural, peasant communities by religious groups such as Apolinario dela Cruz’s Cofradia de San Jose.

On the other hand, Reynaldo Iletto’s “Little Traditions” phenomenon, as elucidated through his *magnum opus*, *Pasyon and Revolution*, posits the breakthrough of thoroughly examining the ‘history from below’ – placing the limelight of the scholarly discourse stemming from the narratives and lived experiences of the masses.⁷ Furthermore, his expansive discussion is further depicted by the extensive call for the necessity to revisit the often marginalized aspects

⁷ Reynaldo Iletto, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910*. (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press), 1979.

of mainstream Philippine historiography, such as that of the messianic movements spearheaded by brotherhood groups such as the Lapiang Malaya, Cofradia de San Jose, and the colorum society, and eventually framing their experiences of emancipation not solely as micronarratives behind actual revolution.⁸

As depicted above, Little Tradition entails the inclusion of oral and/or non-textual narratives, local rituals, customs, traditions, and day-to-day practices within a given community. Having that in mind, Ileteo’s Little Tradition, as contextualized in the study, encompasses the endeavor of unraveling the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries’ (ARBs) perception of *pakikibaka* in their everyday struggle for land acquisition vis-a-vis the politics of *bungkalan*.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

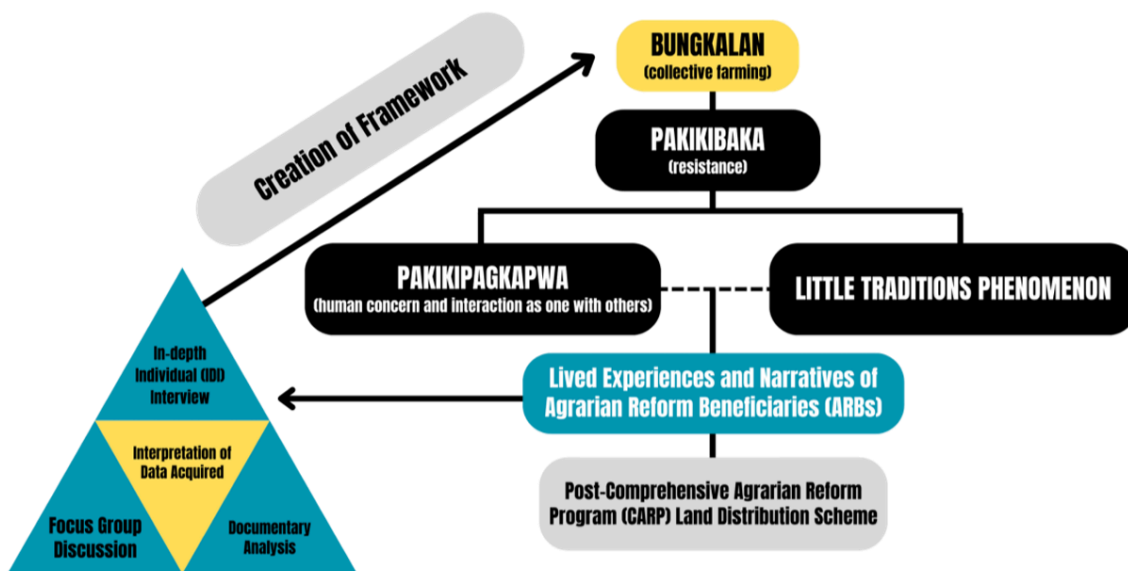


Figure 3. Conceptual Framework of the study entitled, “*Politics of Bungkalan as Pakikibaka: A Phenomenological Study on the Post-CARP Land Distribution Scheme on Hacienda Tinang Peasantry of Tarlac Province*” (Tolete, 2023).

Delving deeper on the conduct of the study, the researcher strived to capture the lived experiences and narratives of the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) from *Hacienda Tinang* Peasantry of Tarlac Province in further understanding their conception of the underlying political phenomenon of *bungkalan* in the Post-CARP Land Distribution Scheme vis-a-vis the respective Filipino concept of *pakikibaka* within the purview of (a) *pakikipagkapwa* and (b) little traditions phenomenon.

⁸ Rhoderick John Abellanos, Local Discourse, Identity and the Search for a Filipino Philosophy: A Re-exploration through the Lens of Reynaldo Ileteo, *Asian Perspectives in the Arts and Humanities*, 3 No. 1, 35-59 (2013).

Following the framework depicted above, such an undertaking of maximizing a phenomenological approach included an all-encompassing triangulation method of (1) in-depth individual interviews, (2) focus group discussions, and (3) documentary analysis. This way of data collection paved the way for the researcher to generate another framework portraying the community mobilization from within by the end of the study, demonstrating the politics of *bungkalan* situated within *Hacienda* Tinang, and in good hope, will then be a basis for future scholarly work focusing on the said political phenomenon through community mobilization.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

With the primary objective of understanding how the politics of *bungkalan* serves as a manifestation of the Filipino concept of *pakikibaka* as situated within the context of the Post-CARP Land Distribution Scheme, the researcher strived to delineate the extent of capturing the lived experiences and narratives of research participants to solely the qualified Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) from *Hacienda* Tinang from the Municipality of Concepcion who currently holds a share on the current collective Certificate of Land Ownership Award (CLOA), given the still pending granting of individual CLOAs from the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR). Moreover, these ARBs must additionally be recognized members and organized leaders of the Malayang Kilusang Samahan ng Magsasaka sa Tinang (MAKISAMA-Tinang) in order to qualify for the data acquisition phase of the focus group discussion and in-depth individual interviews, respectively. Agrarian reform advocates, youth activists, officials from the Sangguniang Barangay of Tinang, officials from the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Concepcion, Tarlac, representatives from the Provincial Office of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) – Tarlac, and members and/or leaders of agrarian unions who are not considered to be ARBs from Hacienda Tinang yet interact with the latter shall still be not considered in the data collection method for the focus group discussion (FGD), while deemed as a supplementary key informants for the conduct of in-depth individual interviews and documentary analysis.

Following the exhaustive depiction of the amalgamated *Kapwa* theory earlier presented through the theoretical framework, the researcher did not undertake further explication on [1] other defined smooth interpersonal relationships (SIR) outlined by Enriquez within the field of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (i.e., *hiya*, *utang na loob*, *amor propio*, etc.) and [2] six (6) of the eight levels of social interactions demarcated within the purview of the Filipino concept of *pakikipagkapwa* as *pakikibaka*. Consequently, the researcher was not bound to explore the [3] great traditions phenomenon and solely focus on the little traditions' phenomenon delineated by Ito as potentially perceived by the key informants of the study.

Ultimately, corresponding to the problems initially posed by the researcher, a phenomenological study on Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries of other existing *haciendas* and/or plantations within the province of Tarlac, such as the infamous *Hacienda* Luisita spanning across the municipalities of La Paz and Concepcion, as well as the City of Tarlac, was not pursued in this study.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

Qualitative Research Design entails an exhaustive comprehension and interpretation of substantial and detailed meanings, as it is conventionally grasped as any scholarly pursuit that encompasses the ‘humanness’ that is, delving deeper into the individual and/or collective feelings, thoughts, and experiences of a chosen [political] phenomenon.⁹ Such a research design bounds the unfolding of a multitude of realities vis-a-vis subjectivity corresponding to the essentiality of encapsulating meanings through immersion with the participants as a means of acquiring data and generating themes from significant observation.¹⁰

With that being said, the researcher maximized a qualitative research design, as it is deemed fit in paving the way for the utilization of non-numerical data with the inclusion of texts, audio, and/or video in articulating thoughts, feelings, perceptions, behaviors, and experiences of a particular political phenomenon— coming from the members of the peasant community of *Hacienda Tinang*.¹¹ Furthermore, Creswell emphasized the importance of augmenting a qualitative approach in allowing a researcher to generate in-depth knowledge by accumulating personal experiences and narratives from the ground through active participation within their locale.¹²

Contextualizing within the pursuit of this study, the chosen design and approach aided the researcher in identifying and describing what constitutes the politics of *bungkalan* by delving deeper through the intertwined perceptions and manifestations of the Filipino value of *pakikibaka* within the purview of [1] *pakikipagkapwa* and [2] little traditions phenomenon within the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) and members of the *Hacienda Tinang* Peasantry of Tarlac Province. Doing so paved the way for the researcher to gain meaningful and abundant knowledge of the subject matter, relating to the overall purpose of amplifying the lived experiences and narratives of ARBs in the ongoing discourse regarding the struggle for agrarian reform in the country.

Corresponding to the undertaking of crafting a study by employing a qualitative research design lies the intertwined task of maximizing a phenomenological approach¹³ as one of the long-established and existing means of acquiring exhaustive data in the field and describing the comprehensive essence of a certain phenomenon.¹⁴

Gaining an extensive understanding of the research participants’ lived experiences and narratives, the researcher maximized a phenomenological approach in revealing the perceptible

⁹“Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods”, University of Northampton, <https://cpb-eu-w2.wpmucdn.com/mypad.northampton.ac.uk/dist/d/6334/files/2018/01/Quantitative-qualitative-and-Mixed-Methods-Jan-2018-1hvxxl1.pdf>

¹⁰ Valerie Sheppard, “Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods Research Approaches”, BC Campus Pressbooks, <https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/jibcresearchmethods/chapter/3-5-quantitative-quantitative-mixed-methods-research-approaches/>

¹¹ Steven Tenny, Janelle Brannan, and Grace Brannan, “Qualitative Study”, National Library of Medicine - National Center for Biotechnology Information, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK470395/#:~:text=>

¹² John Creswell, “Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches”, SAGE Publications, Inc. (2009).

¹³Hugh Good, “What is phenomenology in qualitative research?”, Dovetail. <https://dovetail.com/research/phenomenology-qualitative-research/>

¹⁴ “What is Phenomenological Research Design? Essential Guide to Coding Qualitative Data”, Delve, <https://delvetool.com/blog/phenomenology>

political phenomenon of *bungkalan* vis-à-vis their perception and manifestation of the Filipino value of *pakikibaka* (resistance/joining a struggle). By utilizing phenomenology, the researcher acquired a substantial knowledge of their underlying struggles and triumphs situated within the coinciding implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law, as the primary stakeholders concerned in the post-CARP Land Distribution Scheme as further means of disentangling the political dynamics, as often left unnuanced within the existing body of literature and studies laser-focused on generating quantitative analysis of the said political phenomenon.

Consequently, the researcher justifies such a choice in research approach, as this would pave the way in facilitating a more-encompassing immersion and dialogue with the study's participants — the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) of *Hacienda Tinang* Peasantry using the following data collection techniques discussed in the succeeding portion.

DATA COLLECTION METHOD

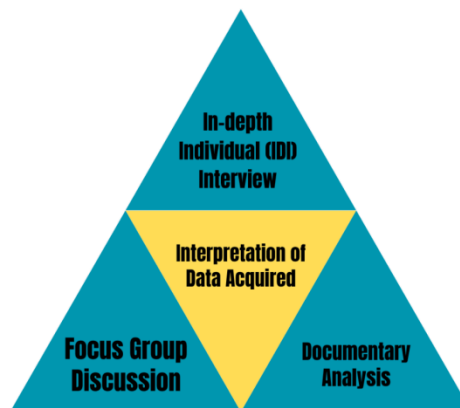


Figure 4. The Triangulation Method in Data Collection

This study maximized the Triangulation Method¹⁵ in the acquisition of data based on the lived experiences and narratives of the research participants in supplementing the chosen research design and approach. Patton mentioned that a data collection method of this sort is comprised of conducting [1] in-depth individual (IDI) interviews, [2] focus group discussions, and [3] documentary analysis¹⁶ that would enable researchers in their respective pursuit of developing an extensive and cohesive interpretation of an underlying [political] phenomenon by merging information from distinct sources. In this way, the researcher would be able to lessen, if not, totally eradicate the tendencies of integrating biases and a priori assumptions surrounding the chosen political phenomenon and consequently, increase the validity of analyzing the

¹⁵ Such Triangulation Method in research data collection was formerly maximized by some Political Science researcher-students from the university in their pursuit of inducing respective grounded theories through Qualitative Research Design by doing phenomenological approach. In doing so, cross-examination and validation can be done by employing three (3) means of acquiring data hence, paving the way for more extensive data from the ground.

¹⁶ Nancy Carter, Denise Bryant-Lukosius, Alba Dicenso, Jennifer Blythe, and Alan Neville, "The use of triangulation in qualitative research", *Oncology Nursing Forum* 41, no. 5: 545-7. (2014). doi:10.1188/14.ONF.545-547.

generated knowledge of the participants' lived experiences and narratives maximizing multiple means of explaining the data being acquired in the field.¹⁷

Foremost, in-depth individual (IDI) interviews primarily involve the thorough conduct of interviews deemed appropriate in exploring the underlying perspectives, thoughts, experiences, and feelings of individuals, who in turn serve as the main participants of a study.¹⁸ IDI interviews are maximized to contextualize and provide a complete depiction of the chosen phenomenon to be studied in a more personal and targeted manner, in case potential participants of the ongoing research opt not to be included in the supplementary focus group discussions (FGDs), and in instances where questions being generated by the researcher amplify follow-up responses and demand more exhaustive explanations.¹⁹

Contextualized in this study, the researcher employed such data collection methods as a means of capturing a more exhaustive narrative stemming from the identified [political] leaders of the existing organizations and/or unions within the *Hacienda Tinang* Peasantry of Tarlac Province. Over the course of the study, the researcher deemed it necessary to conduct IDI interview/s with some of the current organizational peasant leaders coming from Malayang Kilusang Samahan ng Magsasaka sa Tinang (MAKISAMA-Tinang) and, by extension, the Tinang SN Multipurpose Cooperative, as a co-existing and contending cooperative alongside the former. Consequent to this pursuit, the researcher followed on the supplementary necessity to conduct IDI Interviews with some of the identified Non-Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (Non-ARBs) who have previously witnessed a *bungkalan* activity within the given hacienda.

Consequently, focus group discussion (FGD) essentially entails a method of facilitating and moderating an in-depth discourse surrounding a particular phenomenon among a purposively selected group of people hence, the research participants.²⁰ Supplementing the IDI interviews in this study, the focus group discussion deemed itself an appropriate data collection technique in generating and coding common themes arising from the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries' (ARBs) discussion and responses, as they share commonalities in their collective struggle for land reform through their collective action of *bungkalan* as *pakikibaka*.

Furthermore, the researcher's choice of incorporating FGD within the study corresponds to the conventional characteristic of such as to the inclusion of potential research participants with synonymous backgrounds, which would then lead to the generation of common knowledge from their experiences. In this case, deemed FGD participants for the study shall comprise any of the present and active members from the MAKISAMA-Tinang, as well as qualified Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) for the acquisition of the Certificate of Land Ownership Awards (CLOAs) in Hacienda Tinang Peasantry. Lastly, the documentary analysis capped off and filled in the existing gaps in the acquired data from both the in-depth individual interviews and focus

¹⁷ Andrea Nightingale, "*Triangulation*". International Encyclopedia of Human Geography (Second Edition), 2020.

¹⁸ Carolyn Boyce and Palena Neale, "Conducting In-depth Interviews: A Guide for Designing and Conducting In-Depth Interviews for Evaluation Input". Pathfinder International, 3.

¹⁹ Matthew DeCarlo, "Interview Research: What is it and when should it be used?" Pressbooks. <https://pressbooks.pub/scientificinquiryinsocialwork/chapter/13-1-interview-research-what-is-it-and-when-should-it-be-used>.

²⁰ Peter van Eeuwijk and Zuzanna Angehrn, "How to Conduct a Focus Group Discussion". Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute, 1.

group discussion respectively by examining the diverse collection of documents and records sourced within and outside of the research participants' community such as, but not limited to, books, newspaper clippings, manuals, letters and memoranda, maps and charts, institutional reports, press releases, which enhanced and corroborated the study's findings.²¹ In this way, the researcher was able to employ a scholarly mechanism of 'checks and balances' by verifying and validating two (2) or more sources of data that fall under the same category in making much sense of the similarities and differences arising from the conducted IDI interviews and focus group discussions hence, establishing the groundwork for credibility.²²

Contextualized in this study, the researcher maximized the existing documents in possession of ARBs situated within Hacienda Tinang (e.g., masterlist of qualified beneficiaries, political and organizational structure in MAKISAMA-Tinang, geographical maps, and the like), as well as that of the organizational and institutional documents available from the Provincial Office of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) and the Local Government Unit (LGU) of the Municipality of Concepcion.

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

Following the chosen data collection method of pursuing triangulation by the researcher then urged the necessity to formulate a semi-structured questionnaire guide for the conduct of both the in-depth individual (IDI) interviews and the focus group discussion (FGD) with the chosen key informants based on the aforementioned concepts, variables, and elements integrated within the theoretical frameworks, as well as that of the research problems formerly posed in the previous chapters. This eventually paved the way to facilitate a more substantial discourse for both the researcher and participants hence, enabling the researcher to pose follow-up questions for a more expansive, free-flowing discussion and warranting the participants to further clarify their stances and narratives should there be any identified gray areas pertaining on the issue at hand— understanding the politics of *bungkalan* as *pakikibaka* sine qua non through the lived experiences and narratives of the research participants.²³

Delving deeper into the data gathering instrument itself, the guide questionnaire formulated by the researcher may primarily be divided into two (2) portions corresponding the [1] in-depth individual interviews and the [2] focus group discussion in striving to answer the sub-problems in detail and after some time, the main research problem itself.

Foremost, the first section presenting the in-depth individual interview/s aimed to unravel the first sub-problem posed on the preceding introductory chapter: "*What constitutes bungkalan as political praxis among the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) of Hacienda Tinang?*" by focusing on further disentangling the historicity and context of the community's practice of *bungkalan* beyond mere collective farming and cultivation activity, which would then lead to

²¹ Hani Morgan, "Conducting a Qualitative Document Analysis: The Qualitative Report" 27(1), 64-77. (2022). <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5044>.

²² Glenn A. Bowen, "Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method", Qualitative Research Journal 9(2), 27-40. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027>.

²³ Alison Doyle, "What is a Semi-Structured Interview?". The Balance. <https://www.thebalancemoney.com/what-is-a-semi-structured-interview-2061632>

elucidating the overall concept of *bungkalan* as a political praxis from the purview of the ARBs by asking the [1A] significant, historical commencement of the on-going praxis, [1B] reason/s behind such continuation of the praxis of *bungkalan*, [1C] relevant changes and progress made over time in relation of *bungkalan* as a praxis towards their community, [1D] subjective perception on *bungkalan* as political praxis by ARBs themselves, [1E] political process and structure/hierarchy succeeding *bungkalan*-related activities, [1F] existing relationship between the ARBs and the authorities necessary for the continuously occurring implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (i.e., Provincial Office of the Department of Agrarian Reform, Local Government Unit of the Municipality of Concepcion, Tarlac, and such).

Consequently, the succeeding portion of the semi-structured interview guide entailed and corresponded to the second sub-problem, “*What constitutes the politics of bungkalan as pakikipagkapwa, as situated within the context of the post-CARP Land Distribution Scheme among the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) of Hacienda Tinang?*”. Successive of the amalgamated theoretical cornerstone of Virgilio Enriquez’s concept of *kapwa* as the core Filipino value from *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, as well as that of Leonardo Mercado’s concept of *loob* from Filipino Philosophy and Rev. Fr. Albert Alejo’s concept of *pakikipagkapwa-tao* from Filipino Anthropology, the researcher crafted two (2) sub-sections namely, (1) ‘*ibang tao*’ (outsider/not one of us) and (2) ‘*hindi ibang tao*’ (one of us), as these were deemed to be the levels of interaction that the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries potentially have experienced and continuously experience in providing more meaningful perception pertaining to politics of *bungkalan* among outside cooperatives and unions, state forces, the Local Government Unit (LGU) of the Municipality of Concepcion, Tarlac, and Provincial Office of the Department of Agrarian Reform under ‘*ibang tao*’ and their fellow ARBs under ‘*hindi ibang tao*’. Specifically, the data gathering instrument entailed the central question as to how do the ARBs manifest the collective, political practice of *bungkalan* as a form of [based on the specified level of interaction] in fighting for their rights within the agricultural land of *Hacienda Tinang* as farmer-beneficiaries with individual rights to CLOA.

Lastly, the third section of the data gathering instrument dwelled deeper on the integration of Reynaldo Ilete’s concept of little traditions explicated on his ‘*Pasyon and Revolution*’ by simply prompting the query among the ARBs as to how do they manifest the collective, political practice of *bungkalan* as a form of everyday resistance (*pang-araw-araw na pakikibaka*) in fighting for their rights within the agricultural land of *Hacienda Tinang* as farmer-beneficiaries with individual rights to CLOA through their (1) day-to-day practice, customs, and traditions and (2) rituals. Additionally, the researcher strived to gather insightful responses as to how the practice of *bungkalan* affected and still affects the everyday lives of ARBs.

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

The participants of this study were primarily deemed as [1] Qualified Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) who dedicated majority of their agricultural activities centered on *Hacienda Tinang* and those who were entitled of individual Certificate of Land Ownership Award (CLOA) certified by the Provincial Office of the Department of Agrarian Reform – Tarlac Province, which corresponded to the three (3) of the four (4) established research questions in the introductory chapter. Consequently, [2] Non Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (Non-ARBs),

previously defined as those people who have formerly laid witness to a *bungkalan* activity conducted within *Hacienda* Tinang would be in consonant with one (1) of the four (4) established research questions.

In the case of In-Depth Individual Interviews, the researcher acquired the consent of (a) the current organizational leaders of the primary union centered in *Hacienda* Tinang – the Malayang Kilusang Samahan ng Magsasaka sa Tinang (MAKASAMA-Tinang), inclusive of the aforementioned condition as qualified ARBs with CLOAs and (b) representatives from the Sangguniang Barangay (Barangay Council) of Tinang and the Local Government Unit of the Municipality of Concepcion, the Provincial Office of the Department of Agrarian Reform – Tarlac Province, land reform lawyers, and the like who form the Non-Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (Non ARBs) cluster. Furthermore, ten (10) qualified ARBs with CLOAs and current members of the MAKISAMA-Tinang comprised the key informants for the conduct of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD).

SUMMARY

In its entirety, this study initially explored the relatively ‘untouched’, novel concept of *bungkalan* in further understanding its political nuances and specificities pinned against the continuity of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law of 1988 and its implementation, as well as that of the decades of land struggle among the Filipino farmers and other land laborers. Through the recognition of the lackluster studies encompassing the perspectives, narratives, and lived experiences of the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs), this study strived to provide and generate a supplementary body of knowledge by reiterating the challenges perceived within farming communities beyond the mere flux of quantitative empirical data through the years.

The Theoretical frameworks outlining the overarching concept of *pakikibaka* (resistance) within the purview of *pakikipagkapwa* and little traditions phenomenon certify that the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries’ perception of their *bungkalan* activities must be properly contextualized as a manifestation of their everyday hustle and struggle in asserting their rights over their landholdings against all odds— the provincial office of the Department of Agrarian Reform, Local Government Unit (LGU) of the Municipality of Concepcion, Tarlac, local state forces, and other circumstantial factors adding up to their collective struggle in the Post-CARP Land Distribution Scheme, as well as that of their post-installation as individual CLOA holders.

FINDINGS

Demographics of the Participants and Key Informants

PARTICIPANTS	AGE	GENDER	ADDRESS	YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN FARMING	OTHER SOURCE/S OF INCOME
1	38	F	Brgy. Tinang, Concepcion, Tarlac	<i>N/A; Daughter of Original CLOA Holder and ARB</i>	Former OFW)
2	70	F	Brgy. Tinang, Concepcion, Tarlac	40	Housekeeping
3	63	F	Brgy. Tinang, Concepcion, Tarlac	21	Housekeeping
4	50	F	Brgy. Tinang, Concepcion, Tarlac	30	N/A
5	68	M	Brgy. Tinang, Concepcion, Tarlac	15	Driving; Private Service
6	54	M	Brgy. Tinang, Concepcion, Tarlac	39	N/A
7	66	M	Brgy. Tinang, Concepcion, Tarlac	45	N/A
8	30	M	Brgy. Tinang, Concepcion, Tarlac	<i>N/A; Son of Original CLOA Holder and ARB</i>	Employed
9	70	M	Brgy. Tinang, Concepcion, Tarlac	23	Driving; Motorcycle
10	52	M	Brgy. Tinang, Concepcion, Tarlac	10	Driving; Motorcycle

Table 1. Demographics of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), concerning Ten (10) Qualified Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) who are additionally deemed and recognized as Members of the Malayang Kilusang Samahang Magsasaka ng Tinang (MAKISAMA-Tinang).

Foremost, the abovementioned table depicts the participants' demographics for the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with an underlying composition entailing Hacienda Tinang – Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries' (ARBs) apparent (1) gender disparities, (2) age differences and years of experience in extensive farming, and (3) distinction based on their projected, supplementary sources of income. Parallel to the conducted documentary analysis and auxiliary observation by the researcher during the acquisition of data, four (4) out of ten (10) ARBs participated in the FGD were female ARBs and/or individual Certificate of Land Ownership Award (CLOA) holders. In this regard, majority of the qualified ARBs present at *kubol* (headquarters of MAKISAMA-Tinang ARBs) accomplishing their daily farming errands were male farmers and qualified CLOA holders, considering even those who did not directly participate during the conduct of the FGD. By the virtue of further cross-examination, two (2) of the four (4) female participants revealed that they stand of behalf of their already-deceased patriarch partners (husbands), who formerly served as the original collective CLOA holders. This further reinforces the Department of Agrarian Reform's (DAR) disposition and stipulation regarding the reinvestigation of the ARBs for their qualifications on the individual CLOAs. Such reappraisal brings about the pertinent necessity to furnish a more up-to-date copy of the finalized rundown of the Qualified Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries for the Individualized CLOA titling, regardless of their affiliation from MAKISAMA-Tinang (90 ARBs) and the Tinang SN Multipurpose Cooperative, which further encompasses the essentiality of detailed profiling (i.e., inclusion of descriptive breakdown of the individual CLOA holders vis-à-vis their gender, age, and other relevant, personal information) in the aftermath of the installation held at the 62-hectare-Tinang land.

Furthermore, the conduct of the FGD reveals that two (2) out of ten (10) ARBs constitute the so-called “second-generation ARBs”, which reinforces the documentary analysis that those ARBs who were already deceased and those which physically could not attend were represented by their nearest kin with appropriate authorization. As evidenced by FGD Participants #1 and 8, their non-possession of a considerable amount of time and/or years of experience in extensive farming posits yet another interesting facet of the ARBs’ demographics by means of comprehending that they are widely considered as second-generation ARBs who already took over as ‘recognized heirs’ of the Tinang landholding via their respective parent/s’ CLOAs, should there be a finalized individual CLOA issuance by DAR – National Office. Moreover, their status as second-generation ARBs connote the eventual change and evident differences on economic standing, in comparison to their ARB counterparts, considering that they are in possession of supplementary source of income (e.g., as former Overseas Filipino Workers/OFW and Employed) prior their almost three (3) consecutive years of *bungkalan* over the land and therefore, with little to no additional source of income to date.

Consequently, some of the male ARBs and CLOA holders mentioned through the FGD that even though they are considered part of the said original certificate, they were then stripped of rights over their former cooperative—the Tinang SN Multipurpose Cooperative hence, depriving them of economic gain. This then further strengthened their collective perception of the need to assert their rights over their possession of land—hence, the political praxis of *bungkalan*.

Political Praxis of Bungkalan

In consonance with the corroborated data acquired from the focus group discussion and in-depth individual interviews, the Qualified Agrarian Beneficiaries depicted the political praxis of *bungkalan* as corresponding to the themes of [1] Makisama-Tinang’s political legitimacy, [2] *Bungkalan*’s historicity, and [3] Defining *bungkalan*.

MAKISAMA-Tinang’s Political Legitimacy

Foremost, the concept of political legitimacy goes back to the previously cited pieces of literature and studies on the underlying struggle for landownership and resource control among the landless farm laborers throughout the existing history of peasant grapples across the world vis-à-vis their existence from the purview of political institutions and agencies concerned (e.g., the Department of Agrarian Reform, Local Government Unit of Concepcion, Tarlac) and further contextualized in this study, the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) of *Hacienda* Tinang in Tarlac. As mentioned by one of the FGD participants:

“Nag-start lang ang MAKISAMA-Tinang noong starting na, kailangan pala may pangalan ‘yong organisasyon para kapag pumupunta ka sa mga department ng gobyerno tulad ng DAR, at least alam nila na, “ah, itong grupong ito, sila ‘yong galing sa Tinang [Concepcion, Tarlac]. Kaya doon namin pinagkasunduan na dapat pala may pangalan ‘yong grupo. Para lang din po sa record, we are SEC-registered so, rehistrado na ‘yong grupo namin sa Security Exchange Commission.”

Such a pronouncement comes from the rudimentary observation among the *Hacienda Tinang* ARBs, as they collectively and constantly feel the necessity to register their peasant organization (i.e., through the Security Exchange Commission or SEC) for the purpose of lessening the tendencies of redtagging, harassment, and surveillance by state forces. As evidenced and factored by the death of their former chairperson due to intensified state surveillance and further health complications, their notion of political legitimacy then eventually transformed into a more nuanced discipline of following the proper channels of addressing their grievances and concerns through legalities, even though they were outrightly rejected by private legal practitioners for years and, in due course, accepted by the Sentro Para sa Tunay na Repormang Agraryo (SENTRA) lawyers— a non-government institution providing pro bono legal services among farmers, fisherfolk, and indigenous people.

[1] *“As a consequence thereof, Task Force Tinang was created on March 11, 2022 headed by the Undersecretary David Erro to check the records and validate the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) farmers and occupants of the subject landholding”*

[2] *“It appears that there are 90 farmers who decided not to join the Tinang SN Multi Purpose, while 368 farmers filed the aforesaid petition for annulment of judgment/order. 70 of the petitioners in the Petition to Annul the subject order/judgment are among the 237 registered co-owners reflected in the collective CLOA and at the same time, members of Tinang SN Multi-purpose Cooperative per validation of the MARO.”*

Concurring with the previously mentioned antecedents, MAKISAMA-Tinang was established, following a political hierarchy/structure similar to that of Filipino labor organizations such as Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) and Unyon ng mga Manggagawa sa Agrikultura (UMA)— with Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary General (additionally serving as the group’s spokesperson), and underlying committees (i.e., Committee on Education, Committee on Finance, and such) functioning on a rotational basis of leadership and succession.

Bungkalan’s Historicity

Reiterating some of the FGD participants’ contextualized definition of bungkalan as political praxis:

[1] *“Ang ibig naming mangyari, maibigay sa amin ‘yong lupa kaso, hinaharang kami ng mga politiko. Siguro, nabili ‘yong mga taga-DAR Tarlac, kaya hindi kami mabigyan ng lupa.”*

[2] *“Ang kahalagahan at kahulugan ng bungkalan—tulad ng sama-sama naming pagkilos eh iniaangat natin ‘yung sa agrikultura, tulad ng pagtanim ng palay tsaka pagtanim ng mga gulay para may pangkain.”*

It is more than clear than apparent that their collective characterization of the notion of *bungkalan* revolves around (1) steppingstone towards the full realization of their potential over the landholdings through little to no state intervention and (2) achievement of land sovereignty,

food security, and economic prosperity by means of unified assertion of rights over the land. Over and above that proposition, the documentary analysis from the Department of Agrarian Reform's response concerning three (3) administrative cases, as well as that of the key informant interviews conducted with the Non-Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries posit:

“Meanwhile, the tension over the subject landholding persisted. Sometime on June 9, 2022, an incident transpired wherein a group of persons went to the subject landholding to practice “bungkalan”— a regular agricultural activity by the farmers during a lean time between planting and harvesting. A portion of the subject property with an estimated area of 5,000 square meters planted with sugar cane allegedly by Tinang SN Multipurpose Cooperative was plowed using farm tractor/rotovator. This was immediately reported to the nearby police station by the said Cooperative.”

For the given set of key informants and institutions, *bungkalan* solely refers to the “regular agricultural activity by the farmers during a lean time between planting and harvesting”. However, harmonizing and contextualizing such a notion to the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries' experiences and narratives postulate a more in-depth definition of *bungkalan*.

Since the infamously historic June 2022 *bungkalan* activity, MAKISAMA-Tinang perceived their political praxis of *bungkalan* as an induced flashpoint (i.e., through media's sensationalization of the said event) to further maintain their collective resistance from both the Local Government Unit of Concepcion, Tarlac (whose highest-seating executive officer serves as the patriarch of the contending farm cooperative holding the monopoly over the Tinang landholdings) and the Provincial Office of DAR. Eventually, ARBs and their peasant sector organization leaders attest to the change in their perception of *bungkalan* as both the “highs and lows” of their *pakikibaka*— from solely constituting their daily activities and errands through a minute 2-hectare farm plot over their frozen hundreds of land hectares, towards their intensified declaration of rights over the land.

Bungkalan as Pakikibaka

Tracing back the theoretical frameworks introduced in the introductory chapter of this study— [1] the amalgamated *Kapwa* Theory by Virgilio Enriquez from *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, Leonardo Mercado's articulations within the purview of Filipino Philosophy, and Rev. Fr. Albert Alejo, S.J.'s ideas through Filipino Anthropology; and [2] Reynaldo Ileta's Little Traditions Phenomenon through his “Pasyon and Revolution” attest further strengthens the collective narratives of the Hacienda Tinang's Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries' that over time, there exists no clear demarcation among their manifestations of (a) *paninindigan*, (b) *pakikisangkot*, and (c) *pakikiisa*, as *pakikipagkapwa*, in contrast to the long-established levels of interaction pointed out from the preliminaries of the study.

Such a proposition comes from the fact that they, as explained by Enriquez, have already reached the highest peak level of interaction through their everyday interlinkage with one another, not to mention their intertwined lives living within close-knit communities (barrios). Based from the conducted focus group discussion and in-depth individual interviews, their distinctive practices of [1] *pagbubutaw-butaw* (filling in financial gaps for the expenses within

and beyond their *kubol* in aiding their organization's affairs) and [2] *pagkanya-kanya* (not perceived as 'isolation' but rather, placing their strengths into the spotlight, through their respective daily routine and occurrences), aside from the conventionally maximized organizational meetings, educational discussions and trainings lay witness to their constant validation *bungkalan* within the purview of "*pakikipagkapwa sa pang-araw-araw*" as *pakikibaka*.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study ascertained that although the notion of *bungkalan* from the collective narratives of the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) of MAKISAMA Tinang does not totally coincide with the perception of Non-Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (Non-ARBs) constituting the media, legal practitioners involved in the case, government agencies and units, the reality stands firm— *bungkalan* qualifies as a political praxis of *pakikibaka* (resistance), which can be further understood in a spectrum depending upon (a) the level of interaction with the actual ARBs [i.e., *pakikipagkapwa* through *paninindigan*, *pakikisangkot*, and *pakikiisa*], as well as that of (b) progression of the land struggle over the years to come. Indeed, the notion of *bungkalan* qualifies as a political praxis of *pakikibaka* (resistance) for both the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) themselves and the Non-Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (Non-ARBs) who laid witness to their land struggle over the years.

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