

Title: **\*\*Spouses Bonifacio R. Valdez, Jr. and Venida M. Valdez vs. Spouses Gabriel Fabella and Francisca Fabella\*\***

**\*\*Facts:\*\***

The case stems from an unlawful detainer complaint filed by the petitioners, Spouses Bonifacio and Venida Valdez, against the respondents, Spouses Gabriel and Francisca Fabella, regarding a residential lot in Carolina Executive Village, Antipolo, Rizal. The Valdez spouses became the registered owners of the property in November 1992 through a sales contract with Carolina Realty, Inc. They alleged that the Fabellas occupied the lot without any legal claim and built a house on it, depriving them of rightful possession. Despite several requests for the Fabellas to vacate and unsuccessful barangay mediation, the latter refused to leave the property. This prompted the Valdezes to file the complaint, asserting they incurred damages due to this refusal.

The Fabellas countered, claiming the complaint lacked allegations that the Valdezes had prior physical possession or were their lessors. They claimed over thirty years of open, continuous, and adverse possession of the land, contending ownership and questioning the complaint's adherence to procedural requirements against non-forum shopping.

The Municipal Trial Court (MTC) ruled in favor of the Valdezes, leading the Fabellas to appeal to the Regional Trial Court (RTC), which affirmed the MTC's decision. The Fabellas then sought relief from the Court of Appeals (CA), which reversed the lower courts' decisions, concluding that the Valdezes failed to establish a case for unlawful detainer due to insufficient allegations regarding their tolerance of the Fabellas' possession or legal basis for their occupancy.

**\*\*Issues:\*\***

1. Whether the complaint's allegations constituted a valid case for unlawful detainer.
2. Whether the Municipal Trial Court of Antipolo, Rizal, had original jurisdiction over the complaint based on its allegations.

**\*\*Court's Decision:\*\***

The Supreme Court denied the petition, affirming the CA's decision and clarifying the proper actions for recovery of real property possession. It distinguished between accion interdictal (which includes forcible entry and unlawful detainer), accion publiciana, and accion reivindicatoria, based on how and when possession became illegal. The Court underscored that for an action of unlawful detainer to be valid, it must be shown that the

defendant's possession was originally legal but became illegal, owing to termination of the right to possess. Since the Valdezes' complaint did not adequately allege tolerance from the onset of the Fabellas' possession nor establish the manner and time when dispossession began, it did not meet the jurisdictional requirements for unlawful detainer. Consequently, the MTC lacked jurisdiction over the case, rendering the dismissal appropriate.

**\*\*Doctrine:\*\***

Actions for recovery of possession of real property are categorized into accion interdical, accion publiciana, and accion reivindicatoria, each with specific jurisdictional requisites related to the nature of possession and dispossession. For unlawful detainer actions, plaintiff's toleration of defendant's possession must be evident from the beginning, and jurisdictional facts must be clearly outlined in the complaint.

**\*\*Class Notes:\*\***

- **\*\*Unlawful Detainer:\*\*** Requires initial lawful possession by the defendant, which becomes illegal; essential to prove plaintiff's tolerance of this possession from the start.
- **\*\*Jurisdictional Requirements:\*\*** Complaints must explicitly state jurisdictional facts to qualify for either forcible entry or unlawful detainer; failure to do so may redirect the case to accion publiciana or accion reivindicatoria as appropriate.
- **\*\*Tolerance:\*\*** Must be present from the inception of possession to justify an unlawful detainer action; this is crucial in determining the appropriate action and court for cases involving possession disputes.

**\*\*Historical Background:\*\***

Disputes over real property possession, particularly those involving forcible entry and unlawful detainer, are guided by established doctrine emphasizing the need for clear jurisdictional bases within the complaint. This case reaffirms the importance of specific factual allegations to distinguish between different types of possession recovery actions, highlighting the procedural nuances in Philippine property law.