

Pasagui vs. Villablanca, G.R. No. L-20432, May 30, 1969

Facts

****Agreement and Purchase:**** On February 4, 1963, Calixto Pasagui and Fausta Mosar filed a complaint in the Court of First Instance (CFI) of Tacloban City. They alleged that on November 15, 1962, they purchased a 2.6814-hectare agricultural land in Hamindangon, Pastrana, Leyte, from Eustaquia Bocar and Catalina Bocar for PHP 2,800. The sale was notarized and recorded the next day.

****Dispossession:**** In the first week of February 1963, Ester T. Villablanca and Zosimo Villablanca allegedly took unlawful possession of the land and began harvesting coconuts, depriving the plaintiffs of their possession. Pasagui and Mosar demanded the return of the property but were refused.

****Initial Complaint:**** Pasagui and Mosar included Eustaquia and Catalina Bocar as defendants by virtue of the warranty clause in the sale document. They prayed for the land's return and damages.

****Motion to Dismiss:**** On February 21, 1963, the Villablancas moved to dismiss the complaint, arguing that the CFI had no jurisdiction because the case was one of forcible entry, which falls under the exclusive jurisdiction of the municipal court.

****Opposition & Trial Court's Decision:**** Pasagui and Mosar opposed, stating that the complaint did not allege deprivation through force, intimidation, threat, strategy, or stealth. On May 13, 1963, the trial court dismissed the complaint for lack of jurisdiction, asserting it was a forcible entry case. Petitions for reconsideration were denied.

****Appeal:**** Pasagui and Mosar appealed to the Supreme Court on a pure question of law.

Issues

****1. Jurisdiction:**** Whether the nature of the action, as pleaded, constituted forcible entry and was within the exclusive jurisdiction of the municipal court.

****2. Allegations Required:**** Whether the complaint sufficiently alleged prior possession and dispossession using the means specified under Section 1, Rule 70 of the Revised Rules of Court (force, intimidation, threats, strategy, or stealth) to classify it as a forcible entry case.

Court's Decision

****Jurisdiction Determination:**** The Supreme Court analyzed the facts and allegations presented in the complaint to determine jurisdiction. The complaint did not indicate Pasagui and Mosar were in prior physical possession or dispossession by means specified under Section 1, Rule 70 of the Revised Rules of Court.

****Doctrine:**** For an action to be classified as forcible entry, plaintiffs must allege prior physical possession and dispossession through force, intimidation, threat, strategy, or stealth.

****Material Findings:****

- ****Nature of Possession:**** The court noted that Pasagui and Mosar's purpose in filing was to obtain possession, indicating they had not acquired physical possession.

- ****Justification:**** The mere allegation of "illegal and without any right" taking possession by the Villablancas was insufficient without specific mention of force, intimidation, threat, strategy, or stealth.

- ****Alternative Action:**** The aim of seeking return of the purchase price and damages from the vendors was not aligned with a summary action of forcible entry.

****Conclusion:**** The Court held that the CFI had jurisdiction over the case since the complaint did not meet the criteria for a forcible entry case as defined by the Rules of Court.

****Order Reversal:**** The order of dismissal by the trial court was set aside, and the case was remanded for further proceedings.

Doctrine

1. ****Jurisdiction in Forcible Entry Cases:**** The jurisdiction is defined by the nature of the action pleaded, specifically requiring allegations of prior physical possession and dispossession through force, intimidation, threat, strategy, or stealth.

2. ****Presumptive Delivery:**** Execution of a deed of sale in a public instrument is presumptive of land delivery, rebuttable by lack of material possession transfer.

3. ****Alternative Remedies:**** Asking for damages and vendor return of the purchase price in case of eviction does not fall under the summary action of forcible entry.

Class Notes

- **Elements of Forcible Entry:**
 - Prior physical possession by the plaintiff.
 - Dispossession through force, intimidation, threat, strategy, or stealth.
- **Procedural Statutes:**
 - **Section 1, Rule 70, Revised Rules of Court:** Summarized actions in forcible entry require specific allegations of dispossession method.
- **Key Principles:** Jurisdiction depends on the nature of allegations. Courts of First Instance handle cases without specified means of dispossession.

Historical Background

- **Land Disputes Context:** This case emerged during a period when land disputes in rural areas often resulted from categorical misinterpretations of alleged possession breaches.
- **Jurisdictional Clarifications:** The ruling clarified jurisdictional competencies for forcible entry vs. other civil claim disputes, solidifying procedural prerequisites for such claims in Philippine jurisprudence.