

****Title:**** Marcelina Edroso vs. Pablo and Basilio Sablan, 25 Phil. 295 (1913)

****Facts:****

1. Marcelina Edroso applied for the registration of two parcels of land located in Pagsanjan, Laguna—one measuring 1 hectare, 77 ares, and 63 centares, and the other 1 hectare, 6 ares, and 26 centares.
2. The land originated from the Sablan family lineage. Marcelina's deceased husband, Victoriano Sablan, acquired the property through inheritance from his parents, Mariano Sablan and Maria Rita Fernandez.
3. Upon Victoriano's death in 1882, the land passed to his son, Pedro Sablan, who inherited it also by operation of law.
4. Pedro Sablan died in 1902, unmarried and without issue; thus, the land devolved to his mother, Marcelina Edroso, initiating her application for registration in her name.
5. Opposition came from Victoriano's brothers, Pablo and Basilio Sablan, Pedro's uncles, who argued that the property should either not be registered or acknowledged as reserved, with their rights noted in the registration.
6. The Court of Land Registration denied the application for registration, prompting Marcelina Edroso to appeal the decision to the Supreme Court of the Philippines.

****Issues:****

1. Whether the parcels of land should be considered property subject to legal reservation as per Article 811 of the Civil Code and thus cannot be unconditionally registered in Marcelina's name alone.
2. Whether Marcelina Edroso holds rights equivalent to absolute ownership or merely usufructuary rights due to the reservation requirement.
3. Whether the opponents' (Pablo and Basilio Sablan) rights to the reserved property were adversely affected by prescription or lacked registration under the relevant property and mortgage laws.
4. Whether there was an effective renunciation by the opponents of their rights to the reserved property.

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

1. ****Reserved Property:**** The Supreme Court held that as Pedro inherited the property without valuable consideration, it was subject to legal reservation under Article 811 of the Civil Code. Marcelina Edroso, as the ascendant inheriting from Pedro, was obliged to reserve the property for Pedro's uncles, who were within the third degree of consanguinity.
2. ****Ownership Rights:**** The Court concluded that Marcelina effectively held full ownership with conditional faculties—a condition subsequent tied to the existence of relatives (uncles) eligible for reservation rights. She maintained use, enjoyment, and disposal rights but under the stipulation that these would lapse should the uncles outlive her.
3. ****Prescription and Renunciation:**** The provision of a 90-day period for asserting claims under the Mortgage Law was interpreted not as a prescription period against filing claims for rights reserved but a limitation on requiring mortgages as guarantees. Thus, no prescription hindered the appellation of reserved rights for registration.
4. ****Registration and Renunciation:**** The Court found no explicit renunciation by Pablo and Basilio Sablan. Registration should reflect the reservation rights, identifying the uncles' contingent interests should they outlive Marcelina.

****Doctrine:****

The case reiterated the application of Article 811 of the Civil Code, establishing that an ascendant who inherits from a descendant property acquired without valuable consideration should reserve it for relatives in the line of succession within the third degree. It also discussed the balance between full ownership with conditional disposal rights tied to reservations and the rights of potential heirs under the legal reservation doctrine.

****Class Notes:****

- Legal Reservation (Article 811): A concept where property inherited without valuable consideration must be reserved for relatives within the third degree if conditions subsequent are fulfilled.
- Property Registration Jurisdiction: Reservation rights must be recorded even when the fee simple is confirmed to the reserving party.
- Rights of Use and Disposal: The person obligated to reserve retains full rights, including

alienation under conditions, countering views that restrict rights to mere usufructuary status.

- Prescription Timing: Understanding that prescription related to protective measures does not annul substantive conditional rights protected by the Civil Code.

****Historical Background:****

This case arises from colonial jurisprudence under Spanish civil law codification during American occupation of the Philippines, signaling a complex adaptation of Spanish property laws to align with emerging yet diverse local land ownership contexts. The decision highlighted tensions between legislative history, familial property preservation, and evolving land title concepts.