

Experiences of Disrespect: The Impetus for Filipino Farmers' Struggle for Land Ownership

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Abstract: *This study attempted to provide analysis of the current social conditions of the farmers in the Philippines. This is grounded on the idea that this piece of work may help in addressing the issue of landlessness and poverty among Filipino farmers. The researchers argue that the farmers, who are considered the country's top food producers, have been victims of various forms of injustice by the society, thus, the most that they could do is to struggle for the recognition of their rights and privileges as beneficiaries of agrarian reform programs by the Philippine government. Employing Honneth's theory of the struggle for recognition, the researchers showed that these experiences of disrespect drive the Filipino farmers to struggle for land ownership.*

Keywords: Recognition, Axel Honneth, Filipino Farmers, Social Justice, CARP

1. Introduction

In this paper, the researchers first discussed the social conditions of the farmers in the Philippines. This work was purposely done that the country's top food producers have been subjected to various forms of disrespect such as land grabbing, human rights abuses, exploitation, extortion and deceit by the landlords and local elites in cooperation with the government despite the enactment of numerous land reform laws, that supposedly provide protection to Filipino farmers. These experiences of injustice motivated the farmers to struggle for the recognition of their rights as rightful owners of the land they till and their privileges as co-equal members of the society. Second, the researchers briefly engaged Honneth's social critical theory of recognition and appropriated it in understanding the plight of the Filipino farmers. For Honneth, recognition in the spheres of love, right and solidarity provides the individual her basic self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem. These three forms of so-called practical relation-to-self, as for Honneth, are necessary for self-realization [1]. In this paper however; we have given more focused on the spheres of right and solidarity because it directly related to the farmers' struggle for land ownership. And third, we provided analysis of the farmers' current social conditions. We argued that the several instances of disrespect on farmers by the landlords, local elites and the government have made these peasants and their families remained landless and poor.

1.1 Objectives of the study

- 1) Discussed the current social conditions of the farmers in the Philippines; and,
- 2) Provided an analysis on how the farmers' experiences of disrespect motivated them to struggle for recognition of their rights as beneficiaries of the country's land reform program.

2. Literature Review

The presentation started with the historical background of land ownership, feudalism and land reform programs in the country. This short glimpse of history provided us the understanding on how the Filipino farmers were being neglected by the society.

The Philippines, being an agricultural country, land is very important to each and every Filipino. For Filipinos, particularly their ancestors, land was considered not just as means for survival but it is sacred, a communal property that provided them their sense of identity. However, these concepts suddenly changed with the coming of Spanish colonizers in the country in 1500s.

According to Karl Gaspar, a Filipino scholar on anthropology, in the 16th century, the Spaniards, through *encomienda* and *hacienda* systems, gave birth to feudal system in the Philippines. Because of these, the land was considered as a commodity in the market and thus, the institution of private land ownership begun [2]. Moreover, in the latter part of 18th century, various economic reforms created by the Spanish government that have caused more miseries to the life of farm workers and laborers. During this period, large tracts of land were awarded to the Spanish soldiers, Filipino *principales*, and government officials as a symbol of gratitude to their loyalty to the Spanish crown. These reforms also include paying of tributes to the government by the farmers, payment for labor services and intensification of commercial farming. Moreover, the Spanish government has institutionalized ownership of real property, and classified land ownership into three: a.) land of private citizen, which was acquired through purchase or awarded as government's grants; b.) ecclesiastical/church land, which was acquired through purchases or donation from Spanish laymen; and, c.) the royal or crown land, which belongs to the State. In principle, those land declared by the state unoccupied became the property of the state [3]. As we can see, these Spanish colonial systems of land reforms have paved the

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way for the rich people, landlords and local elites to amassed large areas of farm lands and pushed the native farmers away from the land they have been tilling for generations.

The miseries of Filipino farmers and their struggle for land ownership continues up to the American regime in 1900s when the government enacted various land laws such as Land Registration Act No. 496 of 1902, which provides land title to the claimants, Philippine Commission Act No. 178 of 1903, which provides the state the power to classify and exploit all unregistered land which has been classified as public domain for economic use, utilization of homesteaders, local elites and corporations for settlement and plantation business [4]. With these laws, massive land grabbing happened since most of the poor farmers were unable to process the titling of their agricultural lands thus, their ancestral land were awarded to the transnational corporations for plantation and economic use.

During the Commonwealth period, under the leadership of President Manuel L. Quezon, he has enacted various laws on land reform that will theoretically promote social justice and economic security of the Filipinos. These laws include the Commonwealth Act No. 178, which provided certain controls in the landlord-tenant relationships, National Rice and Corn Corporation (NARIC) in 1936, which regulated the price of rice and corn that protected the welfare of the poor tenants and consumers, and the creation of Rural Program Administration, which provided the purchase and lease of haciendas and their sale and lease to the tenants. However, these laws failed in providing social justice to poor Filipino farmers instead; the landlords and few elites used these laws to acquire large areas occupied by poor tenants [5].

Seeing the worsening issues on land conflicts, President Manuel Roxas in 1946 has enacted Republic Act No. 34, which established the 70-30 sharing agreement between the tenants and land owners, and Republic Act No. 55, which provided safeguard against illegal ejection of tenants. These laws promulgated by President Roxas were strengthened during the time of President Elpidio Quirino and created Land Settlement Development Corporation (LASEDECO) through Republic Act No. 355, that purposely to equip the farmers with agricultural machineries that will help increase their yields and provide security of tenure to farmers and their families in the land they till. Yet, like all other enacted laws on land reform, Quirino's administration failed to provide answers to problem of rural poverty and landlessness among Filipino farmers [5].

When President Ramon Magsaysay assumed office in 1953, he abolished LASEDECO and established the National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Administration (NARRA), which provides settlement to rebel returnees and landless farmers. Also, President Magsaysay passed Republic Act No. 1199 or the Agricultural Tenancy Act of 1954, which provided a system of tenancy and leasehold as well as providing security of tenure of tenants, and the creation of Court of Agrarian Relations, Land Reform Act

of 1995, and RA 821 or the creation of Agricultural Credit Cooperative Financing Administration [5].

Through the leadership of President Diosdado Macapagal, the Agrarian Reform Code of 1963 was enacted. This law has institutionalized leasehold, set retention limit to 75 hectares, invested land rights to tenant farmers, establishment of the judicial system of agrarian cases and provided marketing and credit system of services of farmer beneficiaries. Like President Macapagal, the hope of uplifting the economic status of Filipino farmers was one of the goals of Marcos presidency. In fact, President Ferdinand Marcos, declared the country under land reform program by the virtue of Presidential Decree (PD) No. 27 and was only limited to tenanted rice and corn lands. However, during martial law, the decree was used for counter-insurgency measures than improving the social economic status of the farmers [6].

After martial law, the Philippine constitution was ratified under the leadership of President Corazon Aquino. The 1987 constitution, which is used up to the present, has provided in Section 21, Article II, which states that "the State shall promote comprehensive rural development and agrarian reform". This constitutional mandate has provided the basis for the enactment of Republic Act No. 6657 or the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL) in 1988, which instituted a Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) that promotes social justice to farmers and farm workers which was strengthened through a Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms (CARPER) Law in 2009.

However, despite these agrarian reform laws and programs by the Philippine government, the farmers, who are supposed to be its primary beneficiaries, are always in the losing end. As we can see, up to this present time, thousands of farmers are still landless and poor. In fact, according to the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), the agriculture sector has the highest poverty incidence in 2012. Moreover, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) noted that among the nine basic sectors in the country, Filipino farmers are posted the second highest poverty incidence in 2014 [7]. PIDS and PSA noted that the high poverty incidence among farmers is caused by low family income and inability to acquire basic amenities and deprivation from availing social services of the government [8].

Landlessness is another problem among thousands of Filipino farmers today. In fact, in a report made by Asian Development Bank (ADB) showed that 68% of Filipinos who are working in the agriculture sector are still landless while only 3% of these farm workers received land through CARP. ADB noted that there are many factors affecting the failure of CARP in the Philippines such as lack of funds, opposition from landlord-dominated congress, legal issues and resistance from the landlords and local elites, and poor performance of Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) in implementing the CARP [9]. Moreover, in the 2016 report of Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) shows from 1972 to 2015, there was a total of 4.72 million hectares out of 5.42 million hectares

of agricultural land were awarded to landless farmers and farmworkers. This means that in 43 years of implementation of comprehensive land reform in the Philippines, only 87 % are accomplished [10]. The problem of landlessness makes the Filipino farmers and their families classified as illegal settlers on the land they till for generations. Because of fear of losing his job and being ejected in the farm, the farmworkers work on the conditions that favor the landlord. As a result, several abuses were committed by the landlord against the farmworkers.

Moreover, land grabbing and militarization in the farmlands, particularly in Southern part of the country have been massive. For instance, the implementation of the Revised Forestry Reform Code of the Philippines in 1975 and the National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 1995, where huge areas claimed by the native farmers as part of their ancestral domain were forcibly taken by the local elites and corporations, making these areas as grounds for industrial plantation and other economic use. In some parts of the country, these big corporations used these land reform laws and private army to grab the ancestral land of the natives. Because of these, thousands of native farmers and their families were greatly displaced and those community leaders who opposed the project were threatened to die [11].

The aforementioned narratives clearly show that despite various agrarian reform laws and land reform programs in the country, the lives of the Filipino farmers remain miserable. In fact, some of these land reform laws were used by the landlords and elites to illegally acquire the land of the poor farmers. Poverty, landlessness, massive land grabbing, militarization and other forms of disrespect only prove that the society is doing injustice to Filipino farmers. Thus, these experiences of injustice pushed these farmers and farmworkers to struggle for their rights and privileges as co-equal members of the society.

3. Research Methodology

In the first phase, this study made use of hermeneutic and descriptive methods in discussing the current social conditions of farmers in the Philippines. In the second phase, actual interviews were conducted to some farmers in order to account their actual experiences of injustice and the manner they struggle for recognition. And lastly, critical-analytic method was employed in the application of Honneth's theory of recognition to the farmers' struggle for land ownership.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Honneth's Theory of Recognition

In this section, we will briefly sketched Honneth's theory of recognition and appropriated it to the Filipino farmers' struggle for land ownership. As mentioned earlier, we have given more focus on his spheres of right and solidarity since they directly affects the struggle of the farmers.

Axel Honneth is a leading critical theorist in the 20th century and the current director of the Institute for Social Research, otherwise known as the Frankfurt School. In his book entitled *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*, Honneth argued that self-realization, that is as a free and individuated person, is dependent on the development of her self-confidence, self-respect, and self-esteem. These three forms of so-called practical relation-to-self are gained through recognition in the spheres of love, right and solidarity. For Honneth, the denial of the individual's demands for recognition causes social sufferings and experiences of injustice. These feelings of injustice for Honneth simply prove that the society is doing something unjust to its people [12]. Thus, for Honneth, it is by way of giving the full recognition of the individuals' deep-seated claims and expectations that one is able to gain her autonomy.

Honneth argues that it is innate to all human persons the need for recognition and sense of approval from the other people particularly in the spheres of love, right and solidarity. These means, that in the society, each should give respect to everyone's rights as free, rational and as full-fledged member of the society. However, as we can see, various individuals particularly those who belong in peasant groups, the farmers in particular, have seen themselves treated unjustly by the society and thus, they feel insulted, angered and disappointed. These negative feelings brought them to struggle for recognition.

2.2 Cases of Disrespect to Filipino Farmers in the Philippines and their struggle for land ownership

Let us take a look at the case of Hacienda Luisita farmers from the northern part of the Philippines. In 1957, Jose "Pepe" Cojuangco Sr., one of the heirs of Pedro Cojuangco and was the father of the late former President Corazon "Cory" Cojuangco Aquino, took control of the Hacienda Luisita and the Central Azucarera de Tarlac. Mr. Cojuangco acquired the property through a loan from the Manufacturer's Trust Company of New York City for a 10-year contract. The Central Bank of the Philippines (CBP) and Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) approved a \$2.1 million loan under the condition that the said agricultural lands shall be distributed to the Filipino farmers after the 10-year loan contract[13]. However, after the 10 years, the Cojuangco-Aquino family failed to distribute the land to the Hacienda Luisita farmers and opted for a stock distribution option (SDO).

In 1999, the Cojuangcos-Aquinos together with Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) and local government of Tarlac obliged the farmers to choose between SDO and land distribution through a secret balloting. But because of Cojuangco-Aquino family's powerful clout in the government and in military, SDO prevails over land distribution.

Since SDO won, the Cojuangco-Aquino family got the 70percent shares of stocks while only 30percent goes to the farmers [13]. For these reasons, land disputes between the Cojuangco-Aquino Family and the Hacienda Luisita farmer's has started. The farmers felt that the landlords

have cheated them during the sample balloting where SDO wins. Because of this, the Hacienda Luisita farmers strongly protested and called for the revocation of SDO and the immediate distribution of agricultural lands to the farmers. However, their protests resulted in several human rights abuses such as massacre, assassination of tenants, and series of deaths of notable peasant farmers. It is likewise noted that in 1987, hundreds of Hacienda Luisita farmers, together with other farmers' group from all over the country marched to Mendiola, Manila to call for genuine land reform and the distribution of huge land holdings. Yet their protests resulted to the bloody Mendiola massacre where 13 famers including those from Hacienda Luisita were allegedly killed by the police forces [13].

Few years later, another case of extra judicial killings of Hacienda Luisita farmers happened during a farmers' rally in Tarlacon November 6, 2004. During the bloody rally, which was famously called as Hacienda Luisita Massacre, there were 7 Hacienda Luisita farmers died, more or less 121 farmers got injured, and 32 farmworkers suffered gun wounds [13].

Up to the present time, the struggle of Hacienda Luisita farmers to acquire the piece of land, being a true land beneficiary continues. However, the Cojuangco-Aquino family stood their ground, use their powerful machineries and militarization in order to retain the huge agricultural land as their family business. Because of these, the farmers are still considered illegal settlers in the land where they rightfully owned. Still, they work as ordinary workers receiving a low income and lower share of stocks. Despite of this, the farmers are still hopeful that one day, they will be acknowledged as the rightful owners of the Hacienda and receive their dream land titles.

The case of Sumilao farmers from southern Philippines is another case of injustice to Filipino farmers. According to UN Human Rights Commission, in 1940s, the Angeles Family comes in and forcibly removing the Higaonon tribe farmers from their sacred land. The 243 hectare ancestral land of Higaonon tribe farmers was converted by the Angeles Family into cattle ranch. During 1970s, the ancestral land was divided between two land owners namely, Salvador Carlos with 99 hectares and Norberto Quisumbing with 144 hectares [14]. Carlos ownership of land is not in questions but the land owned by the Quisumbings was in controversy because most of the area belongs to the ancestral domain claim of the Higaonon farmers. However, in 1984, the one-hundred forty-four hectares land owned by the Quisumbing family was rented by Del Monte Philippines, Inc. (DMPI) with a 10-year contract. This means that the Higaonon tribe farmers work as laborers for Quisumbing Family and later to DMPI. [14]

During the beginning of implementation of Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL) in 1988, the 144 hectare ancestral land was distributed to 137 Higaonon tribe farmers, which ultimately leads to the issuance of the Certificate of Land Ownership Award (CLOA) to the Higaonon farmers. However, no Certificate of Land Titles (CLT) was given to the farmers.

Few years later, when the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) was fully implemented, registered land owner Norberto Quisumbing opposed the government plan to put his land under CARP and took measures that his land be converted from agricultural to industrial or institutional area. In fact, in 1994, the Sanguniang Bayan of Sumilao passed a municipal Resolution No. 24, converting the Quisumbing's land from agricultural into an industrial or institutional area. This municipal resolution was then affirmed by the Sanguniang Panlalawigan of Bukidnon allowing them for reclassification of 144 agricultural lands into industrial or institutional area. Thus, in 1996, the former executive secretary Ruben Torres approved Quisumbing's application for land conversion. Because of the said approval on land conversion, the Certificate of Landownership (CLOA) issued to the Sumilao farmers is thereby cancelled and thus, the tribe is stripped of their rights on their ancestral land [15].

For this reason, in the following year, the Sumilao tribe farmers made a peaceful protest against the Quisumbing family through series of hunger strikes for 28 days outside the gates of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) offices in the cities of Quezon and Cagayan de Oro. This peaceful protest caught the attention of the public, including national personalities such as the late Cardinal Sin of the Catholic Church, and the other members of the House of Representatives and other legislative bodies to investigate the issue [16].

Because of massive public pressure, then President Fidel V. Ramos decided to cancel the decision of Secretary Robin Torres and issued a so called 'win-win resolution' on the issue by awarding the 100 hectares of the land to the Sumilao tribe farmers, while the 44 hectares to Norberto Quisumbing. For the Higaonon tribe farmers, the president's decision was a success of their long history of struggle to have legal rights on their ancestral land. However, unexpectedly, Norberto Quisumbing filed a petition to the Supreme Court of the Philippines to cancel the compromise agreement or the 'win-win resolution' made by the office of the president due to legal technicalities. The Supreme Court of the Philippines decided in favour of the Quisumbings [16].

In 2002 Norberto Quisumbing has once more cheated the Sumilao farmers by selling the 144 ancestral lands to San Miguel Foods Inc. owned by businessman Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. which he converted it into livestock farm. On December 17, 2007 however, former president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo cancelled the conversion order on the disputed 144 hectare ancestral land in Sumilao and acknowledge the 55 members of Higaonon tribe farmers as rightful owners of the land. However, the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) was too slow to award to install the farmer-beneficiaries on the land [17].

Because of these instances of injustice, the Sumilao farmers once again staged a protest by walking 1,700 kilometers for two months from Bukidnon to Metro Manila which was tagged as 'Walk for Justice' purposely to show that they are the rightful owners of their ancestral

land. Their protest captured wide media attention and support from Non-Government Organization (NGO), which later forced San Miguel Corporation (SMC) to talk the matters with the Higaonon tribe farmers for a compromise. On March 29, 2008 where a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was signed between Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), San Miguel Corporation (SMC), and Higaonon tribe farmers and the office of the President. As stated in the MOA, the SMC pledge to give a total of 144 hectares of Ancestral land to the Higaonon tribe farmers. The San Miguel Corporation (SMC) promised to release 50 hectares of its property and the remaining 94 hectares outside the disputed estate for the distribution to the Higaonon tribe farmers [17].

In September of the same year, the Higaonon tribe farmers decided to agree DAR's offer of 94 hectares of land, the land is located 10-15 kilometers away from their home in San. Vicente, Sumilao. The DAR had advised them to accept the offer since if they refuse the land would be occupied by another famers beneficiaries. The Higaonon tribe farmers had no choice but to say yes to the offer. However, on November 24, 2009, the Higaonon tribe farmers were frustrated because out of 94 hectares of land promised by SMC, only 15 hectares of land are awarded to them. According to DAR, the Certificate of Land Ownership (CLOA) for the remaining 79 hectares of land could not yet be processed because the department was still waiting for the certification from the Land Registration Authority (LRA) in Manila and that processing takes for a long period of time [17].

The Sumilao farmers continue to fight for their rights over their lands. Once again, on February 8, 2010, they decided to camp in front of the San Miguel Hog farm to show their disagreements on the delays in the awarding of the beneficiaries and distribution of land. Within that day, DAR Regional Director Felix Agujob with the presence of San Miguel Corporation's legal counsel Atty. Fred Peñaflores promised to the Higaonon tribe farmers that they would install the lands on or before March 29, 2010. However, when March 29 came there was no awarding of land title to farmer-beneficiaries because Atty. Peñaflores failed to appear [17].

Finally, On April 16, 2010 the awarding ceremony was held near the San Miguel Hog Farm in Sumilao, Bukidnon. President Francis Alejo III the President of San Miguel Foods, Incorporated has turned-over the title of 50 hectares of land and was officially given to the Higaonon tribe farmers, while the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) Regional Director Agujob awarded the CLOA covering a total 15 hectares outside the disputed land. After the awarding the Higaonon tribe farmers went to the 15 hectare of land in Sitio Larok, Barangay Kisolon Sumilao. The Higaonon tribe farmers, however, were shocked and frustrated to know that land was not only leased by Del Monte Philippines, Inc. (DMCI), but was also planted by pineapple. The Higaonon tribe farmers feeling irritated and cheated and they uprooted the pineapples and replace it into cassava.

Because of this, the Del Monte Philippines Inc. threatens the Sumilao Farmers and filed a case against them for destroying the Del Monte crops. Through the Chairperson of the PANAW-Sumilao Mapalad Multipurpose Cooperative (PANAW-Sumilao MPC) and the paralegal for the Sumilao farmers have strongly defended the rights of the farmers against the case. The Sumilao farmers have the right to do what they want because they are the actual owner of land [18].

Another case of disrespect to Filipino farmers happened in Sanson Estate, Sara, Iloilo located at the western part of the Philippines. Don Alfredo Araneta Sanson, was the owner of the hacienda. According to Jake Ledesma, an amateur researcher on farmers' sufferings in Sara, Alfredo Sanson was a good man and was appreciated by the locals because of his kindness. In fact, Ledesma argues that Don Alfredo allows the farmworkers to stay in his land for a long period of time without any advance payment or paying any rent.

Moreover, Don Alfredo has divided his 437.13 hectares of lands to his registered tenants and advised them to proceed with the application of Certificate of Land Ownership to the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR). However, the unfortunate death of the 'old man' has discontinued the processing of the CLOA application.

Mr. Jex Ledesma, one of the overseers of the Sanson Estate, argues that they have started processing the CLOA in 1992 and registered their names as beneficiaries for land ownership. After having registered in DAR, Mr. Ledesma noted that George Sanson, one of the sons of the old man, told him to let the owners take charge of the distribution of land to the tenants so that it will take a short process. Thus, Mr. Ledesma hasn't proceeded with the processing of CLOA because of his trust to the landowner.

However, according to Rodrigo Basa, Municipal Agrarian Reform Officer (MARO), the Hacienda of Sanson Estate with a total area of 427.31 was voluntarily offered to sell by the Landowner in 1992. Two years later, a memorandum of valuation was issued by the Land Bank of the Philippines. Moreover, Basa noted that in since 1995 to 2012, the land was officially registered for Collective Certificate of Land Ownership Award (CCLOA), which paves the way to the issuance of writ of Installation on July 27, 2012 [19].

The DAR proceeded with the awarding of land titles to has already awarded to 348 agrarian reform beneficiaries [19]. However, Mr. Ledesma and his group questioned the actions of DAR since most of these recipients are not the true beneficiary of Sanson Estate since they are not working in Hacienda as a laborer or engage in actual tillage. For this reason, the Mr. Ledesma and his group, being the true beneficiaries, have filed a petition for cancellation of the CLOAS, claiming that they were not included in the DAR list of beneficiaries because the MARO and DAR have connived to manipulate the list. At present, there are still more than 100 local famers and farmworkers in Sara, Iloilo who have not received their land titles including Mr. Ledesma and his group. For Mr.

Ledesma, they will continue to fight for land ownership since they are the rightful owners of the said land.

The aforementioned discussion showed that the farmers' experiences of injustice are brought by society's indifference on the peasants' rights as co-equal members of the Philippine society. Because of these, the farmers felt frustrated, angered and disappointed thus, they 'come together', form group and collectively struggle for the recognition of their rights as rightful owners of the agricultural land. The coming up together of afflicted individuals as for Honneth is a form of solidarity. In solidarity, each member feels the comfort or sympathy of each other and thus, they recognize the value of their fellow members [20]. This is same with farmers experience when they struggle as a group wherein they feel the support and understands each other, and since they have common negative experiences, they can openly share their thoughts, ideas and other personal matters affecting them.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

As we can see, the poverty, landlessness, land grabbing and militarization are empirical proofs that the society is indeed doing something unjust to these peasants. It is an obvious fact that the land reform laws and land reform programs, which are supposedly to protect the welfare of the farmers and help them improve their socio-economic status, were used by the landlords and local elites to seize large tracts of land occupied by the poor farmers. As a result, the Filipino farmers are greatly marginalized and disenfranchised. For this reason, it is a normative way for the farmers to struggle for the recognition of deep-seated claims and expectations; that is to have a land which they can call their own.

It is believed that Filipino farmers are considered the top food producers of the country. They provide food for every Filipino family yet, they themselves have nothing to eat on their table. It is then important that the society should recognize the role, rights and privileges of the farmers by giving them what they truly deserve, not just as farmworkers but as full-fledged citizens of the Philippine society.

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