

Theme 3

Food, Forests, and Farmers *Finding Sustainable Pathways for the Future*



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ABSTRACT

An Exploration of Structural Injustice through the System of Smallholder Corn Farming in the Upper Pulangi

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In this chapter, I present a discussion and analysis of the fieldwork I conducted in Bukidnon, among small-scale farmers and corn traders and financiers. Aside from presenting my methodology and fieldwork results, I also show how the farmers and financiers mapped their relationships with each other and how the small farmers were disadvantaged not only by limited economic capital, but by cultural and social capital as well. I further argue that the situation of HYV corn farming in the area, despite its legal nature, is a structure of injustice for which the small farmers see very little alternatives. From the sociology of agriculture, I borrow the concept of expropriation to describe their situation—one in which legal means/policies deprive farmers of choice and market power, for the sake of biotech companies' profits, while allowing responsibility for any negative consequences to be diffused through structure. I introduce here the idea that with structural injustice it is difficult to pinpoint who is responsible for reducing injustice/effecting change towards justice.

About the Author

Pamela Joy (PJ) Mariano Capistrano is a PhD candidate in philosophy at the Department of Sciences, Philosophies, and Societies, Université de Namur, Belgium, and an Instructor at Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines. Her field research is supported by the Academie de Recherche et d'Enseignement Supérieure (ARES), the Institute of Environmental Science and Social Change, Ateneo de Manila University, and is linked to the Socio-Economic Drivers of Land-Use Change in the Uplands (LUCID) Project. Her research interests include the capability approach, theories of justice and development, feminist approaches, and the work of Amartya Sen and Iris Marion Young. She is also, in no particular order of importance: a mother to a feisty seven year old, married to an economist, an avid reader of fiction, and a practitioner of bokashi composting.