

Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints

Ateneo de Manila University · Loyola Heights, Quezon City · 1108 Philippines

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Filomeno V. Aguilar Jr.

Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints
vol. 67 no. 3–4 (2019): 375–410

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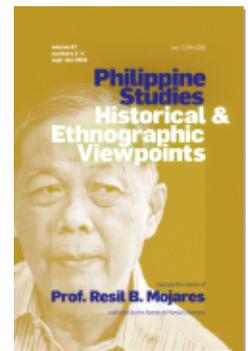
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Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints, Volume 67,
Numbers 3-4, September-December 2019, pp. 375-410 (Article)

Published by Ateneo de Manila University

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/phs.2019.0021>



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FILOMENO V. AGUILAR JR.

Gregorio Sancianco, Colonial Tribute, and Social Identities On the Cusp of Filipino Nationalist Consciousness

Gregorio Sancianco, the author of *El Progreso de Filipinas* (1881), is an ephemeral figure in Philippine history. Although somewhat known for his defense of the native against charges of indolence, Sancianco advanced a penetrating critique of colonial tribute that generally has been ignored but to which this article draws attention. Sancianco argued that tribute did not only negate the principle of assimilation, but it also divided the native population and provoked social antagonisms. The tribute's abolition in 1884 rendered Sancianco's historical position as transitional, straddling the creole nationalism of the 1860s and the *ilustrados'* colonial nationalism of the 1880s. Sancianco's critique of tribute anticipated nationalist consciousness.

KEYWORDS: TRIBUTE • IDENTITY • SPANISH COLONIALISM • RACISM • NATIONALISM

Gregorio Sancierco is an ephemeral figure in Philippine history. He usually gets passing mention for his defense of the native against charges of indolence. This defense became well known, thanks to José Rizal (1996a), who began his 1890 essay, “Sobre la indolencia de los filipinos,” by referencing Sancierco (1881, 237), who had refuted the “highly vexatious” allegations about native indolence in an appendix to his *El Progreso de Filipinas*, published in Madrid in 1881.¹ Sancierco (*ibid.*, 223–27) pointed out that economic production in selected provinces and the country’s overall export of primary commodities were solid proof that natives had been hard at work, and therefore indolence did not exist. He also cited extracts from a number of reports that attested to the economic rationality of natives who migrated in response to opportunities. The natives would work, he argued, if they were assured of gain from the exertion of their labor and if they could call upon liberal laws (*ibid.*, 227–37). Rizal (1996a, 322) acknowledged Sancierco’s rationalistic argument, but differed from it by proposing that, because “serious and disinterested persons” had adduced evidence contrary to Sancierco’s, it became “appropriate to study this question at its root, without scorn or sensitivities, without preconceptions, without pessimisms.” In an inculpatory line of reasoning, Rizal (*ibid.*) admitted the existence of indolence but asserted that ultimately the colonizers were to blame for this state of affairs.

As Emmanuel de Dios (2013, 69–70) puts it, Sancierco’s writing “enjoys a largely reflected glory as the reference and starting point for a more famous polemic on this same theme [of indolence], written almost a decade later by the nation’s foremost hero.” In fact, Rizal would seem to have constrained Sancierco’s reputation by brushing aside the latter’s defense of the native. However, Sancierco’s best legacy to Philippine historiography rests not on his argument against indolence but on his critique of tribute, which has been underappreciated and on which this article focuses.

Sancierco and the Juventud Escolar Liberal

By the time Rizal’s essay on indolence began to be serialized in *La Solidaridad* in 1890, Sancierco had returned to the Philippines permanently. He arrived in the homeland in January 1884, some seven years after he had obtained his doctorate degree as a 25-year-old—the first native to have done so—in civil and canon laws from the Universidad Central de Madrid (*ibid.*, 72). Before

his return to the Philippines, he was editor of *El Demócrata* (López Jaena 1951, 123, 126; 1974, 114, 117).

On 11 May 1884 Sancianco visited San Isidro, the capital of Nueva Ecija province, to meet the Spanish provincial governor, who had been his classmate and friend in Spain. Over lunch with the governor he was arrested by the Guardia Civil, ending up in prison allegedly for complicity in the uprising staged on the previous day by Andres Novicio in Santa Maria de Tayug in neighboring Pangasinan province (Buencamino 1969, 321; Corpuz 2006, 133). Although in Madrid the Ultramar passed off the incident as a disturbance caused by bandits, Graciano López Jaena (1951, 121–24; 1974, 113–15) reported that the local notables (*principalía*) of Tayug had complained of harassment because of their failure to pay the tribute on time, but the provincial commissioner to whom they had presented their plight ordered their arrest, ramifying in the apprehension of thousands in places beyond Pangasinan, such as Manila and Nueva Ecija, where Sancianco was seized.

Sancianco ended up in the same cell where Felipe Buencamino had been locked up since the previous day; they were soon transported to Lingayen, capital of Pangasinan, to stand trial in a military court, along with other prisoners (Buencamino 1969, 321–22; Corpuz 2006, 133).

Sancianco had known Buencamino since at least 1868 as the leader of La Juventud Escolar Liberal (The Liberal Student Youth), whose members included Sancianco, Paciano Mercado Rizal, and other students of the University of Santo Tomas (UST) (Artigas 1996, 28 n. 1; 29–31 n. 3). It was the year of the Glorious Revolution in Spain, which deposed Queen Isabela II and caused much excitement in some social circles in the Philippines (Buencamino 1969, 316–17). The students' group was part of a loose network of reformers closely associated with the secularization movement within the Catholic Church (Schumacher 2006, 273–74), whose leading light was Fr. Pedro Peláez, who died unexpectedly in the earthquake of 1863 and was succeeded by Fr. José Burgos (Blanco 2010; Schumacher 1999). Out of this movement had emerged a creole nationalism that bonded Spaniards born in the Philippines—the original *filipinos*—with some educated natives, mainly Chinese mestizos; they began to see themselves as sons of the country (*hijos del país*) under the label “LOS FILIPINOS,” which appeared as the collective signature in a manifesto in support of the secular clergy published in Madrid in 1864 (Schumacher 2006, esp. 168–209, 293–95; Rafael 2006, 308–10). Leaders

associated with the secularization movement, particularly Burgos, along with Frs. Mariano Gómez and Jacinto Zamora, took the brunt of the colonial state's suppression of the 1872 Cavite Revolt (Artigas 1996, 34–35; Corpuz 2006, 6; Manuel 1970, 69–70; Schumacher 2011). The harrowing events of 1872 prompted Sancianco to leave the Philippines and study in Madrid (Artigas 1996, 30 n. 3; Manuel 1970, 316), where he obtained his doctorate degree in 1877.

Sancianco's arrest for alleged involvement in the Tayug uprising of 1884 was not surprising. Although Sancianco had nothing to do with it according to Buencamino (1969, 321), the former would have been tagged with the frightening label of *filibustero* (subversive) for his involvement in La Juventud Escolar Liberal, which had been accused of staging a riot in 1869. This event resulted in Buencamino's (ibid., 318–19) arrest and imprisonment for eleven months.² Buencamino (ibid., 319) recalled that, in another event held in 1869, students joined a group of reformers who sang a hymn that ended with the line, “Because the son of a lion is also a lion”; which meant to say that the Spaniards in the Philippines were the same as those in the peninsula, and should, therefore, have the same rights.”³ The aphorism was an expression of creole nationalism. However, Sancianco insisted that the protest of La Juventud Escolar Liberal was concerned mainly with university affairs. In *El Progreso* he described the student action as “entirely harmless” (enteramente inofensivos) (Sancianco 1881, 110). Sancianco (ibid.) asserted that the students, who were 16 to 23 years of age, expressed their “simple aspiration, not subversive, but reasonable and well-founded, just and lawful” (una mera pretensión, nada subversiva, antes razonable y fundada, justa y legal). The students, he claimed, did not disturb the university's peace and order; there were no shouts or interruption of classes nor was there a public demonstration.⁴ However, because it targeted a dominant friar order, the students' action was deeply political.

The widespread arrests in connection with the May 1884 Tayug uprising, according to Buencamino (1969, 322), were staged by Dominican friars, who “simulated the insurrection” at Tayug. However, a prisoner who was tortured to extract a confession reportedly implicated ingeniously, if mischievously, several Spaniards in Manila, including the archbishop; consequently, the authorities in Manila had to assume jurisdiction over the case, which eventually led to the dismissal of charges against most of the accused (ibid., 323–24). In September 1884 Sancianco was released from detention (Corpuz 2006, 134; Manuel 1970, 316). In 1887 he became

justice of the peace in Cabanatuan, Nueva Ecija, but a disagreement with the Spanish parish priest led to his resignation (Manuel 1970, 316; De Dios 2013, 72). He joined the Manila law firm of Ambrosio Rianzares Bautista, who had been active in the reform movement of the 1860s but subsequently learned to be cautious to avoid further persecution (Buencamino 1969, 326). It was probably while Sancianco was affiliated with this law firm that Rizal cited him in the essay on indolence. Sancianco then disappears from the record. There is no word about his activities during the revolutionary period, but he died in Santo Domingo, Nueva Ecija, on 17 November 1897 (Manuel 1970, 316; De Dios 2013, 73).⁵ He was 45.

Intergenerational Link

Born on 7 March 1852 in Malabon (making him nine years older than Rizal), Sancianco represented a direct link between the generation of the 1860s and the generation of the Europe-based *ilustrados* (literally, the enlightened ones) of the Propaganda Movement.⁶ Sancianco occupied a unique historical location between the creole nationalism of the 1860s, which the colonial state was determined to crush in 1872, and the colonial nationalism that crystallized among the *ilustrados* in the 1880s.

Horacio de la Costa (1967, 353) recognized Sancianco as “one of the earliest of [the] propagandists,” while Nick Joaquin (2005, 39) enthroned him as “*the* epiphany that starts the Propaganda.” But it was John Schumacher (1997, 25, 29) who, in the early 1970s, accurately perceived Sancianco’s intermediate location, memorializing *El Progreso* as “the first serious study by a Filipino,” which “anticipate[d] most of the principal themes of the later Filipino nationalist campaign: administrative reform, eradication of corruption in the government, recognition of Filipino rights as loyal Spaniards, extension of Spanish law to the Philippines, curtailment of the excessive power of the friars in the life of the country, and assertion of the dignity of the Filipino.” At the same time, Schumacher (*ibid.*, 27) “connected him with the Philippine reform movement of 1869–72,” particularly the reform initiatives of Gov. Gen. Carlos Maria de la Torre. Crucially, Sancianco passed on the principle of assimilation—the Philippines being a Spanish province and entitled to the same rights as the Peninsula—to the Propaganda Movement of the 1880s.

Later analysts have focused on Sancianco’s economic ideas. Summarizing Sancianco’s “blueprint” for economic growth, Aurora Roxas-

Lim (1998, 94–95) extolled him for “writing a detailed study in taxation, land tenure, and revenue system” that “exposed the unjust and iniquitous taxation based on race.” De Dios (2013, 70, 78) hailed Sancianco as “an early advocate of presumptive taxation” in the form of a liberal and modern poll tax that “conformed with the same maxims of taxation enunciated by Adam Smith which liberal economists of the time valued.” Sancianco knew that taxation should be based on net income; however, because of “asymmetric information between revenue assessors and taxpayers,” his pragmatic and “precocious” proposal settled on an “imperfect and second-best” solution, a regressive system that nonetheless “avoided the administrative and information requirements of liberal schemes based on first-best principles” (*ibid.*, 79, 82, 88).

Although De Dios has applied the economist’s lens in analyzing Sancianco’s proposed taxation system and other scholars have noted Sancianco’s suggestion to abolish the tribute, there is a level of complexity in Sancianco’s social analysis of the extant tribute system that this article hopes to bring to light. As argued here, the tribute was the basis of Sancianco’s critique of the Spanish colonial state and Madrid’s failure to implement assimilation, but we need to appreciate the origins of this principle in the short-lived Cádiz Constitution of 1812. More importantly, among the *ilustrados*, only Sancianco articulated the tribute’s capacity to create internal racial divisions within native society, which this article seeks to explain. The divisiveness of the tribute-based social classification system hampered assimilation and obstructed the formation of a national community. The abolition of the tribute in 1884, therefore, had far-reaching consequences, enabling Rizal and other *ilustrados* to move on from the social identities and realities that Sancianco had to confront, positioning them to look to the future rather than the past. When he wrote his book, Sancianco was still caught in the tribute system, putting him at the juncture between two generations and two types of emergent nationalist consciousness.

Tribute as Vassalage

Sancianco (1881, 101) denounced the tribute as a form of ancient vassalage.⁷ The tribute, he said, had its origins in “governments by force, centuries of barbarism, and right of conquest” (*los gobiernos de la fuerza, siglos de barbarie y derecho de conquista*); it was an obligatory and unavoidable impost, regardless of one’s capacity to pay. “The tribute had no justification

other than force: it was imposed by force, was complied with by means of force, and terminated also by force” (el tributo no tenía más razón de ser que la fuerza: se imponía por la fuerza, se cumplía con medios de fuerza y acababa también por la fuerza) (ibid.). Given its association with brute force and barbarism, Sancianco (ibid., 100–101) argued that “The tribute bears a significance that modern law condemns from the moment it grants freedom to the citizenry and the exclusive use of their rights and possessions” (El tributo tiene una significación que el derecho moderno condena desde el momento que otorga al ciudadano la libertad y exclusivo uso de sus facultades y bienes). Sancianco implied that the Philippines was to be governed no longer by force of conquest nor by means of an absolutist state but by methods consistent with the modern age of the nineteenth century. Drawing on a liberal notion of the state, one bound by certain limits, Sancianco (ibid., 101) asserted, “The state, unlike previously attributed to it, is no longer absolute owner of the life and property of the persons subject under its authority” (El estado no es ya, como antes se le atribuía, dueño absoluto de la vida y hacienda de las personas sometidas bajo su acción).

The outmodedness of tribute and its incompatibility with the modern state was later echoed by López Jaena (1951, 71–77; 1974, 67–72) in an article that appeared in *Los Dos Mundos* in mid-1883 (Schumacher 1997, 42–43). Repeating Sancianco’s assertion that tribute was imposed by force and that it had become incompatible with the “modern” age of the nineteenth century, López Jaena (1951, 72) appealed to the Ultramar minister Gaspar Núñez de Arce to end the tribute system in the Philippines, just as the minister had terminated slavery in Cuba.⁸ Contrary to modern citizenship, the tribute, López Jaena (ibid., 73) asserted, was akin to slavery for “it consumes [the native’s] rights of citizenship; it oppresses him with burdens and duties without rights, which is equivalent to regarding him as a slave disguised under a different name” (absorbe sus derechos de ciudadanía; le oprime con cargas y deberes sin derechos, lo cual viene a ser igual a considerarle esclavo disfrazado bajo diferente nombre). The tribute signified that the Philippines was treated not as a Spanish province, but as “vassal populations, feudal peoples” (pueblos vasallos, pueblos feudales) (ibid., 74).

López Jaena (ibid.) asserted that the tribute drove a wedge between natives and Spaniards, “a dividing line, a deleterious and demoralizing line between the European and [Spanish] peninsular race and the natives or Indochinese [sic]: the former elevated as the ruling class exempt from all

taxes, and the latter as the dominated, the enslaved and tribute-paying” (una línea divisoria, línea deletérea y desmoralizadora entre la raza europea y peninsular, y la indígena o indochina: la primera, elevando como a señora dominadora exenta de toda contribución, y la segunda como dominada, esclava y tributaria). Indeed, only natives paid tribute. Exempted were Spanish, Europeans, and Spanish mestizos—descent reckoned, in the case of the last category, through the paternal side (Sancianco 1881, 6–7).⁹

In addition to the tribute, natives were required to render forced labor (*polos y servicios*) amounting to forty days each year, which the well-off could redeem through a cash payment. Natives also had to pay a tithe, which was later incorporated into the tribute, and to contribute to the community chest (*caja de comunidad*), exactions from which Spaniards and their descendants were exempt (Robles 1969, 72–73). Natives also had to pay a tax called *sanctorum* to support church expenses, although “Spanish mestizos were later required to pay twice the amount” (*ibid.*, 73). However, Spaniards and the Spanish friar orders had to pay the *diezmos prediales*, or tithes on land, an impost that “consisted of one-tenth of the liquid value realized from the products of farm lands, particularly large estates” (*ibid.*, 271)—which natives did not have to pay except those who tilled or leased land in the monastic estates. Contrary to López Jaena, the Spanish and Spanish mestizos did pay some taxes, but not the tribute; they were also exempt from forced labor. Thus, the tribute was symbolic of the imperial divide between colonizer and colonized.

The Tribute System and Social Categories

The unit of tribute was a native couple, consisting of husband and wife; thus, a married couple was said to pay a full tribute (*un tributo entero*). The rules changed in the course of Spanish rule. From 1851 onward, a native who was at least 16 years of age and who was no longer dependent on the family was required to pay tribute; however, from 18 years of age, a native had to pay tribute, whether or not the person remained dependent on the family. Single individuals, both male and female, paid a half tribute (*medio tributo*). Some groups were granted exemption from tribute and were classified as *reservado*, including those 60 years of age and older (Plehn 1901, 685–87; Robles 1969, 72).¹⁰

The tribute was payable in money or in kind, and it must be paid in the pueblos where natives resided and were registered as tribute payers. The

village chiefs (*cabezas de barangay*) were the actual tribute gatherers, but they had to remit the collection to the municipal captain (*gobernadorcillo*) and eventually to the Spanish provincial governor (*alcalde mayor*). These local officials were entitled to a percentage share of the tribute collections: after 1852, cabezas received 5 percent; municipal captains, 1.5 percent; and provincial governors, 2 percent (Cruikshank 2014, 32). A tax list (*padrón de tasas*) was made every second year, containing the names, ages, and occupations of tribute payers; the list had to be concurred in by the parish priest (Plehn 1901, 688).

If the cabezas did not turn in the full amount of the tribute, they could be imprisoned and their assets confiscated. Errors in tribute lists as well as collections below target often compelled cabezas—rather than risk sanctions—to pay from their own pockets the tribute of deceased taxpayers and those who had disappeared from the locality (Huetz de Lempes 2006, 75–76). A manual for cabezas was introduced in 1873 to assist them with their duties and the computation of tribute and other collectibles (Robles 1969, 239–42). However, with the appointment in 1863 of inspectors of labor-exemption fees, which formed “the financial base of town and village governments,” “native officials had to be more careful with their ‘caidas’ or misappropriations—however necessary these might have been for the proper functioning of town and village governments, lest these be discovered and the officials punished,” which then “intensified the plight of native officials who were not wealthy enough to bear the financial burdens of their task, and tended to promote further corruption in some other respects” (*ibid.*, 239–40). This burden persisted even after a new system of poll tax was instituted in 1884 (Inarejos 2015, 80–92)—an issue that vexed the *ilustrados* (*La Solidaridad* 1996b; De los Reyes 1996).

Luis Alonso (2003, 2004) has shown that, before the establishment of the tobacco monopoly at the end of the eighteenth century, tribute was the largest source of revenue for the Spanish colonial state and that the Philippines was viable fiscally and not really dependent on the subsidies (*situado*) from Mexico. Alonso (2004, 96, 101) has also shown that, in 1697, 76 percent of the tribute was paid in coins and only 24 percent was paid in kind and that, in 1739, the respective proportions were 97 percent in money and 3 percent in kind. The data might suggest a high level of monetization, but as Xavier Huetz de Lempes (2006, 29–30, 50–52) and Bruce Cruikshank (2014, 38–40) suggest the high rates of payment in coins

is a window to the corruption of Spanish governors, who extracted tribute in kind at values below market prices, subsequently trading the goods from which they then paid the required tribute and kept the difference. Huetz de Lemp (2006, 73–74) and Cruikshank (2014, 16–21) also argue that, in the face of the onerous tasks they faced in tribute collection, many village chiefs and municipal captains also, to use Cruikshank’s term, “gamed the tribute system,” resorting to various schemes for personal gain (such as manipulating the number of tributes and, like the governor, forcing natives to sell their products at low prices).

The tribute system was updated with the rise of a new social stratum in the late eighteenth century. The series of expulsions of the ethnic Chinese, culminating in that of 1766 in the wake of Chinese cooperation with the British invasion of Manila in 1762–1764, an offshoot of the Seven Years’ War (Wickberg 1965, 17), resulted in a period during which immigrant Chinese were in effect absent on Philippine soil. The opportunity arose for a new social stratum to gain ascendance: the Chinese mestizo (*mestizo de sangley*; *mestizo chino*), progeny of a Chinese father and *indio* (native) mother.¹¹ The Chinese mestizo formed a category that was regarded not as Chinese but as “native” of the Philippines.¹² The emergence of the Chinese mestizo underscored the adjectival “natural” as modifier of “indio”—giving salience to the category *indio natural* or “pure native”—in order to distinguish the two “native” tribute categories. The Chinese mestizos formed their own *gremios* or corporate councils, which were distinct from the *gremios* of the *indios naturales*. As Edgar Wickberg’s (1964, 71) pioneering study has shown, “By 1741 the Chinese mestizos had been recognized as a distinct element in Philippine society, sufficiently numerous to be organized and classified separately.”

This distinction became evident in Binondo, where the Chinese mestizos had coalesced with the Chinese when their numbers were small, but with whom they broke away when their numbers became substantial. In the province of Tondo Chinese mestizos accounted for about 15 percent of the population (*ibid.*, 73). As their numbers grew amid the relative absence of the ethnic Chinese, the Chinese mestizos took over the economic roles of Chinese immigrants, particularly in trade, and carved up their own niche in moneylending and farm ownership and leasing. From the mid-eighteenth century onward, Chinese mestizos did not only constitute a separate tribute category but they also acquired a level of economic and

social prominence within native society, which ramified in terms of higher tribute exaction, as will be discussed shortly. The Chinese mestizos were made to pay a higher amount of tribute based on the assumption that they had, as Wickberg (*ibid.*, 64) put it, “approximately double the earning capacity of the *indio* [*natural*].”

Strictly speaking, the Chinese in the Philippines, generally males, were not a subject population and, therefore, did not pay tribute.¹³ In 1614, however, license taxes began to be collected from Chinese traders, who in 1660 were required to be listed in a *padrón* (Plehn 1901, 695–96). In 1790, through the *capitación personal de Chinos* (effectively the counterpart of the tribute), the ethnic Chinese 18 years or older were made to pay a capitation tax of ₱6 per annum (*ibid.*, 685 n. 1, 696; Sancianco 1881, 6; Robles 1969, 74). The same 1790 edict required the Chinese to contribute to the *caja de comunidad*, as the natives did (Robles 1969, 74). In 1828 the colonial state imposed a new tax system on Chinese residents in the islands, who were divided into three classes, but many Chinese could not afford the steep rates such that a fourth class was introduced; even then hundreds of Chinese returned to the mainland or fled to the mountains to avoid paying the taxes (Plehn 1901, 696–98). In 1834 the tax rates were reduced, and in 1850 two new tax classes were introduced in a bid to encourage Chinese persons to enter agricultural pursuits (*ibid.*, 698). Unlike the tribute, the Chinese capitation tax had no division between full and half capitation tax; rather, they paid a “fixed quota according to sex and the industry or occupation in which they [were] engaged” (*una cuota fija con arreglo a su sexo y a la industria u oficio a que se dedican*) (Sancianco 1881, 7). A Chinese farmer, for instance, paid a much lower tax than another Chinese who was engaged in industry in the province of Manila (*ibid.*, 8). The Chinese also paid a tax according to the type of industry they were engaged in (*ibid.*, 9). Moreover, all Chinese were required to render forced labor, which they were also obligated to redeem by making a cash payment—a requirement that otherwise applied only to natives who lived within the municipality of Manila (*ibid.*, 8).¹⁴

Thus, although the Chinese were technically not tribute payers, the colonial state found ways to generate revenue by taxing them in various ways and making them pay more than all other groups in colonial society. What riled the Chinese was not “heavy taxation” but “arbitrary taxation,” as Wickberg (1965, 10) explained. But for Sancianco the imposition of arbitrary and onerous taxes on the Chinese was not an issue. He himself

said the Chinese were a “different species” (*especie distinta*) and “absolutely incomparable to that of the European nationals and foreigners and of the most civilized peoples” (*absolutamente incomparable con la de los nacionales y extranjeros europeos y de los pueblos más civilizados*) (Sancianco 1881, 119)—an attitude that suggested Sancianco’s immersion in the *ilustrados*’ racist thinking of the era (Aguilar 2005). Consequently, as far as Sancianco was concerned, what was at issue was the fact that Spanish and Spanish mestizos got off lightly as emblemized by their exemption from tribute, the burden of which was felt to have fallen solely upon the shoulders of the natives, both *indios naturales* and *mestizos de sangley*. The tribute was thus seen as the burden of colonial vassalage.

Cádiz 1812 and the Principle of Assimilation

That the tribute generated invidious distinctions between colonizer and colonized ran contrary to the principle of assimilation, which among the *ilustrados* Sancianco was the first to enunciate. Sancianco (1881, 101–2) asked rhetorically:

Si, pues, se considera a Filipinas parte de la Nacion española y de consiguiente es provincia española y no colonia tributaria; si sus hijos nacen también españoles como los de la Metrópoli; si, por último, reconociéndose en los peninsulares el derecho de ciudadanía, hay que reconocérsele igualmente a los filipinos, no puede imponérseles ningún tributo bajo el sentido propio de esta palabra, sino exigirles una contribución proporcionada a sus haberes, más o menos crecida, cuanto sean mayores o menores los servicios que el Estado les presta para la seguridad de sus personas e intereses.

If, then, the Philippines is considered a part of the Spanish nation and consequently a province of Spain and not a tributary colony; if her children are also born Spanish like those in the metropolis; if, lastly, the right of citizenship is recognized among the [Spanish] peninsulars, then it must be equally recognized among the filipinos;¹⁵ no tribute in the exact sense of this word can be imposed on them, but they can be made to pay a tax proportionate to their properties, more or less ascending, depending on the level of services that the state provides to them for the security of their persons and interests.

In other words, the status of the Philippines was pivotal: if the archipelago was a province of Spain as Madrid officially claimed, everyone born in the Philippines was Spanish, and they should not be made to render tribute. The assertion of the Spanish citizenship of Philippine natives was based on the principle of *jus soli*, which would later be laid out in the 1889 Spanish Civil Code, considered the final “culmination” of a “modern codification impulse” that began in 1812 “and coinciding with the Spanish Constitution of that year” (Rodríguez 1970, 723).¹⁶

Sancianco advanced the point that the inhabitants of the Philippines were as equally Spanish as those born on the Peninsula. And if the state recognized the right to citizenship of those born in Spain, so also should it recognize the right to citizenship of those born in other Spanish territories, including *Las Islas Filipinas*. Based on this logic, the state’s exactions on the people in Spain and those in the Philippines should be identical, in the same way that the right of citizenship ought to subsist in the Philippines as it did in Spain. Thus, Sancianco advocated the tribute’s abolition for it no longer existed in Spain, where direct contribution (*contribución directa*) had been introduced in 1845 (Consejo de Filipinas 1874, 1). The tax system in the Philippines should be similar to that on the Peninsula. In fact, one of the seven factors in the “revolution in the government” contained in the Cádiz Constitution of 1812 was that “all Spaniards are equally required to contribute to the State’s expenses, according to each person’s income”; accordingly, “tax privileges” should be abolished, and all citizens would contribute to the state’s maintenance and enjoy equality in the payment of taxes according to their ability (Piqueras 2013, 44, 49).¹⁷

In this light, Sancianco argued that, rather than ancient vassalage built on force, the modern state rendered services to its citizens who were then obligated to support the state under given conditions. Sancianco suggested that citizenship was a social contract, although he did not delve into the question of whether the inhabitants of the Philippines freely consented to this contract. In any event, the extract cited on page 386 asserting the status of the Philippines as a Spanish province was taken from a paragraph the opening statement of which stated: “In a word, a citizen must contribute to the maintenance of the State according to his abilities in return for the services it provides him, [but] he must not pay tribute, or anything like it, if he owns nothing” (En una palabra; el ciudadano debe contribuir según

sus posibilidades, para el sostenimiento del Estado, en satisfacción de los servicios que este le presta; mas no paga tributo, ni mucho menos, si nada posee) (Sancianco 1881, 101). And if all residents benefited—albeit in varying degrees—from the state and its services, then everyone ought to be taxed in a similar manner. On the basis of these principles, Sancianco (*ibid.*, 102) asked why tribute was paid only by those with “no Spanish or European blood in their veins from the father’s side.” Intersecting with the racial bias that Sancianco, and later López Jaena, called out in regard to tribute was the contention that the Philippines was not being treated as a province of Spain.

In fact, Sancianco’s position was a reiteration of the basic tenets enshrined in the Cádiz Constitution. Sancianco’s push for the assimilationist stance that the Philippines was a Spanish province became the rallying cry of the Propaganda Movement. The editorial in the inaugural issue of *La Solidaridad* (1996a), launched on 15 February 1889, harked back to Cádiz when it declared that the Philippines had been “deprived of representation in the Cortes.” What made Cádiz arrive at this radical reformulation of relations within the Spanish empire?

The change in status of Spanish overseas possessions came about when Napoleon Bonaparte acquired Spain and its overseas empire in 1808. As María Dolores Elizalde (2013, 333) explains, Napoleon sought to keep the empire’s unity by winning over the creoles, which he pursued by acquiescing to “some of the aspirations they had been calling for since the eighteenth century: equal rights for provinces in the Americas with those on the peninsula; increased participation in the empire’s political life; and freedom of industry, trade, and farming.” When he convened the Cortes in Bayonne in June 1808, Napoleon granted representation to the American territories and considered them provinces rather than colonies, treating them as “an integral part of the Spanish realm” (*ibid.*, 334). This drastic redefinition of terms affected various efforts to reorganize the Spanish state during this tumultuous period, which saw Spain revolting against French rule.

In September 1810, the Cortes convened in Cádiz, the seaside location that had remained unvanquished territory where a governing state was formed. Representatives from the overseas provinces participated in the debates and approved the constitution in March 1812. The constitution was proclaimed in Manila on 17 April 1813 (Piqueras 2013, 47), which many understood as the end of tribute and forced labor (Camagay 2013, 94).¹⁸ In this context, between 1811 and 1814, the Philippines was represented in

the Cortes by the Ilocos-born creole Ventura de los Reyes (Elizalde 2013, 336–37, 352). Reyes “voted for a constitution that expressly declared that ‘the nation of Spain’ consisted of all Spaniards in both hemispheres,” formalizing the transformation of the overseas territories into provinces that enjoyed parliamentary representation (*ibid.*, 353).

As Francisco Pérez (2013, xiii) puts it, “For the first time, Spain was not defined in geographic terms, but as a political community made up of American and Spanish citizens as a whole.” The empire had been transformed into a “transcontinental nation,” as José Antonio Piqueras (2013) conceptualizes the shift. Moreover, the Cádiz Constitution “underscored the conviction that, from that time forward, sovereignty resided in the nation and marked a change from subjects to citizens—although who in the Philippines would be considered a citizen still awaited debate” (Elizalde 2013, 353). In March 1814, the return of the absolute monarchy led to the abrogation of the constitution and the loss of representation in the Cortes¹⁹—but not before the Philippines had a taste of its political ideals in 1813–1814 and again, during the brief periods when it was revived in Spain, in 1820–1824 and 1836–1837 (Camagay 2013).²⁰

Thus, Cádiz laid a seed that germinated (to use Tasio’s analogy in *Noli me tângere*) ever slowly in the decades after 1812. The ideas in the 1812 constitution impinged upon internal debates in Spanish officialdom, but in public and among the natives only Sancianco raised the issue: in this realm composed of Spanish provinces and an empire without colonies, tribute had no place as it contradicted the principle of assimilation; rather, in this “transcontinental nation” the modern notion of equal citizenship applied, and all citizens irrespective of race contributed to the state based on income.

Tribute and Racial Hierarchy

Other than asserting equality of status between the Philippines and Spain and between Spaniards in the overseas provinces and those on the Peninsula, Sancianco’s critique of the tribute bracketed aside the injustices and corruption in tribute collection and centered on the inherent inequalities it engendered in native society along racial lines.²¹

From a purely economic perspective, the tribute did not reflect the income or paying capacity of the individual because the fixed amount to be paid was based on ascribed status, specifically, one’s race. Sancianco

(1881, 105) underscored this inherent unfairness of the tribute system in that Chinese mestizos paid a higher tribute than indios naturales did even if they had similar circumstances:

En unos pueblos el tributo de un natural, sea pobre ó rico, varon ó hembra, importa 96 céntimos de peso, y el de un mestizo en iguales circunstancias, es un peso y 66 céntimos; en otros pueblos, el del primero es de un peso 46 céntimos, y el segundo un peso y 96 céntimos, sin contar en unos y otros el *sanctorum* y los arbitrios locales. . . .

Aquí el privilegio recae ya en favor del indígena puro, al menos por la línea paterna; pero es siempre injusto no en cuanto a los chinos que poseen mayor fortuna . . . y en extremo industrioso, y si con respecto a los llamados mestizos que son tan filipinos como los naturales.

In some towns the tribute of a natural, whether rich or poor, man or woman, amounts to 96 cents and that of a mestizo in the same circumstances is one peso and 66 cents; in other towns the tribute of the former is one peso and 46 cents and that of the latter, one peso and 96 cents, excluding for both parties the *sanctorum* and local excise taxes. . . .

In this case the privilege falls in favor of the pure native, at least through the paternal line; but it is always unjust, not as far as those Chinese who possess a large fortune . . . and are extremely industrious, but with respect to those who are called mestizos, who are as much filipinos as the naturales.

Sancianco asserted that the privilege enjoyed by the indio natural was iniquitous, not in relation to the ethnic Chinese but to Chinese mestizos who were “as much filipinos as” the naturales. He was courageous in underscoring this basic inequality within native society, probably the one and only native to have done so publicly and in writing.

Sancianco (*ibid.*) also emphasized that the differentials in tribute payment had the capacity to stoke social divisions and hostilities:

Entre éstos nacen tambien antagonismos que se traducen muchas veces en verdaderas colisiones, no bien reprimidas por los encargados de establecer entre ellos la más perfecta armonía; antagonismos que no reconocen otra causa que la diferencia de tributo que unos y otros pagan, porque de ella deducen los naturales razón para creerse superiores á los mestizos, de la propia manera que sobre ellos los individuos de la generacion peninsular.

Among [the pure natives and Chinese mestizos] also arise antagonisms that many times result in real collisions, not well managed by those in charge of maintaining perfect harmony among them. These antagonisms know no cause other than the difference in tribute they all pay, from which the naturales deduce reason to believe themselves superior to the mestizos, in the same way that those of [Spanish] peninsular lineage consider themselves superior to [the natives].

Sancianco elucidated on the iniquitous prestige inherent in the tribute system, for the natives had deduced a schema in which social prestige and the amount of tribute were inversely related—evinced by the Spaniards' exemption from tribute, which was correlated with their higher rank in colonial society. Because *indios naturales* paid a lower tribute than Chinese mestizos, the former could claim higher social prestige than the latter. In this schema, the Chinese had the lowest prestige and lowest social rank because they paid the most taxes.

In fact, Sancianco (*ibid.*, 105–6) asserted that an “antiquated (*antiquísimo*) system of division of races and classes” prevailed in the Philippines, with the following hierarchy in descending order: (1) “the pure [Spanish] peninsular ruling race” (*La raza pura peninsular dominadora*), (2) “the mestizos of [Spanish] peninsular or European lineage” (*La generación peninsular y europea, mestiza*) (3) “the natural or strictly indigenous” (*La natural o indígena propiamente*), (4) “the [Chinese] mestizos who pay double the tribute of the naturales” (*La mestiza que paga doble cantidad de tribute que la natural*), and (5) “the pure Chinese as foreign immigrants” (*La china pura, como advenediza*). Sancianco noted specifically that *indios naturales* preceded the Chinese mestizos “in the order of preference” (*ibid.*, 105).

Sancianco's critique of what he called an “antiquated system” was keenly felt, most likely because of his self-identification as a Chinese mestizo, which

can be deduced from his name that bore the classic Chinese mestizo surname ending in “co,” derived from “the Hokkien polite suffix *k’o*” (Wickberg 1965, 32). Sancianco hailed from Malabon, then known as Tambobong, which Wickberg (1964, 76) described as “a half-*mestizo*, half-*indio* town of some 15,000 population.”²² Given its high proportion of mestizos compared with the average 5 percent of the population (*ibid.*, 72), Malabon was a locality where evidently mestizos had prestige and social ascendancy.

Sancianco’s assertion that Chinese mestizos like him were “as much filipinos” as the naturales was only partially addressed to the Spanish colonial state, which already regarded both groups as “native” even as it concomitantly ordained the invidious distinction in tribute payment. His assertion was also addressed to the indios naturales who did not accept the mestizos as one of them. Sancianco’s call was thus radical and unprecedented.

Indios Naturales versus Mestizos de Sangley

Nevertheless, Sancianco did not elaborate on the social antagonisms within native society spawned by the tribute system. What he expounded on at length was his argument that the tribute could not forever divide colonial society, the evidence he adduced being the multiracial dimension of several acts of resistance, even uprisings, in Philippine history. Moreover, the emphasis in this part of Sancianco’s (1881, 108) discussion did not focus on the internal divisions within native society but rather on the gulf between Spaniards and the rest:

¿Qué ha producido hasta aquí ese odioso sistema, injusto é inmoral, sino el ensoberbecimiento de la clase privilegiada, el espíritu que sugiere la superioridad otorgada por caprichosa ley á sus individuos, hasta creerse con derecho legítimo de despreciar y abusar contra la clase preterida, naciendo en ésta el resentimiento, la venganza y la rebelión que toma á veces las proporciones en un movimiento insurreccional?

What has this odious, unjust, and immoral system produced until now except the hubris of the privileged class, the spirit that evokes among those individuals the superiority legitimated by a capricious law, making them believe they have a valid right to despise and abuse the subjugated

class, giving rise to resentment, vengeance, and rebellion that sometimes assume the proportions of an insurrectionary movement?

Among these rebellious acts Sancianco listed the following military revolts: the 1852 revolt led by Lieutenant Novales, the 1854 rebellion of Cuesta, and the 1872 Cavite uprising led by Sergeant La Madrid (*ibid.*). After discussing the Cavite Revolt, Sancianco discussed the student protest action at the UST in which he was a participant, referred to earlier in this article (p. 378).

Sancianco's (*ibid.*, 115–16) discussion of these uprisings underscored his point that the tribute classification scheme could not forever serve as a divide-and-conquer strategy, leading him to ask rhetorically:

Pues bien; admitiendo que estos hechos hasta aquí realizados en Filipinas, hayan sido verdaderas conspiraciones, con sus planes, fines y medios de ejecucion perfectamente ideados y propios para conseguir la emancipacion de aquellas islas, . . . ¿en cuál de ellas aparece que la division de razas y clases haya servido ni podido servir como medio preventivo? . . . ¿Dónde no han estado confundidos y unidos individuos de la raza mestiza que paga doble tributo, de la natural que paga ménos y de la generacion peninsular mestiza que no paga nada? ¿Han obstando estas clasificaciones, la distincion de condiciones establecidas, para ideas planes reprobados y ponerlos en ejecucion?

Well then, assuming that these incidents that have occurred in the Philippines have been genuine conspiracies, with plans, objectives, and means of carrying them out, perfectly conceived and appropriate to attain the emancipation of those Islands, . . . in which of those incidents has the division by races and classes served or not served as a preventive measure? . . . In which of those events have persons of the mestizo race who pay double the tribute, the natural who pay less, and the mestizos descended from [Spanish] peninsulars who pay nothing not been mixed and united? Have these classifications and social distinctions hindered doomed ideas from being devised and executed?

Although not alluding to a fully crystallized nationalist consciousness, Sancianco (*ibid.*, 116) suggested that a common birthplace—a shared

geography—superseded racial differences among all of these “filipinos” despite the racial distinctions that divided them:

¿Qué mucho, pues, que se una y confundan los filipinos, á pesar de las clases y condiciones que les distinguen, porque despues de todo son hijos todos de Filipinas, nacidos de una misma tierra, bajo un solo sol y clima y mecidos por el mismo ambiente, si tambien se unen y se confunden con ellos en todo los peninsulares?

Why should it be wondered, therefore, if the filipinos mix and unite despite the classes and conditions that set them apart, because after all they are all sons of the Philippines, born on the same land, under the same sun and climate, and swayed by the same surroundings—if also [Spanish] peninsulars join and mix with them in everything?

The mention of peninsular Spaniards might have suggested the inclusiveness of the notion of “the sons of the Philippines” that Sancianco summoned in his text, although he did not refer to immigrant Spaniards as “filipinos.” In any event, Sancianco was not arguing in a fully crystallized nationalist sense, but he was only asserting that the tribute, by imposing a hierarchical system of social classification, was not serving its purpose of splitting apart those who shared a common birthplace.

Be that as it may, Sancianco crucially failed to elaborate on the social antagonisms that tribute generated in native society. They remained Sancianco’s unmentionable. Notwithstanding his stress on the interracial character of rebellions, he knew that *indios naturales* and Chinese mestizos derived their social identities from the tribute categories and as such were deeply divided and did not constitute a single cohesive community.

Before we proceed further, it is important to note that the stratification system was not a simple hierarchy in which *indios naturales* were socially superior over Chinese mestizos because, in fact, many Chinese mestizos were more affluent than and felt superior to the mass of *indios naturales*. What complicated the situation, and therefore was unmentionable too, was the fact that the tribute categories were not static, and Sancianco could only emphasize that these categories operated through the paternal side. Women’s tribute category was not fixed: when they married, they followed the category of their husbands. Men, too, could transfer from one tribute

list (padrón) to another through an administrative mechanism called *dispensa de ley* or *gracias de sacar* (Wickberg 1964, 66). Through the state's dispensation, Rizal's paternal grandfather was delisted from the Chinese mestizo padrón and moved to that of the indio natural (ibid., 65–66). Therefore, the racial classification of individuals was far from absolute. Yet, the categories remained the basic premise for determining tribute exactions, which influenced social identities and the ensuing social antagonisms.

Several historical accounts point to the lack of cohesion among indios naturales and Chinese mestizos, the latter occupying a formally recognized middle position between the indios naturales and the Chinese (Aguilar 1998, 60). Events in recorded Philippine history attest to the interracial tensions, if not outright conflicts, between indios naturales and Chinese mestizos. In the late eighteenth century, as the Chinese mestizos became economically ascendant, old Tagalog elites protested that mestizos had “no right” to acquire land (Roth 1982, 145). In the 1810s Spanish friars in Cebu were able to influence the indios naturales' negative perception of the Chinese mestizos (Cullinane 1982). In the late 1820s, an Englishman (1907, 94, 105) observed that the indio natural “is pinched or cheated by the Mestizos, a forestalling, avaricious, and tyrannical race,” and in return the indio natural “repays them with a keen contempt, not unmixed with hatred.” In the 1840s the visiting French physician Jean Mallat (1983, 515) reiterated the observation that the indio natural was “an enemy of the mestizo and vice versa.” A peasant religious movement with a huge following in the southern Tagalog in the 1830s, the Cofradia de San Jose had only one restriction on membership: Chinese mestizos could not be admitted as the confraternity saw itself as exclusively for “the poor” (Ikehata 1990, 127–31). The Chinese mestizos, although often wealthier than others, had a contested status in native society.

Unmentionable for Sancianco also was the reality that these social divides had contravened the liberal intentions of the Cádiz Constitution. Ruth de Llobet (2014) has shown through an episode in Binondo that attempts to implement the constitution in the Philippines reinforced and heightened interracial rivalries. On 1 August 1813, about three and a half months after the constitution was proclaimed in Manila, a crowd of nearly 1,000 indios naturales attacked Chinese mestizos inside the Binondo church, an incident provoked by a recurring dispute between indios naturales and Chinese mestizos over which group had the privilege to sit on the front pews and at the right side of the church. The prompt deployment of troops prevented

a bloodbath, although several mestizos were wounded and one mestizo officer and two Chinese parishioners died (*ibid.*, 214–15). In other parts of the Philippines, *indios naturales* had the privilege of sitting in the front rows on the right or “Gospel” side of the church, while Chinese mestizos and Chinese sat on the left or “Epistle” side. However, circumstances in Binondo were such that mestizos occupied the front rows of both sides, and *indios naturales* sat behind them (*ibid.*, 218–19). Now, under the Cádiz Constitution equality—that all were Spanish citizens—meant that racial distinctions based on the tribute categories had been abolished, and the corresponding *gremios* would also no longer subsist. However, the old elites among the *indios naturales* interpreted the new dispensation as supporting their position as the “natural inhabitants” of the country, especially because Cádiz had also issued a decree in 1811 stating that “natives could not be dispossessed of their ‘primitive rights and properties’” (*ibid.*, 222). Accordingly, the *indios naturales* of Binondo “declared themselves ‘the children of the primitive and legitimate natural Indians of the islands’, and rulers of, at the very least, their own towns” (*ibid.*, 223). Thus, they justified their claims not only to land (and to depriving mestizos of land) but also to the choice seats in church, legitimating the violence of 1 August 1813. In contrast, Chinese mestizos used the 1812 constitution to assert equality with the *indios naturales* by insisting that they too were *naturales* and had the same rights as the *naturales* (*ibid.*, 228). Each group used the terms of the Cádiz Constitution to advance its own position, forcing the governor general to make compromises contrary to the charter. In the end, so exasperated was he with this unending altercation that he ordered the removal of all the benches in the Binondo church (*ibid.*, 232).²³

For Sancianco, the social antagonisms that arose from the tribute categories could be mentioned only in passing rather than in their full complexity because these racial labels had become deeply intertwined with their social identities. Ultimately, the unmentionable for Sancianco was that, contrary to his assertion, the tribute categories had succeeded as divide-and-conquer strategies, leaving the two native categories far from conceiving themselves as constituting one community. As Llobet (*ibid.*, 234) observed, the *indios naturales* of Binondo “did not perceive the Spanish as their enemy or the usurper of their lands and rights—the Chinese mestizos and the Chinese were the rivals to resist.” The tribute had also undermined the very liberal principle Sancianco advocated: assimilation. As a consequence,

the removal of tribute had become a precondition for assimilation, even as modern citizenship necessitated a new taxation scheme consonant with the tenets of equality first articulated in the 1812 Cádiz Constitution.

Abolition of the Tribute

In 1884 the tribute was abolished, replaced by a graduated tax based on ability to pay that all inhabitants of the Philippines 18 years of age and older, Spaniards included, had to pay. There were sixteen rates or classes, with the highest tax pegged at ₱37.50 for those who earned the highest income, followed by a descending scale that went down to as low as ₱2.25 for domestic workers and ₱2.00 for persons with irregular income. A concessionary rate of ₱2.00 was assigned to military officers in active service, ₱0.50 to these officers' wives and sons, and ₱1.50 to agricultural colonists. There were three *gratis* classes: one for the religious, paupers, convicts, and private soldiers in the army, navy, and the Guardia Civil; another for the "privileged class" of *gobernadorcillos* and *cabezas de barangay*, who continued in their crucial role in tax collection; and a special *gratis* category for European agriculturists in Palawan (Plehn 1901, 691–93). This tax was known as the *cédula*, after the document, the *cédula personal*, that was issued to the taxpayer and which was required for transactions with the government and any financial institution, for engaging in any profession or trade, and for establishing identity should anyone be questioned by the authorities (*ibid.*). It was this *cédula* that in 1896 the Katipunan fighters tore symbolically in launching the revolution against Spain.

De la Costa (1967, 354–55) wondered if Sancianco's economic treatise had anything to do with the decision of Spain to abolish the tribute in the Philippines; in any case, De la Costa asserted that "the action they took may be said to have proved him right. Not only did they abolish the tobacco monopoly and substitute for it the *cédula personal* as a source of revenue, but they extended the *cédula personal* requirement to all, Spaniards as well as Filipinos."

Sancianco's (1881, 5–15) *El Progreso* quotes extensively from the 1870 report of the government's Junta de Reformas Económicas, which recommended several changes in the tax structure, including the abolition of the tribute, the capitation tax on Chinese, and the tobacco monopoly. In fact, for several decades there had been internal discussions concerning reforms of the financial system in the Philippines. Some Spanish officials had long

realized the inequality inherent in the tribute system because it determined exactions based on race rather than on financial or economic criteria—which did not benefit the colonial state as the tribute system dampened state revenue at a time of economic growth stimulated by direct linkages to the world market (e.g., Consejo de Filipinas 1874, 1875). Thus, Spanish officials had already expressed ideas similar to those articulated by Sancianco.

In 1874 the Consejo de Filipinas (1874, 2–3) wrote pointedly that the government faced two problems:

One problem is that of collecting funds not only to pay off the growing deficit that is exhausting the treasury, but also to cover the costs of reforms planned in harmony with the country's advancements. The other is that of replacing a race-based legislation, which humiliates some and grants privileges to others, with a system founded on the most basic maxims of justice and on the principles recognized and accepted by the political and social sciences.

The council further recognized the issue of inequalities, including the exemption of Spaniards from the tribute and its insensitivity to paying capacity:

It is not fair that the vast mass of the indigenous population is subject to tribute and forced labor, while the white race is exempt from both burdens. It is not fair that the Chinese pay a capitation tax and the *Industria* [see below], while European foreigners pay nothing. In the same tribute system, there is the glaring injustice in which the rich and the poor pay the same amount; the opulent capitalist and affluent property owner and the day laborer and young hireling (*mozo de cordel*) also pay the same; the head of the family is assessed similarly as the bachelor. (ibid., 5)

Akin to Sancianco, the council insisted: “All citizens have the obligation to contribute to sustain the State’s responsibilities in proportion to their incomes and the yield of their economic activities” (ibid., 6). The council conceded that “a direct contribution (*contribución directa*) based on wealth and with no racial distinctions” was needed to replace the tribute (ibid., 9).

Yet, in the end, Spanish officialdom decided to act cautiously for fear of stirring up resentments, and the council did not advocate the outright abolition of the tribute (ibid.). The council sought to provide “an example that the new form of contribution begins by taxing Spaniards. And it will demonstrate to the indio’s eyes that not to pay is not a sign of superiority. On the contrary, he who earns more and has more possessions pays more (*el que más vale y posee, mas paga*)” (ibid., 24). As part of a gradualist approach, several intermediate taxes were introduced. In 1878 two new taxes were announced: an urban property rental tax (*contribución directa sobre la propiedad urbana*), commonly referred to as *Urbana*, and a hodgepodge “income-excise-corporation-franchise-import-export-business license-occupation license-industrial tax” (*contribución directa sobre la industria, el comercio, las profesiones y las artes*), commonly referred to as *Industria* (Corpuz 1997, 190–91). Note that for the *cédula*, which was later introduced in 1884, one’s tax bracket was determined based on the amount paid for the *Urbana* and the *Industria* (Plehn 1901, 692 n. 1). As part of an incremental approach, the tobacco monopoly was abolished in 1882.

Fernando Primo de Rivera (1883, 178), in his terminal report as governor general dated 7 March 1883, discussed the tribute as needing to be eliminated. “The tribute is another tax that political, social, and public administration interests demand should disappear. The suppression of this obligation has been the most definite and constant aspiration of these peoples (*pueblos*) since the start of the century.” Primo de Rivera (ibid., 178B–179) harked back to the Cortes de Cádiz and its reconceptualization of the Spanish empire, emphasizing that the decree of 13 March 1811 had abolished the tribute. He stated that the return of absolutism reimposed the tribute, and “since then, rarely has there been a Governor General who has not been asked to notify His Majesty’s Government of the advisability of its abolition” (ibid., 179). In lieu of the tribute, Primo de Rivera (ibid., 179B) recommended passage of the proposal of the Intendente General de Hacienda concerning the introduction of a head tax that would take its name from the document issued to taxpayers, the *cédulas personales*:

This tax will be obligatory for all inhabitants and residents of these Islands, without distinction as to race or nationality (exceptions being the Chinese and those subjected to the recognition of vassalage). This tax—equitable in its distribution, easily collectible, and conformable with the perennial aspirations of this country—will be more productive

than the tribute, which can disappear without bankrupting the treasury and to the widespread applause of these peoples.

Having taken an incrementalist approach to manage public reaction, Madrid took the historic step, on the year following the departing governor general's report, of terminating the tribute and introducing the system of *cédulas personales*, very similar to Sancianco's suggestions.

Viewed from the perspective of the apparent internal dynamic in Spanish officialdom, Sancianco's intervention would appear to be diminished in significance, although he evidently expressed the liberal consensus concerning taxation at the time. In fact, the opaqueness of governmental discussions was itself a reason for Sancianco's contribution to the clamor to end tribute. Nevertheless, although the internal debate in official Spanish circles showed a keen awareness of the issues involved from the perspective of the natives, they appeared to have missed Sancianco's critique about the tribute categories' capacity to drive a wedge through native society. Officialdom failed to see Sancianco's unmentionables. They cited the inequalities between Spaniards and non-Spaniards and between rich and poor, but failed to discern how the tribute schema had determined social identities and caused deep divisions among the natives—to Spain's advantage.

After 1884: Social Identities in Flux

Propelled by notions of racial equality traceable to Cádiz while also concerned about the pragmatics of state finances, Madrid took a bold step in doing away with the tribute, one that had far-ranging implications beyond the budget.²⁴ Because the tribute was so intimately connected to social identities, its abolition represented a seismic shift in social relations. Without the tribute and the tribute categories as legal distinctions mandated by law, the *gremios*, which by then were in “decline” and no longer “functioning political bodies” (Wickberg 1964, 94), had to go—although Binondo's three racially based *gremios* continued to exist after 1884 primarily as status groups.

In 1886–1887 the antifriar movement, supported by sympathetic Spanish officials, managed to capitalize on the dispute between *indios naturales* and Chinese *mestizos* on who would sponsor the feast day of Our Lady of the Rosary. In 1886 the Intendente had given the honor to the Chinese and Chinese *mestizos*, but the *indios naturales* protested and obtained a temporary reversal of the decision (Schumacher 1997, 110). In the following year, the *indios*

naturales insisted that they be given precedence in the fiesta, contrary to the Dominican parish priest's decision to accord the coveted role to the Chinese and Chinese mestizos. The governor general upheld the indios naturales and ordered the removal of the parish priest, notwithstanding the archbishop's protests (ibid., 111). On the day of the fiesta, other gobernadorcillos in Manila, who were indios naturales, attended the festivities in a show of solidarity. Binondo's indios naturales reveled at their victory not only over the Chinese and Chinese mestizos but over the Spanish friar as well. "The entire affair had been managed by Juan Zulueta, Del Pilar's associate and, apparently, with the latter's advice," according to Schumacher (ibid.).²⁵

As seen in this incident, even after the end of the tribute system, interracial antagonisms did not disappear overnight. However, this conflict in Binondo was driven by a different sort of politics than the dispute over church pews in 1813. The context of the "ancient *mestizo-indio* dispute" (Wickberg 1964, 95) had changed. In 1887–1888 the conflict over ceremonial precedence between the two groups was fodder for a larger battle; this time around, unlike in 1813, a dominant segment of Spanish society, composed of the friars, was now the "real" target of the political mobilization.²⁶

Precisely because of the division of natives into two distinct categories, the erasure of the distinction between indios naturales and mestizos de sangley was momentous in the formation of a national community. "Henceforth," as Wickberg (ibid.) stated, "each individual was identified as society might wish or as he himself might choose. It was no longer a legal matter. Increasingly, definitions were simplified and nationalized."

The dissolution of tribute categories could be seen to have had a marked effect on Rizal's writing of his novels. Although he was in Europe at the time, its significance would not have been lost on him as he completed his first novel in late 1886. This change could well be the powerful force that explained what Benedict Anderson (2008, 4) observed in his quantitative analysis of keywords in *Noli me tângere*: "It is very striking that the form *mestizo chino* never crops up, even though the Chinese mestizos were a large, increasingly rich and influential group in the late nineteenth century, and Rizal himself belonged to it, 'racially' at least." Anderson's (ibid., 39, 81) analysis of words in *El filibusterismo* indicated a similar trend, although "*mestizo chino*" did get one mention in the second novel. Although "Rizal was perfectly aware of its existence and importance," Anderson (ibid., 8, 82) noticed that Rizal composed his novels "in a manner that largely [hid]" the Chinese mestizo

category, suggesting that the “traditional colonial ‘racial’ categories” were in “rapid decay.” In fact, the official erasure of Chinese mestizo as a tribute category precipitated this process of “rapid decay.” As Wickberg (1964, 96) put it, “The age of the *mestizos* as a separate group was dying.”

By the time Rizal completed the *Fili* in 1891, his use of terms was such that Anderson (2008, 45, 82) could sense that the occlusion of the Chinese mestizo category was laying the ground “for the *mestizos chinos* to become, most likely, the first ‘Filipinos’” in contradistinction to the Chinese as the great Other; “the Chinese mestizos, by insisting that they were above all *real locals*, were preparing themselves to break out of the traditional racial hierarchy . . . by becoming ‘national,’ possibly before any other social group.” This insistence on being “real locals”—of being *naturales*—had been the Chinese mestizo’s clamor since the late eighteenth century, made most manifest in 1813, to which the colonial state acceded.

“Indio” as National Identifier

In April 1887 Rizal wrote Blumentritt to explain that his circle of friends in Madrid who put out *La Solidaridad* were “all youngsters, creoles, mestizos, and Malays, (but) we call ourselves simply *filipinos*” (*ibid.*, 32). Anderson argues that these youngsters’ appropriation of “filipino” as a collective designation was a result of the Spaniards’ misrecognition of migrants from the Philippines and their disregard of the internal distinctions that were highly salient inside the Philippines. But the status of filipino as a nationalist label was still highly unstable. We know that in the Judge Advocate General’s endorsement of Rizal’s death sentence, he was described as a “Chinese mestizo” (De la Costa 1961, 136), which Rizal crossed out and replaced with “indio,” not filipino.

As evident in the *Fili*, *indio* had crystallized as the all-inclusive term to refer to natives of the Philippines. “In the colony,” observed Anderson (2008, 47), *indio* was “the one term with unambiguously non-Spanish and non-Chinese connotations,” given that filipino still officially referred to Spaniards born in the Philippines. *Indio* thus became the “nationalist” category that encompassed both *indios naturales* and Chinese mestizos, which was useful for the latter’s desire to conceal their Chineseness. In 1889, during the Paris Exposition, Rizal formed the group *Los Indios Bravos*, a label that derived inspiration from the applause the Native American Indians received for their

skills on horseback (Schumacher 1997, 237). According to Schumacher (ibid.), “Rizal suggested to his companions that instead of resenting the derogatory name of *indio* applied to them by the Spaniards, they ought to take pride in their race and call themselves *Indios Bravos*, while they so conducted themselves as to make Spaniards revise their idea of the *indio*.” Having thus overcome Spanish condescension, Rizal could happily use the term *indio* in the novel he completed two years later to be the internally meaningful nationalist term.

However, there was something peculiar about “*indio*” in *Los Indios Bravos*. Gone was the adjectival “natural.” In fact, the word “*naturales*” appeared only five times in the *Noli* and six times in the *Fili* (Anderson 2008, 43), a seemingly unremarkable observation. However, it appeared that the Chinese mestizos’ desire to be regarded as *naturales* resulted in the dropping of this very term in order to make *indio* encompass the two formerly divided groups. *Indio* merged the two sides of the native self.

Philippine historiography has inherited the nationalizing meaning of *indio*. This connotation is best encapsulated in Domingo Abella’s (1978?) phrase in the title of his book, *From Indio to Filipino*. We hardly think twice to correct the phrase and say it ought to be “From *Indio Natural* and *Mestizo Chino* to *Filipino*.” In general, Chinese mestizos are sidestepped in Philippine history: they are either collapsed with the Chinese or are relegated to a bygone era, a group that simply but inexplicably vanished at the end of the nineteenth century. This proclivity to think of *indio* in a nationalizing sense—of *indio* as the word for *Filipino* in the nineteenth century—has been the amazing achievement of nationalist consciousness, which from its inception had desired to occlude the *Filipino*’s Chinese mestizo heritage.

This same nationalizing impulse has made it difficult for present-day *Filipinos* to imagine the world that Sancierco endeavored to critique with his pained discussion of the social antagonisms that divided native society into *indios naturales* and *mestizos chinos*, engendered by the tribute system that he strenuously argued should be abolished. But it is precisely Sancierco’s world that he dissected in 1881 in *El Progreso de Filipinas*—the world that Rizal no longer inhabited when he wrote his novels—that we need to recapture and reimagine, with all its contradictions, for us to truly marvel at the historic achievement of *Filipino* nationalist consciousness.

Notes

An earlier version of this article was presented at two conferences, where the valuable comments and questions of participants helped to improve it: "Bridging Worlds, Illuminating the Archive: An International Conference in Honor of Professor Resil B. Mojares" organized by Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints, Ateneo de Manila University, and Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, and held on 30–31 July 2018 at Novotel Manila Araneta Center, Quezon City; and the 16th Philippine–Spanish Friendship Day Conference "Mapping Spaces and Identities in Spanish Colonial Philippines," organized by the National Historical Commission of the Philippines and the Department of History, University of the Philippines, and held on the UP campus, Quezon City, 4–5 Oct. 2018. Research at the Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN) in Madrid was aided by a Loyola Schools Scholarly Work Faculty Grant 2017–2018. I am most grateful to Ros Costelo, for her kind support during my research in Madrid and for following up the digitization of documents at the AHN and eventually turning them over to me in the Philippines, and to Hobe Sy, for assistance in the transcription and initial translation of documents from the AHN.

- 1 The National Historical Institute published an English translation of *El Progreso de Filipinas* in 1975 (Sancianco 1975).
- 2 Sancianco (1881, 110) mistakenly put this event to November 1870, which Artigas (1996, 22, 29 n. 2) repeated. Schumacher (2006, 274) reckoned that Sancianco "errs on dates." Corpuz (2006, 14) cites the year 1869.
- 3 Rizal (1887/1995, 13) repeats this aphorism in ch. 2 of *Noli me tângere, el hijo del leon era tambien leon*.
- 4 Interestingly but for reasons that will be explained shortly, Sancianco's discussion of this student action appeared in ch. 19 of *El Progreso* in his analysis of the tribute system.
- 5 Horacio de la Costa (1967, 353) puts Sancianco's year of death as 1892, which is erroneous.
- 6 Schumacher (2006, 274–90) has argued for a direct and personal link between Burgos and Rizal through the latter's brother Paciano, who lived in Burgos's house as a student in Manila. Sancianco's influence, however, went beyond Rizal.
- 7 On the origin of the tribute and its promulgation in the Laws of the Indies in 1523, cf. Plehn 1901. Tribute was intended to be rendered by natives who had been "pacified, and reduced to obedience and vassalage" (ibid., 684).
- 8 The Spanish Cortes passed an abolition law in 1880, which provided for an eight-year period of *patronato* (tutelage) for all slaves liberated by the law. However, the so-called freed slaves became indentured laborers who were required to spend eight years working for their masters at no cost. On 7 October 1886, slavery was finally abolished in Cuba by a royal decree that also made the *patronato* illegal.
- 9 Plehn (1901, 689) suggests, however, that Spanish blood rather than descent was the basis of exemption: "Spanish *mestizos* were exempt from the tribute. This exemption included the sons of Spaniards by native women and of natives by Spanish women."
- 10 The exempted groups included incumbent *gobernadorcillos* and *cabezas de barangay*, their wives, and first-born sons; soldiers and militia men, their wives, and dependent sons, as well as the widows of soldiers; civil and marine guards, their wives, and sons; tobacco monopoly inspectors and storekeepers, their wives, and sons; government employees with a fixed salary; paupers; and

"Miscellaneous persons, some exempt in recognition of distinguished services to the government, or to agriculture or industry, and others for 'just cause'" (Plehn 1901, 687).

- 11 The individual's racial status was based on that of the father. Male descendants of Chinese mestizos retained their status, but married female descendants changed their tribute category by taking on the status of the husband. There were also administrative means to move from one tribute category to another (Wickberg 1964, 65–66). These points are discussed in a later section of this article.
- 12 As Wickberg (1965, 31) underscored, "the Chinese mestizo in the Philippines was not a special kind of local Chinese. He was a special kind of Filipino. The law identified him as such and so did he. The legal identification with the Philippines was automatic upon birth." Because the categories *indios naturales* and *mestizos de sangley* or *mestizo chino* were both considered native, the same rights of geographic mobility and participation in local governance pertained to both groups. But how they differed in the case of property ownership "is not clear" (Wickberg 1964, 65).
- 13 Wickberg's (1964, 63) statement that the Chinese were tribute-paying is inexact.
- 14 The next major tax legislation on the Chinese came in 1890, following the introduction in 1884 of the *cédula* for all other inhabitants of the archipelago who were 18 years of age or older. The 1890 decree required the Chinese, regardless of age or sex, to obtain a *cédula de capitación personal*, which was to serve as a document of identification (Plehn 1901, 699). Unlike the sixteen classes for the *cédula* of the non-Chinese, the scheme for the Chinese had eight classes (*ibid.*). For the Chinese the lowest amount to be paid was ₱3, unlike the ₱2 for all other inhabitants. For the non-Chinese the highest amount of tax was ₱37.50, but for the Chinese the figure was ₱30. However, with the addition of several surtaxes the total cost of the *cédula* for the highest class of Chinese was ₱48.90 (*ibid.*, 700).
- 15 To distinguish the word *filipino* from the modern concept of the Filipino citizen, the Spanish lower case is retained. The word originally referred to creoles born in the Philippines, and in this sense the word was largely geographic in orientation, even when used by Sancierco.
- 16 Article 17 of the 1889 Spanish Civil Code declared as Spaniards those who were (a) born on Spanish territory; (b) the children of a Spanish father or mother, even though they were born out of Spain; (c) foreigners who had obtained naturalization papers; and (d) "those who, without such papers, may have acquired a domicile in any town in the Monarchy" (Peck 1965, 464 n. 35). Interestingly, both the 1812 constitution and the 1889 civil code served as grounds of contention in the Spanish Philippines.
- 17 After the September 1868 Glorious Revolution that deposed Queen Isabela II, a group of economists belonging to the liberal school known as the *Escuela economista* took control of the Ministry of Public Finance, with Laureano Figuerola assuming the post of finance minister in the provisional government formed in October 1868 (San Julián 2011, 248). As part of spurring on Spain's long-term economic growth, Figuerola imitated the British model and introduced "the first attempt to implement an income tax" in Spain (*ibid.*, 247). Figuerola believed that "Taxes should be personal (unlike the main direct Spanish taxes—the land tax and the tax on industrial and trade returns—which were product taxes), because they were essentially a reciprocal exchange for the services supplied by the state to the individual, which allowed him to devote his time to his business freely and safely" (*ibid.*, 250–51). During the parliamentary debate, "Liberal economic doctrine provided powerful arguments to support the income tax; specifically, the idea that a single tax on incomes

was the scientific ideal to build a national modern taxation system" (ibid., 254). The opposition agreed that "a single tax on personal incomes was the scientific ideal expressed by classical liberal authors" (ibid., 255), but they questioned its practical administration in Spain, which was proven right by the decline in revenue and the eventual suppression of Figuerola's plan in 1870 (ibid., 258). Nevertheless, the principles the Escuela economista had advocated entered state discourse. Sancianco was evidently influenced heavily by this liberal school in economics.

- 18 Because the Cádiz Constitution was seen as ending tribute, its revocation resulted in, among others, the Sarrat uprising of 1815 to protest the reinstatement of tribute.
- 19 The abrogation of the Cádiz Constitution of 1812 led to the loss of representation of Cuba, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico in the Cortes, but later in the nineteenth century Cuba and Puerto Rico regained their seats—but the Philippines did not. "Only during the Spanish revolution of 1868 was the possibility of a true constitutional integration of Cuba and Puerto Rico (not the Philippines) considered. The conservative system of the Restoration in 1876 returned to the idea of governing the ultramarine provinces simply as colonies" (Portillo 2012, 63). However, in the wake of the first Cuban war of independence, Cuba was granted representation in the Cortes in 1878 (Tarragó 2017, 31).
- 20 The Cádiz Constitution did not help to preserve the Spanish empire. As Piqueras (2013, 50) states, "In several places in America, it was considered late and did not fulfill the objectives of sovereignty and political self-governance."
- 21 Although a slippery concept, "race" is used in this article in the sense in which the authors cited here used it in the nineteenth century. It is the basic concept at the root of the tribute categories.
- 22 Malabon "had sprung from obscurity because of its position as a center for transshipment of goods from Pampanga and Bulacan to Manila" (Wickberg 1964, 76).
- 23 In chapter 16 of Rizal's (1996b, 131) *El filibusterismo*, the "*gobernadorcillo* of the natives" is described as seated on the right. Because of the Chinese presence in the church, the setting could well have been Binondo, although it is unnamed in the novel. It would appear that the *indios naturales* had won the right to sit on the Gospel side. In the late 1880s, however, the contest over status had shifted to the sponsorship of the fiesta, as will be discussed toward the end of this article.
- 24 This move also had unforeseen consequences, especially because Madrid did not follow through with the full implementation of assimilation, particularly in granting Philippine representation in the Cortes.
- 25 This and other subsequent events strengthened the antifriar movement, which culminated in the historic *manifestación* (protest action) of 1 March 1888 staged by *gobernadorcillos* who demanded the exile of the archbishop and the expulsion of the friars. However, this incident was not received favorably even by many locals, and sympathetic Spanish officials distanced themselves from the movement. Another set of Spanish officials acted to reverse whatever the antifriar movement had achieved: the parish priest was restored to his seat in Binondo, and the *gobernadorcillos* were removed from office and charged in court (Schumacher 1997, 114–20). Rizal, who was in the Philippines briefly during this period, did not approve of this event (ibid., 120).
- 26 In *El filibusterismo* Rizal (1996b, 131–32) parodies the dispute between *indios naturales* and Chinese mestizos, a conflict that none of them wins because precedence goes to the Chinese,

whom the government favors "because they paid," a reference either to the higher taxes levied on the Chinese or to bribery.

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Filomeno V. Aguilar Jr. is professor, Department of History, and chief editor, *Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints*, 204 Bellarmine Hall, Ateneo de Manila University, Loyola Heights, Quezon City, 1108 Philippines. He is the author of *Clash of Spirits: The History of Power and Sugar Planter Hegemony on a Visayan Island* (1998); *Maalwang Buhay: Family, Overseas Migration, and Cultures of Relatedness in Barangay Paraiso* (2009); *Migration Revolution: Philippine Nationhood and Class Relations in a Globalized Age* (2014); and *Peripheries: Histories of Anti-marginality* (2018). <fvaguilar@ateneo.edu>