

# Citizenship and Civic Education: A Critical Elaboration on the Pedagogy of Rizal's La Liga Filipina

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## Abstract

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's role in shaping Jose Rizal's political ideas is a blurred spot in existing scholarship on the latter's life and works. There seems to be an endemic lack of interest in this matter, with scholars preferring to explore Rizal through the optics of nationalism and/or liberalism, often in their attempt to construct the "unity" of his ideas. Aiming to fill this lacuna and unsettle established readings, this article explores Rizal's decisive shift from Voltairean liberalism in favor of Rousseau's vision of a cohesive civic body constituted through the social contract. It contends that the social contract theory and its associated concept of the "general will" could serve as bases for resolving the problem of fractiousness and excessive individualism Rizal observed among young expatriate Filipinos, a problem he became increasingly concerned with and nuanced his commitment to the campaign for liberal reforms. Putting on hold the obsession with a unified Rizal, this article asserts that invoking Rousseau's vision crystallizes the meaning of La Liga Filipina—its place in the trajectory of Rizal's thoughts and the educative role it was meant to play in relation to the Filipino nation as an ethical project. Finally, the article elaborates on this role, critically exploring its significance and implications for civic education using key sociological concepts and insights from the anthropology and sociology of education, as well as studies

on the effectiveness of service-learning programs in promoting civic engagement and participation among young people. A critical elaboration on the pedagogy suggested by La Liga calls attention to how citizenship education might be situated in quotidian processes and spaces, how it is implicated in systems of inequality, and how it could open up new possibilities.

#### Keywords

Rizal, La Liga Filipina, social contract, pedagogy, civic education, reflexivity

## Introduction

Early in August 1883, the young Jose Rizal wrote to his parents describing what he had seen in and around Paris. He mentioned the tombs of Voltaire and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, two Enlightenment figures Rizal considered “fathers of modern ideas.” He had just begun his life in Europe and was becoming a great admirer of Voltaire and his crusade against religious fanaticism. Rousseau, “the odd man out among the philosophes,” critical of the excessive enthusiasm for human progress of thinkers like Voltaire (Bonoan 1992, 54–5), had yet to make his mark on his thinking. Yet, in what seemed to foreshadow his journey into the intellectual heart of European modernity, Rizal noted the figure of a hand emerging out of Rousseau’s tomb, holding a torch. He wrote, “Those who say that this is not in very good taste are right and moreover it is quite equivocal, because it could be said that he [i.e., Rousseau] set the world on fire or illuminated it” (Rizal 1961a, 134).

Rousseau’s role in shaping Rizal’s political ideas is a blurred spot in existing scholarship. While authors such as Raul Bonoan (1992) and Floro Quibuyen (1999) have acknowledged varying degrees of affinity between the ideas of Rousseau and Rizal, and Leon Ma. Guerrero (2007, 455) suggests that La Liga Filipina was based on “the comfortable theory of the social compact.” This relationship is largely unexplored. There seems to be a lack of interest, with many scholars preferring to explore Rizal through the optics of nationalism and/or classical liberalism (e.g., Guerrero 2007; Agoncillo 1974; Schumacher 1991; Anderson 1983; Hau 2000; Claudio 2019).

These are often used to construct the “unity” of Rizal’s ideas. Two divergent examples will suffice: John Schumacher’s (1991, 93) nationalist reading of Rizal’s *Noli Me Tangere*, Annotations to Morga, and

*El Filibusterismo* as forming “a unity, a carefully calibrated effort to point the way to the future independence of the Philippines,” and Guerrero’s (2013, 56) insistence that Rizal was a liberal who “[sought] for himself and the Filipinos the legal and constitutional rights of the Spaniards; it was only in resignation, in despair, that he became a nationalist.” Rizal was either a nationalist who used liberal notions to articulate that nationalism, or a liberal propagandist who became a nationalist out of “despair.” It is, of course, widely acknowledged that liberalism had a profound influence on Rizal. Javier De Pedro (2005, 34) reflects this consensus, arguing that understanding Rizal should begin with “the ideological struggles that, in the Philippines as in other territories under colonial rule, mixed liberal insights with nationalist aspirations.” Building on Guerrero’s (2013) thesis that Rizal was first and foremost a liberal, Lisandro Claudio (2019, xi) contends that “[liberalism] was the overarching lens through which Rizal viewed politics” and that it was his liberal politics “that led him to his pro-independence position.”

This article agrees with Quibuyen (1999) in taking issue with essentialist “liberal” readings of Rizal by exploring how Rizal complicated his liberal politics in the course of a brief, but remarkable, career as a reformist. However, it goes beyond Quibuyen by challenging the obsessive search for a coherent and unified Rizal that has dominated existing scholarship. The problem is not only with an essentially liberal Rizal, but also with all essentialist readings of his life and works. A Foucauldian sensibility is at work here, seeking to lift the veil of unity in order to see what has been concealed (Webb 2013, 52), a “questioning of the modern themes of genesis, teleology, continuity, totality and unified objects” (Barker 2000, 145). What new insights can be generated if this obsession with the “unity” of Rizal’s thoughts is set aside? This is not an exhaustive sweep of Rizal’s ideas, but a focused analysis of themes articulated in selected writings. The idea is not to proffer a definitive reading that excludes other possible readings, but to explore interpretive directions that allow those in the field of civic education to critically reflect on current practices. A deep dive into the past in search of a Rizal others supposedly missed, this is not.

This exposition argues that Rizal’s Voltairean activism, confronted by the reality of *ilustrado* fractiousness, would be eclipsed by Rousseau’s vision of a cohesive civic body with a “general will.” More specifically, it argues that Rizal, in seeking to establish an alternative political order through La Liga, shifted his normative emphasis from individual rights and freedoms to become an exponent of political and social cohesion, a turn prefiguring the modern communitarian attempt to set liberalism

on an even keel, with its emphasis on the need for community (Walzer 1990, 9). In invoking Rousseau's vision, it hopes to purvey a deeper understanding of the educative role of La Liga Filipina in Rizal's idea of the nation as an ethical project. Finally, the article elaborates on this role, exploring its implications for civic education using sociological concepts and insights from the anthropology and sociology of education, as well as studies on programs promoting civic engagement and participation among young people. Critically elaborating on the pedagogy of La Liga calls attention to how citizenship education may be situated in quotidian processes and spaces, how it may be complicit in systems of inequality, and how it could open up new possibilities.

### Not Quite the "Reluctant Revolutionary"

Clearly, Rizal came under the influence of the Enlightenment and, for a period marked by works like *Noli Me Tangere* (published in 1887), was a staunch liberal professing an intense dislike for organized religion and what he considered its fanatical exponents, the friars. For Guerrero (2007, 142), the message of *Noli Me Tangere* is unequivocal: "No progress, no justice, no reforms are possible in the Philippines because the Spanish friar is their enemy, and an enemy who cannot be defeated on his home-ground." To say, however, that Rizal is saying something different in *El Filibusterismo* is an understatement. In a dramatic departure from his obsession with the friars and frailocracy in *Noli Me Tangere*, the second novel assailed the Filipinos' lack of civic virtues and warned that independence will result in autocratic rule. Indeed, the friars were no longer the real enemies. Gone was the belief in Progress of Pilosopo Tasyo, and in its place one finds the terrible words of Padre Florentino about "a God who punishes our lack of faith, our vices, the little regard we have for dignity and civic virtues" (Rizal 1961b, 251). Simoun's insurrection failed because it was misguided:

[A]s long as the Filipino people do not have sufficient vigour to proclaim... their right to a life of their own in human society, and to guarantee it with their sacrifices, with their very blood; as long as we see our countrymen feel privately ashamed, hearing the growl of their rebelling and protesting conscience, while in public they keep silent and even join the oppressor in mocking the oppressed; as long as we see them wrapping themselves up in their selfishness and praising with forced smiles the most despicable acts, begging with their eyes for a share of

the booty, why give them independence? With or without Spain they would be the same, and perhaps, perhaps worse. What is the use of independence if the slaves of today will be the tyrants of tomorrow? (Rizal 1961b, 251-2)

Quibuyen's (1999, 7-10, 166) "critical hermeneutics" rightly concludes that two different perspectives on the nation, drawn from varying intellectual traditions, emerged in Rizal. These were most visible in *El Filibusterismo*. One—represented by Simoun's stern admonition to Basilio who placed his hopes on the teaching of the Spanish language—conceived the nation as an evolving community of language and culture, while the other, articulated by Padre Florentino, presents the nation ethically (i.e., as a community where "members were bound by a commitment to the common good"). Unfortunately, Quibuyen (1999, 166) ignores the inherent tension between these different ways of thinking about the nation, seeing them instead as "complementary perspectives" simply on the grounds that both are "nonracial and antistatist."

These "perspectives" point in different directions, recalling Homi Bhabha's (1990, 1-2) distinction: the nation as a "system of cultural signification" versus the nation as the "discipline of social polity" (Bhabha 1990, 1-2). Through the failure and death of Simoun and the luminous appearance of Padre Florentino, Rizal declared a shift. From a historical community of language and culture, whose existence was affirmed by European science, he now thought of the nation as a social body defined by civic virtue (Dumol and Camposano 2018, 126). The nation was no longer the unfolding of history, or Progress. It was now an artifact of discipline, a moral community where people no longer "[wrap] themselves up in their selfishness and [praise] with forced smiles the most despicable acts" (Rizal 1961b, 251). The ethical message of the novel is summed up by Guerrero (2007) who argues that, to Rizal's mind, the Filipinos were not ready for revolution because they were not yet worthy of independence. He adds, "[when] the individual had learned to value social good above personal advantage, and when these individuals had become a nation, then 'God would provide the weapon,' whatever it might be, whether revolution or otherwise, and independence would be won" (Guerrero 2007, 300).

Unfortunately, with respect to Simoun's failed insurrection, Guerrero (2007) could only say that Rizal was a "reluctant revolutionary" who "hesitates and draws back." He speculates: "The thought of revolution in real life may have called up too many 'bloody

apparitions'; it also suggested the many unexpected events, the twists and turns of circumstance, the sudden whims of individuals, on which the success of a revolution may hinge" (299). Rizal's clarity of vision is ultimately denied and Guerrero declares him "a leader overtaken not only by the hurry of history but also by a new generation with stronger lungs, nimbler feet, more ruthless and reckless, fresh and uncorrupted still by worldly wisdom and unwounded by defeat and disenchantment" (457).

*El Filibusterismo* is a treatise of sorts on revolution, a lengthy disquisition on how *not* to have a revolution that leads to genuine freedom. By the time he was writing the novel (and perhaps, earlier), Rizal was no longer a reformer pushing for assimilation and peaceful political emancipation (Guerrero 2007, 301), yet he was also convinced that revolution would have only tragic consequences for the people. Without the moral community suggested in the novel's closing chapter, armed seizure of state power can only mean today's slaves will be tomorrow's tyrants. The future cannot be won through plots and political manipulation. It cannot belong to the likes of Simoun for "[the] glory of saving a country cannot be given to one who has contributed to its ruin" (Rizal 1961b, 250). In a line reflecting Rizal's deep disillusionment with expatriate youth, Padre Florentino asks: "Where are you, young men and young women, who are to embody in yourselves the life-force that has been drained from our veins, the pure ideals that have grown stained in our minds, the fiery enthusiasm that has been quenched in our hearts?" (Rizal 1961b, 252).

By the late 1880s, the irresponsible behavior, lack of moral fiber, and fractiousness in the expatriate community would cause Rizal to undergo what De Pedro (2005, 164) describes as *metanoia*, "a profound change of heart, due to the anticipation of total failure in the project to which he devoted his whole life." Like his faith in the inevitability of Progress, Rizal's confidence in the reality of the nation would be undermined by the errant proclivities of his youthful colleagues. One can imagine him wrestling with an anomaly: How could he be so confident about the social and cultural fact of nationhood and not see it enacted by his well-educated compatriots? *El Filibusterismo*, it may be argued, was not so much a sequel to the first novel as it was a statement of a painful realization Rizal had the occasion to initially ventilate in two previous articles. *Sobre la Indolencia de los Filipinos* (Rizal 1961c) noted the absence of a "national sentiment" and declared that "A man in the Philippines is no more than an individual; he is not a member of

a nation” (Rizal 1961c, 257). Three months later, *Como se Gobiernan las Filipinas* (Rizal 1961c) derisively declared:

Concerning his country every Filipino thinks this way: Let her settle her affairs alone, save herself, protest, fight; I’m not going to lift a finger, I’m not the one to settle things; I’ve enough with my own affairs, my passions, and my whims. Let others pull out the chestnuts from the fire, afterwards we shall eat. Filipinos do not seem to know that triumph is the child of struggle, that joy is the flower of many sufferings and privations, and that redemption presupposes martyrdom and sacrifice. They believe that by lamenting, folding their arms, and letting things go on as they are, they have fulfilled their duty.

If the problem was that Filipinos did not constitute a civic community, then the campaign for liberal reforms in Spain had in fact been a misguided and futile exercise. In one of his letters in Tagalog, likely written in late 1891, Rizal said that the site of struggle was not Spain but the Philippines because “[medicine] should be brought near the patient” (Rizal 1961d, 739–40). The task at hand was to make real “Filipinos”—a task that can only be accomplished in the Philippines. Nothing more could be expected from the expatriate community: “The majority of our compatriots in Europe are afraid; they keep away from fire, and they are brave only so long as they are far from danger and in a peaceful country” (Rizal 1961d, 740). Writing to Marcelo H. Del Pilar in 1889, he said that it is in the Philippines “where we ought to sow if we wish to harvest” (Rizal 1961d, 408).

## Making Filipinos

Rizal, whom John Nery (2011, 46) describes as a man of many projects, must now pursue the grandest project of all (Dumol and Camposano 2018, 172). Only a week after his arrival in Manila in June 1892, La Liga Filipina was unveiled to a select group of individuals, which included Andres Bonifacio. The organization’s declared purposes were fairly broad, yet unambiguous: (1) “to unite the whole Archipelago into one, compact, vigorous, and homogeneous body”; (2) “mutual protection in every difficult situation and need”; (3) “defense against every violence and injustice”; (4) “development of education, agriculture, and commerce”; and (5) “the study and implementation of reforms” (Rizal 1961c, 303). Guerrero’s (2007, 331–2) reading of the

statutes of the organization points to “an underground government running parallel with the established regime.” Cesar Adib Majul’s (1959, 14) more perceptive and precise analysis, however, reveals the blueprint of an alternative political order that “completely disregarded Philippine ‘unity’ as either a colony or ecclesiastical province.”

In establishing specific economic, moral, and social relations among members, La Liga Filipina was aiming “to help the formation of a new community that was to be both national and Filipino in character” (Majul 1959, 13). In this way, a moral basis for revolution is laid: The individual, now a Filipino and a member of the national community, would have the right to revolt against a tyrannical colonial government and against an oppressive ecclesiastical order, both of which were alien in character (Majul 1959, 57). La Liga was clearly not libertarian in inspiration. The organization’s motto—*Unus Instar Omnium* or “one is worth all” (Rizal 1961c, 303)—was not a celebration of the individual’s pre-given rights but, rather, a recognition of the indispensability of political and social cohesion to the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms at the heart of any liberal reform program. Its real meaning becomes clear once it is considered that a member must “obey blindly and punctually all orders” and must “give preferential treatment to [other] members in all his acts” (Rizal 1961c, 304). Also, as regards daily transactions, should other things be equal, a member must “always favor a fellow member” (Rizal 1961c, 304), and “[every] violation of this article shall be severely punished” (Ibid.). Indeed, “[if] a member who is able to help another in a difficult situation or danger refused to do so, penalty shall be imposed on him equivalent at least to what the other has suffered” (Ibid.) This interesting turn in Rizal’s intellectual journey anticipates the modern tension within the broad liberal tradition brought by the communitarian critique of liberalism’s tendency to produce what Michael Walzer (1990, 9) describes as a “society... decomposed, without residue, into the problematic coexistence of [atomic] individuals.” Nonetheless, the communitarian prescription is not to roll back individual rights but to preserve social bonds as “essential for the flourishing of individuals and of societies” (Etzioni 2015, 2).

Duties literally come before rights. After outlining the structure, the duties of members are discussed, followed by those of the officers, and only afterwards are the rights of members taken up (Rizal 1961c, 303–6). There are six such rights, with five pertaining to various forms of assistance members can expect. These include rights

“to the moral, material, and pecuniary aid of his council and of the Liga Filipina,” to “demand that all fellow members favor him in his business or profession so long as he offers the same guarantees as the others”, and “[in] case of any difficult situation, grievance, or injustice, [to] invoke the full assistance of the Liga Filipina” (Rizal 1961c, 306). He may also “ask for capital to finance any business if funds are available in the treasury,” and “[from] all the establishments of members directly supported by the Liga Filipina... [to] ask for a discount on articles bought... or services rendered” (Ibid.).

### Intimations of Rousseau

La Liga was Rizal’s solution to the problem he described in *El Filibusterismo*: the absence of a national sentiment. For Quibuyen (1999, 179), “Rizal’s concept of national sentiment may... be compared with Rousseau’s (much-contested) ‘general will,’ as a moral attitude in the heart of every citizen that aims at the general good, and therefore, an expression of the moral freedom of the individual.” His critique of Benedict Anderson’s (1983) notion of an “imagined community” also brings up Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein’s (1991) reference to Rousseau’s question of “what makes a people a people?” (Quibuyen 1999, 287). Quibuyen, however, falls short in exploring Rousseau’s theory of the social contract as a way to clarify the meaning of La Liga. Rousseau’s influence on Rizal has not gone unnoticed. Other than Voltaire, Bonoan (1992) singles out Rousseau, a critic of the Enlightenment’s excessive confidence in reason, as having played an important role in the development of Rizal’s ideas. Rizal’s belief in natural revelation “includes Rousseau’s peculiar argument against the intellectualism of the philosophes: revelation resides also in conscience and the human heart” (Bonoan 1992, 60). It comes as no surprise then that La Liga addressed itself to the realm of sentiment, and not of reason.

For Bonoan (1992, 54–5), Rousseau’s focus “on the interior life of man and on the role of the heart, conscience, sentiments, feelings, and moral intuition in the conduct of moral life” tempered the cold rationalism of the Enlightenment, just as his celebration of the “noble savage’ [was]... an attempt to throw cold water on the Voltairean enthusiasm for present civilization and human progress.” He had “serious doubts... about the wisdom of relying on abstract principles like natural rights and natural freedom as the basis for a political

order” (Lund 2017). His concept of the social contract was predicated on this critical posture, even as it addressed the fundamental problem of political life that was “to find a form of association which will defend and protect with the whole common force the person and goods of each associate, and in which each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone, and remain as free as before” (Rousseau 1960, 445). In uniting with others through the contract, a person becomes a citizen who surrenders his natural liberty in exchange for civil liberty. “What man loses by the social contract is his natural liberty and an unlimited right to everything he tries to get and succeeds in getting; what he gains is civil liberty and the proprietorship of all he possesses” (Rousseau 1960, 447).

Rousseau’s social contract theory and its associated concept of the “general will” seem to have served as bases for resolving the problem of fractiousness and excessive individualism that Rizal became increasingly concerned with, and which caused his estrangement from the expatriate community. La Liga’s goal of “a compact, vigorous, and homogenous body” (Rizal 1961c, 303) may be compared to the goal of Rousseau’s social contract where “[each] of us puts his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will, and, in our corporate capacity, we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole” (Rousseau 1960, 445). Invoking the “general will” crystallizes the meaning of La Liga Filipina’s iron discipline: “[This] act of association creates a moral and collective body... receiving from this act its unity, its common identity, its life, and its will” (Rousseau 1960, 445). In this civil state, citizens acquire “moral liberty” as they are freed from the impulse of appetite, becoming real masters of themselves. Here lies the philosophical justification for La Liga’s “authoritarian” demand for obedience, which explains how this draconian feature might prevent slaves from becoming tyrants:

In order then that the social compact may not be an empty formula, it tacitly includes the undertaking, which alone can give force to the rest, that whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be compelled to do so by the whole body. This means nothing less than that he will be forced to be free; for this is the condition which, by giving each citizen to his country, secures him against all personal dependence. In this lies the key to the working of the political machine; this alone legitimizes civil undertakings, which, without it, would be absurd, tyrannical, and liable to the most frightful abuses. (Rousseau 1960, 447)

## Elaborating on La Liga's Pedagogy

Majul (1959, 13) believes that La Liga's primary aim was to lay the foundation for a Filipino national community by establishing among members certain moral, economic, and social bonds. Interestingly, other than the general purposes, the statutes contained no high-sounding principles. George Aseniero (2013, 31) rightly observes that "[one] is immediately struck by the language... austere, even severe, devoid of exhortations of any kind." The reader is presented mostly with regulations intended to "prepare habits among the people that would eventually weld them more and more into... [a] national community" (Majul 1959, 57). These habits inclined a person to act in a manner that tended "[toward] the benefit of his community as against purely personal or selfish interests" (Majul 1959, 40). Life should not be a struggle to survive and succeed to the utter disregard of others (Majul 1959, 40). The organization was designed for the educative role of forming people (and *a people*), not so much by communicating compelling ideas but by instilling habits that collectively comprised the "national sentiment." The time for abstract principles was over. In Dapitan, with all he had done in that place of exile, "being and acting as part of a community, living in solidarity" with the people, Rizal acted out this vision for all the world to see (Dumol and Camposano 2018, 180–1). Dapitan, it would seem, was the concluding argument.

Rizal's disappointment with the educated Filipino youth in Spain, with their fractiousness and excessive individualism, must have convinced him that this was the only way to align the wills of individuals towards the common good. La Liga represented a pedagogy—here taken to mean not just "teaching methods," but "moral, social, and cultural formation" (Anderson-Levitt 2011, 14) more broadly—aimed at making people imbibe habits and dispositions that will make them resist the pull of personal interests and relations in favor of an abstract society of anonymous others. The assumption was that people were driven not mainly by ideas, but by habits and dispositions. Community and solidarity were to become everyday realities through the ingrained recognition of common interests and habitually "choosing to look for collective rather than individual benefits" (Cox 1995, 4).

Creating the "national sentiment" focused on the crucial role of motivating and cognitive structures that contemporary sociological theory calls the "habitus." Pierre Bourdieu (1990a; 1990b) conceives of the habitus as a system of socially acquired habits and dispositions which functions "on the practical level as categories of perception and

assessment, or as classificatory principles, as well as... the organizing principles of action... constituting the social agent in his true role as the practical operator of the construction of objects” (Bourdieu 1990b, 13). These generative schemes account for the nonmechanical production of thoughts, perceptions, and actions by social agents (Bourdieu 1990a, 54–5). As Rizal envisioned a mechanism for internalizing a sense of community, La Liga may be seen as an attempt to orient how experience might be organized so that the civic community becomes immanent in the individual, and the individual, in turn, constitutes the community (Brooker 2000, 46).

It would seem too that the socialization process imagined for members of La Liga was meant to achieve one of the fundamental and homogenizing effects of the habitus—the production of a commonsense and taken-for-granted world secured on the basis of a durable consensus on the meaning of practice and the world, or doxa. This results in “the harmonization of agents’ experiences and the continuous reinforcement each of them receives from the expression, individual or collective... of similar or identical experiences” (Bourdieu 1977, 80). The doxa “causes practices and works to be immediately intelligible and foreseeable, and hence taken for granted” (Bourdieu 1977, 80). Although the statutes did not define homogeneity in any explicit sense, La Liga’s goal of uniting the Philippines into a “homogeneous body” that is also “compact” and “vigorous” may be taken to mean the “harmonization” of experiences and expressions that serves as a basis for unity (i.e., in the sense of Bourdieu’s doxa).

Recasting Filipino-ness in terms of what people actually did and/or were capable of doing given certain habits and dispositions, Rizal’s project anticipated contemporary perspectives on citizenship education. Bradley Levinson’s (2011) work on the anthropology of democratic citizenship education explores citizenship by raising the ethnographic question of how membership in a community is incorporated by people into their agency. Citizenship is constituted not only by rights and obligations arising from membership, but also and more importantly by “forms of agency and modalities of participation implicated by such membership” (Levinson 2011, 280). The emphasis is “on forms of action and subjectivity that are oriented to a public... [since] citizenship is not merely a juridical status granted by a state but a reciprocally engaged relationship between persons in the public sphere” (Ibid.).

Levinson (2011, 280) attempts a unified approach to understanding recent programs in formal democratic citizenship education, one of

the most important and active strands in global education reform. The view of citizenship he articulates partly emerges out of reflections on school-based civic and citizenship education (DCE) programs in so-called “new” or “transitional” democracies. Levinson notes that, “[in] virtually all DCE discourses and programs, there is broad agreement about the need to supplement ‘mere’ electoral democratization with more robust and far-reaching cultural change” (Levinson 2011, 291). There is also broad agreement that this kind of education cannot rely on the simple accumulation of knowledge that was the hallmark of traditional civic education, but must involve “new values, dispositions, skills, and knowledge” (291).

The importance attached to these elements reflect the influence of U.S.-based groups such as the Civitas International which exports programs on improving the capacities of young people to competently participate in politics. William Galston (2004, 263) provides a concise statement of these capacities: “[An] enlarged interest, a wider human sympathy, a sense of active responsibility for oneself, the skills needed to work with others towards goods that can only be obtained or created through collective action, and the powers of sympathetic understanding needed to build bridges of persuasive words to those with whom one must act.” This perspective is rooted in communitarianism, an Anglo-American ideological response to the perceived insufficient valuing of the community in Western societies (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 2016).

Sally Anderson (2011) takes the emphasis on “forms of agency” in understanding citizenship further in her research into Danish childhood education. Using the concept of “civil sociality,” she looks at “the ethnographic particulars and relational dilemmas of sharing space in spheres of interaction configured as civil or ‘public’” (Anderson 2011, 320). Focusing on forms of extradomestic childhood socialization in Denmark, Anderson (2011, 320) highlights the types of relations and interactions involved in the formation of citizens by exploring “what children might be learning about commonality, mutuality, and participatory democracy through taking part in voluntary social venues.” Civil sociality, as a process, requires leaving domestic spaces and relationalities in order to enter arenas of common activity (323). This use of sociality stems from Georg Simmel’s (1971, 24) discussion of socialization as “forms of being with and for one another... in which individuals grow together into a unity.”

Focusing on the types of relations and interactions, as well as habits, particularly habits of thought, provide a way “to think

through... the material practices of everyday culture” (Fiske 1992, 155). This attention to everyday life directs inquiry toward how nation-building might proceed “at the most banal and quotidian level of experience” (Benei 2011, 269). Expanding on the notion of the “sensorium,” for instance, Veronique Benei (2011, 269) investigates “the emotional sensory and embodied production entering into the daily manufacturing of nationhood and citizenship.” For Benei (2011, 275), exploring how powerful sensory resources are mobilized in the production of citizenship in spaces such as schools “helps bring to light... the untenability of a distinction between the construction of social persons and that of interiorized selves,” and allows for a better understanding of “the all-pervasive nature of all socialization processes.”

Benei’s argument coheres with those of Balibar and Wallerstein (1991, 94) who point out that how individuals “are socialized in the dominant form of national belonging” (Ibid.) disrupts the well-established binary that sets collective identity in opposition to individual identities. For them, “there is no individual identity that is not historical or, in other words, constructed within a field of social values, norms of behaviour and collective symbols” (Ibid.). Their discussion of the relative stability of national belonging clearly attests to the prescience of Rizal’s profoundly seditious project of hammering the *indio* into the shape of a Filipino through La Liga:

A social formation only reproduces itself as a nation to the extent that, through a network of apparatuses and daily practices, the individual is instituted as homo nationalis from cradle to grave, at the same time as he or she is instituted as homo economicus, politicus, religious... That is why the question of the nation form, if it is henceforth an open one, is, at bottom, the question of knowing under what historical conditions it is possible to institute such a thing: by virtue of what internal and external relations of force and also by virtue of what symbolic forms invested in elementary material practices? (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991, 93).

## Civic Education, Service Learning, and Citizenship

Toward the end of the 1880s, Rizal turned to German anthropological scholarship and cultural nationalism in delineating the contours of the imagined Filipino national community he conjured in *Noli Me Tangere* (see Anderson 1983). But just beneath this vision

of a nation, framed by the larger story of human progress, lurked the difficult and potentially messy question of whether or not Filipinos actually constituted a nation (Dumol and Camposano 2018, 67). The individualism and the infighting that Rizal personally witnessed disrupted this narrative. The intractable gap between nation as a way to frame identity and nation as actually existing civic community would reshape his politics.

In her reading of Rizal, Caroline Hau (2000, 48–9) credits him with having constructed a knowable “Filipino” community through a narrative that conjures that community in temporal and spatial terms. She argues that, “[the] very act of constructing a Filipino national community as ‘knowable’... is never just a matter of artistic imagination, but an ethical and political decision to speak of ‘the Philippines’ to ‘fellow Filipinos’” (Hau 2000, 49). What needs to be pointed out, however, is that Rizal went beyond simply articulating the imagined community, and explicitly thought of the nation as an ethical project. Disillusioned by the errant ways of youthful Filipinos in Spain, he was also influenced by Rousseau’s notion of the social contract which supplied the philosophical basis for such an undertaking. Just as Rousseau was critical of the Enlightenment’s excessive confidence in reason and progress, so was Rizal critical of the rationalist yearnings among *ilustrados* for liberal rights and political representation.

For Rizal, the creation of a civic community not unlike that envisioned by Rousseau, was essential to the enjoyment of genuine freedom. Without this, independence was an illusion, a calamitous path leading only to native tyranny. This was the ultimate purpose of the discipline La Liga Filipina sought to impose on its members. It was to be the educative mechanism for acquiring habits and dispositions that reduced the fractious wills of individuals into a collective “general will” whose emergence created the civic community: “When a people reach these heights, God provides the weapon, and the idols and the tyrants fall like a house of cards, and freedom shines in the first dawn” (Rizal 1961b, 251). This attempt to dissolve the individual into the organic unity of the civic body could not have been imagined solely within the hopeful narrative of progress and the liberal commitment to individual liberties that it engendered.

The logic of La Liga has relevance for the contemporary struggle to make democracy work in the Philippines. The decade following the fall of Ferdinand Marcos saw academics highlighting the absence of a viable sense of a larger, abstract community of anonymous others as among the chief obstacles in democratizing society (Licuanan 1989;

Zialcita 1997; Mulder 1997; David 1998; Abueva 1997; Diokno 1997). A policy paper in the late 1980s, prepared by a team led by Prof. Patricia Licuanan for the Senate Committee on Education, Culture and the Arts, called attention to the “weaknesses” in the Filipino character that centered on self-interest and lack of regard for the common good. The paper took stock of the challenges facing the country and its fragile political institutions in the aftermath of the EDSA revolt:

Despite our great display of people’s power, now we are passive once more, expecting our leaders to take all responsibility for solving our many problems. The task of building our nation is an awesome one. There is need for economic recovery. There is need to re-establish democratic institutions and to achieve the goals of peace and genuine social justice. Along with these goals, there is a need as well to build ourselves as a people. (Licuanan 1989)

In the 1990s, a number of scholars would elaborate on this theme. For Fernando Zialcita (1997), Filipinos have a “weak sense of public good” and the idea of a larger society beyond friends and family was still too abstract for many. Niels Mulder (1997, 67) points to a pronounced “absence of [a] localized positive ethics of the public world” and what counts for the public sphere is morally vacuous and exhibit “no other culture... than the rhetoric of rapacious, dynastic politicians.” Beyond family members, intimates, and friends lies an amoral world of political and economic expediency where one struggles to get ahead but carries no responsibility. Randolph David (1998, 119–20) bewails the preference among many Filipinos for private coping mechanisms that “do not address the problems of living in an increasingly complex society.”

According to Jose Abueva (1997, 20–1), the problem of democratization relates to: “(1) the building of sound, functional institutions, governmental and non-governmental, through which the new democratic political system shall operate; and (2) the shaping of an appropriate, supporting political culture consisting of civic values, sentiments, attitudes, evaluations, and behavior.” Democracy was not only defined by the presence of competitive elections, broad citizenship and suffrage, and respect for basic civil and political liberties and minority rights (its “procedural meaning”). More importantly, it was about “effecting” the people’s will through the processes of governance (its “substantive meaning”). For participants in the University of the

Philippines-backed Democracy Project that gathered representatives from academe and civil society, genuine democratization entails far more than a return to the system of elite and clan politics that prevailed before Martial Law (Diokno 1997, 1). The fundamental problem, in Maria Serena Diokno's (1997, 34) synthesis of the discussions, was on "how to develop a sense of community and public good, and how to empower the people."

Making democracy work is less about reengineering the country's republican institutions and has more to do with laying the cultural basis for genuine participation, that is to say, citizenship. Previous interventions, based largely on a moralizing pedagogy that merely preached the virtue of citizenship, have obviously not delivered. Elaborating on the pedagogy of Rizal's *La Liga* calls attention to the question of how citizenship education and nation-building might be situated in the quotidian, and thus accomplished in everyday life. What emerges that is of practical significance to civic educators is the idea that while nations are indeed "imagined" (Anderson 1983), they are also inscribed in bodies as habits and dispositions and enacted in sensory and visceral ways (Benei 2011, 272). Responding to the lack of cohesion among young and educated Filipinos in Spain, Rizal, like Rousseau, raised the question of "What makes a people a people?" Or, in Balibar and Wallerstein's (1991, 94) words, "by virtue of what internal and external relations of force and also by virtue of what symbolic forms invested in elementary material practices?"

How is it possible then for people to learn to transcend the pull of personal and familial ties and to situate themselves within this larger community of anonymous others? One approach that has attracted interest in recent decades is the use of service learning in promoting civic participation. As a form of experiential education linking community service with the formal curriculum (David 2009), service learning involves the application of "knowledge, skills, critical thinking, and wise judgment to address genuine community needs" (Mantooth and Fritz 2006, 38). Considered by advocates to be effective in enhancing both character development and academic skills, service learning is also widely seen as an effective method in "[preparing] students to become engaged citizens, by expanding their understanding of social problems and the role of civic action in solutions to these problems" (David 2009).

In the Philippines, there is broad recognition of the value of community involvement as a complement to formal schooling at the tertiary level. An important impetus has been the enactment in

2001 of the National Service Training Program (NSTP) with its three components: military training, civic welfare training, and literacy training service (Anorico 2019, 1). Community service, however, is typically not an integral part of an academic subject but a separately managed “community outreach” program of educational institutions (Torres 2019, 66). There is even less emphasis on community service in the country’s K to 12 Basic Education Program where civic skills are not among those targeted for acquisition (Department of Education 2019). In 2005, prior to the enactment of K to 12, the Department of Education’s policy guidelines (Department of Education 2005, 7) acknowledged that teachers tend to “fall back on traditional expository modes like lecturing, question-and-answer, dictation exercise, and practice tests.” Although a Citizens’ Training Program was included in the original design of K to 12, this was not released by the Department of Education (Dina S. Ocampo, personal communication).

In the Philippines, there is limited evidence for the effectiveness of service learning as an approach to promoting civic engagement and participation in the country (Pingul 2015, 66). In the United States, however, a growing number of studies have linked service-learning programs to increases in students’ commitment to civic participation (e.g., Melchoir 1998; Kahne and Westheimer 2003; Billig, Root, and Jesse 2005; McFarland and Thomas 2006; Hart, Donnelly, Youniss, and Atkins 2007). Joseph Kahne and Joel Westheimer (2003, 57) have documented “statistically significant increases in students’ ability and desire to understand and act on pressing social needs, in their willingness to devote time to addressing these needs, and in their confidence in being able to act on their beliefs as a result of their participation in these programs.” Daniel Hart and his colleagues (2007, 213), on the other hand, report “that civic participation in adulthood can be increased through community service participation in adolescence.” Summing up the evidence, Jane David (2009) writes that, “[the] strongest effects have generally been found for service learning programs that have the explicit aim of developing active citizenship.”

## Caveats and Guideposts for Reimagining Citizenship

While Bourdieu’s notion of the habitus explains how citizenship is embodied through habits and dispositions, it also raises crucial issues of difference and inequality. The habitus, as Dina Bowman (2010, 6) points out, “reflects and reinforces class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality and other social classifications... [it] is social and individual,

in that it reflects and reinforces social classifications and is a reflection of an individual's lived experience." Used in conjunction with the associated notions of field and capital, the habitus "highlights how power structures are imposed on and incorporated in individuals" (Bowman 2010, 7). As a socially embedded practice enabled and shaped by beliefs, values, tastes, habits, and predispositions, citizenship participation is the result of participatory resources—social, economic, and cultural capital—acquired through socialization (Wood 2014, 16). For Bronwyn Wood (2014, 2–3), the prevailing homogeneous vision of citizenship evoked in contemporary school curricula fails to account for the different ways citizenship is experienced and expressed by differently positioned actors.

There is a need to critically engage citizenship imagined as the work of autonomous agents. As Jethro Pettit (2016) argues, civic engagement among the marginalized and the poor occurs "against the backdrop of complex histories of exclusion, discrimination and violence." The latter do not simply decide to become active citizens since their survival, as well as access to income and services, hinge on patronage relations, just as their actions are shaped by embodied norms that constrain agency. Citing the result of a multinational inquiry into multiple dimensions of poverty and exclusion, Pettit (2016) points out that those living in impoverished conditions "often collude with power rather than engaging as citizens to challenge it." Bodies enact power and "[we] have somatic and emotional reflexes that serve as living maps of our past encounters with norms of power, leading us to reproduce and comply with structures of domination"(Ibid.).

Devoid of context, a one-size-fits-all approach ignores differences in power and unequal access to participatory resources between groups. It also asserts an abstract notion of belonging that, for Wood (2014, 4), does little to engage with the highly variegated ways citizenship is both understood and experienced in different communities and how this intersects with broader cultural narratives. Differences in levels of interrelated economic, cultural, and social capital shape patterns of spatial mobility and the scales of citizenship awareness and action, resulting in locally or globally focused citizenship orientations (Wood 2014, 8, 13). On the other hand, globalization is a profoundly transgressive process unbundling citizenship with the territorial nation-state (Basch, Schiller, and Blanc 1994; Appadurai 1996; Vertovec 1999; Sassen 2002; Ong 2006), producing what Saskia Sassen (2002, 5, 22) calls "rhetorical openings for the emergence of new types of political subjects and new spatialities for politics" or for "new forms of

citizenship practices and identities.” Greg Dimitriadis (2010, 196) sums up the role of globalization in the development of youth identities:

Young people are growing up in a world increasingly marked by new, massive disparities in wealth, the worldwide circulation of (often rigidly fundamentalist) ideologies and belief systems, a dizzying array of signs and symbolic resources dislodged from their traditional moorings, as well as a veritable explosion of new technologies. Youth are now trying to find their “place(s)” in this world, “moving” across this terrain in ways we are only beginning to understand and appreciate. As recent work is making clear, young people are crafting new identities and social networks using a range of globally generated and proliferating resources. Young people are “moving,” both literally and figuratively, crossing national borders with their bodies as well as imaginations, crafting new and unexpected kinds of identity.

## Conclusion: A Transformative Approach to Citizenship

In his attempt to transform the *indio* into the Filipino through La Liga Filipina, Rizal purveyed a vision of the nation as a civic community. Shaped by his disillusionment with expatriate youth and influenced by Rousseau’s social contract theory and critique of Enlightenment rationalism, this civic community was conceived not as the inevitable fruit of history, but as an ethical project premised on the acquisition of habits and dispositions that incline a member to act “toward the benefit of his community as against purely personal or selfish interests” (Majul 1959, 40). Appreciating this aspect of Rizal’s work should provide contemporary readers access into one of the key ideological conundrums shaping contemporary liberal theory: How does one strike a working balance between individual liberty and the human need for community, at a time when contemporary mobilities create societies in perpetual motion (Walzer 1990, 21)? Core elements of the pedagogy informing this vision is sustained in contemporary sociological theory, particularly theoretical perspectives on the embodied production of citizenship, as well as studies on the effectiveness of service learning programs in increasing civic engagement. Rizal’s vision speaks to the post-EDSA project of democratization by calling attention to the need to lay the cultural basis for genuine political participation through civic education.

This approach in making democracy work has its shortcomings. A homogeneous notion of citizenship as the work of autonomous agents is often implied in civic education programs. This abstract model is unable to account for unequal access to participatory resources and the different ways citizenship is experienced by differently positioned actors. Fortunately, Bourdieu's perspective on how inequality is embodied through habits and dispositions facilitates critical reflections on the promise of civic education. Just as important, as Bourdieu and Loic Wacquant (1992) clarify that, the habitus is not fate. While it is durable, it is not eternal: "Being a product of history, it is an *open system of dispositions* that is constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structures" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 133). Civic education then should be reflexive, inquiring into ways that notions and practices of citizenship may be complicit in systems of inequality. Pettit (2016) offers a sketch of this reflexive and "transformative" pedagogy:

A transformative approach to citizen engagement... would include action learning processes that focus not only on critical reason and awareness, but would complement this with more reflexive, creative and embodied methods of learning and practice. These methods would draw on the imagination and envisioning of cultural change, and would use multidimensional methods of narrative, storytelling, visual and artistic expression, music, movement and theatre. Such creative methods can evoke more felt and experiential knowledge of the past and deeper re-imaginings of possible futures.

At this point, it is instructive to recall one crucial aspect of Rizal's project that bears upon the issue of reflexivity. The civic community La Liga was meant to create included only the Christianized lowland population of the Philippine archipelago. This is proven by the 1889 outline of Philippine history Rizal prepared for the Asociacion Internacional de Filipinistas which distinguished "*indios*" from "Races and Independent Regions which include all Muslim sultanates, independent tribes, Negritos, etc" (Ocampo 1998, 209). The latter category was an afterthought as evidenced by letters between Rizal and Ferdinand Blumentritt (Aguilar 2005, 620; Ocampo 1998, 209–10). Filomeno Aguilar (2005, 620) explains that it was Blumentritt's intervention that resulted in the inclusion of the so-called "independent races and regions" within the territorial area

designated by Las Islas Filipinas. Rizal and the *ilustrados*, “molded by the nomenclature and reach of the Spanish colonial state... excluded the zones that had eluded the state’s incorporative advances” (621). How much of this history of exclusion is obscured in contemporary civic education programs? How is it contributing to the continuing marginalization of indigenous groups?

As Ines Dussel (2010, 34) asserts, “[one] cannot sleep over one’s own certainties, nor perform critical acts that repeat themselves and say nothing new.” There is a need to re-imagine democratic citizenship as an open-ended process defined not only by expanding political engagement, but also the acquisition of reflexive consciousness. A politics of incessant critical reflection and a “[discourse] about experience and revision of social activity in the light of new knowledge” (Barker 2000, 390) is called for. These should create opportunities for empowering marginalized groups as well as for re-visioning citizenship beyond effective participation in the processes and spaces of geographically confined institutions. A reimagined civic education should entertain “the possibility of new forms of citizenship practices and identities” (Sassen 2002, 22) framed by the idea of citizenship itself as an “incomplete institution... not meant ever to be complete” (Sassen 2003).

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