

# impact of john stuart mill's philosophies on philippines' society essay sample

[Politics](#), [Democracy](#)



John Stuart Mill's social, political, and economic philosophies are widely applied in the Philippine setting. His conception of social liberty, feminism, political democracy and economic democracy is practiced in the country, although not holistically applied or not well-carried out at some cases. Philippines, as a democratic country, adapts the libertarian culture that Mill believes to be the best for achieving intellectual and social development. Every Filipino citizen is sovereign and free to do what he wants as long as he does not harm others. Mill's proposed ways to obtain 'social liberty', which are having the political liberties (rights) and having the constitutional system are being exercised on the country. Freedom of speech is one Filipino right stated in the 1987 Philippine Constitution. Mill advocates freedom of speech in his work *On Liberty* and argues that free discourse is a necessary condition for intellectual and social progress.

Mill argues that airing opinions is productive as individuals tend to abandon fallacious beliefs if they are active in exchanging ideas and in re-examining beliefs in debate process. Voting right, that exercises 'tyranny of the majority', is also included in the Philippine Bill of Rights. In the country, elections of government officials are being conducted to follow public choice. Mill advocates the tyranny of the masses 'in which decisions made by a majority place its interests so far above those of an individual or minority group' and in which tyranny of political rulers are being opposed. Women's rights are also stressed in the Philippines. Filipino women are empowered and protected by law. Feminist groups are actively advocating women empowerment. Mill also advocates feminism. In his book *The Subjection of*

Women, he argued that the difference between men and women is insignificant and equality should prevail on both sexes.

However, despite having these rights and despite adapting liberty and political democracy, the country still has perverted system that is characterized by injustice, oppression, and poverty. The government does not exercise strong implementation of rights and laws. It does not prosecute or penalize those people and groups harming others or corrupting the nation's system itself and abusing other people's rights. Voting system, for example, is intruded by vast corruption. Vote buying of political candidates prevails, and many Filipinos especially the poor couldn't help but accept money offers because of extreme poverty. This thus manipulates election results and public choice has been dominated by political despots' interests. In this case, the goal of voting rights has not been achieved because the voting system is characterised by 'tyranny of political rulers'. Social liberty, which is the protection from the 'tyranny of political rulers' as defined by Mill, has not been truly achieved despite the Philippine system having liberal and democratic characteristics.

In this view, Mill's utilitarian principle has not been well-practised by the country's government. Although the government's intent is to give the greatest good for the greatest number, its actions have not been effective on achieving its will. Instead, there is domination of political officials, elite, and capitalists that violates human rights and oppresses the mass. The case of freedom of speech of the Filipino poor is also a problem in society. Freedom of speech, according to Mill, has the goal of 'searching for and discovering

the truth' as a way to further knowledge. However, on the case of the poor, this 'furthering of knowledge' doesn't seem to apply even if they have freedom of speech. Most of the poor are deprived of their rights for education. Many are illiterate; many did not finish their education. In this view, the goal of 'furthering knowledge' seems to be difficult to achieve since the poor, who is using freedom of speech, is uneducated and unable to understand 'knowledge' itself.

Oppression of the mass is also seen in this perspective. The poor is deprived of their rights for education. In this case, corruption and interests of the powerful could also be seen as the cause of human rights deprivation in the Philippines. Mill's utilitarianism is again not well-practiced by the government as it hasn't been able to protect Filipino mass' rights. Even in Philippines' economy, only the minority benefits from the fruits of business and production. Economic democracy is not well-implemented in the country. Economic democracy, said Mill, is substituting capitalist businesses into workers' cooperatives so that workers would have more benefits and power for their own welfare. In Philippines' status quo, the capitalist system is growing and workers' welfare is being set aside. Profits of businesses mostly go to the capitalists, while workers earn a minimum wage and are not given benefits that workers are supposed to have.

The country's economic progress is characterized by development aggression, where only the minority benefits from the development. Public-Private Partnership (PPP), privatization and deregulation are some market economy regulations in the country being opposed by socialist groups

because of its oppressing characteristics. These, according to them, pose grave threat to the mass' welfare because price of products and services would go higher while the mass' income stays the same. Along with the rising population, poverty rate and unemployment rate would go higher, thus it would be harder to maintain living. Mill agrees with Malthusian law of diminishing returns, saying that as working population goes higher the wage of each worker declines at a higher rate. He believed that population control was essential for improving the condition of the working class so that they might enjoy the fruits of the technological progress and capital accumulation.

Mill then advocated birth control, so does the Philippines as government implements Reproductive Health (RH) Law. Moreover, the Philippines has progressive taxation which Mill believes to be the most effective on achieving 'equality on taxation' between the rich and the poor. Personal income tax rates vary according to the personal annual taxable income. For example, those who have annual taxable income of less than Php 10, 000 pays a 5% income tax rate, while those who have annual taxable income of Php 500, 000 pays a 32% income tax rate. Clearly, Mill had many impacts on the Philippines' society, politics, and economics. These include freedom of speech, suffrage, feminism, government's utilitarian intent, market economy, birth control and progressive taxation. Mill's philosophies have all been a great help on the Philippines' development as a country.

#### References:

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