

**THE SINGAPORE MODEL IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION:  
AUTHORITARIAN MODERNISM, MERITOCRACY, AND THE NATIONAL  
DISCIPLINE PHILOSOPHY**

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**Annotation:** According to this article, the Singaporean development model is among the most sophisticated and stable examples of Asian authoritarian modernism. Through social discipline, meritocracy, and strong centralised governance, the model was able to strike a balance between economic growth and social stability. Particularly in light of the evolution of contemporary postcolonial cultures, the examination of this concept within the context of social philosophy is highly pertinent.

**Keywords:** education, system, corruption, legal, moral, socio-philosophical, crime.

Through meritocracy, strong centralised administration, and social discipline, the Singapore model of development—one of the most stable and intricate expressions of Asian authoritarian modernism—managed to maintain social stability and economic progress in society. Particularly with regard to the evolution of contemporary postcolonial nations, the examination of this concept within the context of social philosophy is highly pertinent. In addition to being an effective example of economic modernisation, Singapore's experience has helped to establish a new paradigm for reformatting the ontological relationship between the state and society.

Meritocracy in Singapore is seen not only as a social elevator, but also as a criterion of social justice. In this system, the rise in the social pyramid through individual work and intelligence is institutionally ensured, which in turn strengthens the hope for advancement in society, rather than social discontent. However, this approach leads to the assessment of society only on the basis of the “criterion of efficiency”, and as a result, the needs of socially vulnerable groups may be ignored. From a critical point of view, P. Bourdieu interprets this application of meritocracy as the reproduction of social “cultural capital”, which sanctifies social stratification<sup>1</sup> (Bourdieu, 1977, s. 95).

Authoritarian modernism is a political system that values effective governance over democracy. In Singapore, this is particularly evident in the state paradigm led by Lee Kuan Yew, which is characterized by the slogan “authoritarianism for the people, not against the people.” This approach guarantees economic development at the expense of paternalistic control over society and the restriction of the political will of citizens. As S. Huntington has argued, “strong authoritarian stability is preferable to modernized but unstable democratic systems.”<sup>2</sup> (Huntington, 2004, s. 112). However, this idea has been criticized by J. Habermas, who argues

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<sup>1</sup> Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. London: Sage. – B. 95.

<sup>2</sup> Huntington, S. (2004). *Political Order in Changing Societies*. Moskva: Progress-Traditsiya. – B. 112.

that legitimacy should be ensured not only through economic success, but also through communicative consent.<sup>3</sup> (Habermas, 1996, s. 214).

National discipline, on the other hand, forms the humanitarian foundation of Singaporean social life. It is integrated with the historical memory of the nation and the Confucian social order, reinforcing the concepts of collective consciousness, social responsibility and loyalty to the state. In this approach, members of society prioritize not their own "me", but "we". In particular, based on Confucianism and Eastern social harmony, discipline takes the form of a "moral order", which also strengthens political legitimacy<sup>4</sup> (Bell, 2015, s. 67). But under the guise of such moralized discipline, civil liberties and critical thinking can be eroded. Critically, discipline in the Singapore model is a discipline normalized and ideologically shaped by the state, which poststructuralist scholar M. Foucault describes as "the internal technology of the society of control."<sup>5</sup> (Foucault, 1977, s. 201). Through this disciplinary control, the citizen becomes a subject "subjugated" by the state, not only economically but also morally. This analysis shows that although the Singapore model combines meritocracy, authoritarian modernism, and national discipline in an integrated way, it is a system that needs to be balanced in terms of social freedom, individual difference, and civic engagement. Therefore, when this model is transplanted by other countries, it can exacerbate social dissonance if its specific cultural, historical, and social contexts are not taken into account.

The patterns and traits of the growth of small, medium, and even large enterprises as well as private entrepreneurship are determined by corruption. The tendency to get around administrative obstacles in the commercial sector increases with their size, and corruption is a major factor in this. To further fight corruption, the state fabricates administrative elements under a variety of guises. Accordingly, this alone encourages the growth of unofficial ties inside the country's economy.

The Republic of Uzbekistan has implemented several reforms in the fight against corruption. One such reform was the adoption of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Combating Corruption" No. O'RQ-419 on January 3, 2017, which aims to regulate relations in the field of combating corruption. "Corruption is defined as the unlawful use of a person's position or official position for the purpose of obtaining material or non-material benefit for personal gain or the benefit of other persons, as well as the unlawful presentation of such benefit," according to Article 3 of this law.

In conditions of state legal coercion, power is exercised by the bureaucracy and in the interests of the bureaucracy. Therefore, the problems of entrepreneurship and citizens can be solved in practice only with the help of corruption. Many vital problems of economic and social development are solved in practice in this way. Economic losses from corruption include insufficient collection of budget revenues, and the increased state anti-corruption efforts in the context of the economic crisis make it possible to reduce corruption. This indicates that political

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<sup>3</sup> Habermas, J. (1996). *Between Facts and Norms*. Cambridge: MIT Press. – B. 214.

<sup>4</sup> Bell, D. (2015). *The China Model: Political Meritocracy and the Limits of Democracy*. Princeton University Press. – B. 67.

<sup>5</sup> Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Pantheon Books. – B. 201.

and administrative mechanisms for combating corruption in government agencies are a priority. The structure of the damage caused by corruption is largely determined by the structure of the economic system. Regions with a similar industry structure have a similar structure of damage. This once again demonstrates the importance of taking into account the specifics of the region when acting against corruption. The greatest tangible damage is caused by corruption as a result of the failure to fully collect budget revenues at all levels. The main causes of corruption are: increased state intervention in the economy; increased gross tax burden; decreased level of "social services" provided by the state; decreased level of income retained by enterprises; complexity and contradictions of the legislation regulating economic activity.

Increasing government effectiveness in public administration and authority both domestically and internationally, utilising information transparency in management decision-making, and incorporating "e-government" technologies into the framework of management decision-making in Russian society are all examples of political management mechanisms for fighting corruption in state bodies. Instead of fighting corruption, today's ruling class is more concerned with creating new corrupt political tools to unlawfully take or hold onto state power. Therefore, civil society organisations that are engaged in lessening the detrimental socioeconomic effects of political corruption should be given priority in the fight against contemporary corrupt practices.

The following should be included in the political and ideological mechanisms of anti-corruption action in state authorities: firstly, the formation of an anti-corruption mentality and anti-corruption culture of citizens; secondly, the introduction of codes of conduct for civil servants; thirdly, the creation of a system of special information channels (hotlines) to publicize corruption cases in government structures, and the creation of discussion forums on reducing corrupt relations in the Internet space. It is also recommended to conduct a well-thought-out personnel policy in state authorities, including a renewal policy, that is, to conduct a "clean hands" operation. As a result, those who have committed and continue to commit corrupt offenses (crimes) should be dismissed and held accountable. At the same time, it is necessary to establish control over the adequate material support of the activities of the administrative state elite and increasing the effectiveness of this activity, including through the use of social mechanisms.

The authority of government agencies must be divided according to the many kinds of work they carry out. Eliminating institutional conflicts of interest, defining task delegation areas, and excluding certain corrupt activities from the state apparatus are all important aspects of task distribution. Other changes that should be made include reducing excessive control, requiring the implementation of administrative procedures, and implementing "e-government" technologies widely. The degree of corruption will be significantly reduced as a result of these improvements taken together.

It's crucial to remember that practically all recent research indicates that decreasing corruption is linked to improved well-being as well as decreased income inequality and more effective social spending, notably on health and education.