

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIO-PHILOSOPHICAL
FOUNDATIONS OF ANTI-CORRUPTION MECHANISMS IN EDUCATION:
INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
UZBEKISTAN**

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ABSTRACT	KEYWORDS
Fighting corruption is defined as one of the priority areas of state policy in New Uzbekistan within the Development Strategy for 2022–2026 [1] and the "Uzbekistan — 2030" Strategy [2]. In the sphere of education, the "Corruption-Free Sector" project has been implemented in higher education since 2019 [3]. Within the framework of this project, internal departmental regulations were aligned with international standards, educational process documentation was digitized via the "HEMIS" information system, and an anti-corruption compliance system along with a conflict-of-interest declaration mechanism were introduced.	

Introduction

At the same time, the effectiveness of institutional measures depends on the socio-philosophical foundation upon which they rest. World experience shows that countries that have significantly curbed corruption in education followed different paths; however, in all of them, anti-corruption mechanisms were harmonized with the value system of society. Finland and Singapore have held the highest positions for many years in the Corruption Perceptions Index published by Transparency International [4].

The objective of this article is to conduct a comparative analysis of the socio-philosophical foundations of anti-corruption mechanisms in the educational systems of the United States, Singapore, and Finland, and to identify opportunities for adapting them to the conditions of Uzbekistan. These three countries were selected because they represent three ideal-typical pathways to achieving anti-corruption stability: liberal-institutional, state-disciplinary, and trust-based.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Analyzing the relationship between civil society and democratic institutions, A. de Tocqueville demonstrated that voluntary associations of citizens independent of the state serve as a key factor in ensuring a balance between liberty and civic responsibility [5]. R. Dworkin interprets law as a system inextricably linked to moral principles and grounded in integrity [6]. A. Fung analyzed how various forms of civic participation impact the legitimacy, fairness, and effectiveness of governance [7]. Within the framework of social capital theory, F. Fukuyama substantiates trust as the cultural foundation of economic and social well-being [8], while R. Putnam highlighted the impact of civic engagement and networks of mutual trust on institutional performance [9].

Singapore's experience was detailed by Lee Kuan Yew in his memoirs [10]; S. Huntington theoretically substantiated the critical importance of political order and strong institutions during modernization [11]. Among local researchers, Sh.M. Jiyanova [12], R.R. Shodmanov [13], and H.Sh. Shakhriyrov [14] studied the legal aspects of anti-corruption institutions in developed countries, while S. Shomurodova [15], as well as J.Q. Yusubov and Z.A. Ochilova [16], examined the pedagogical and assessment characteristics of the Finnish educational system. However, the socio-philosophical foundations of these foreign models — sources of legitimacy, state-individual relations, and value systems — have not previously been the subject of comparative philosophical inquiry.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study utilized comparative-historical, ideal-typical, structural-systemic, hermeneutic, and axiological methods of analysis. Each model was evaluated across five key criteria: philosophical foundation, primary anti-corruption mechanism, source of legitimacy, the social role of education and teachers, and systemic limitations. In identifying the constraints of these models, J. Habermas's theory of communicative action [17] and M. Foucault's concept of disciplinary power [18] were applied as critical analytical frameworks.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

1. The US Model: Civil Society, the Rule of Law, and Institutional Transparency

The foundation of the US experience rests on liberal philosophical traditions — J. Locke's ideas on natural rights and A. de Tocqueville's concepts of civic association [5]. In this model, the primary agent in the fight against corruption is not the state, but an active civil society: non-governmental organizations, independent media, professional associations, and parent councils exercise continuous public oversight over educational institutions.

The rule of law serves as the second pillar of this system. As interpreted by R. Dworkin, the power of law manifests in its coherence and alignment with moral principles [6]. Therefore, US schools place significant emphasis on fostering respect for the law and civic responsibility through civics education. The third pillar is institutional transparency: at the federal level, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) adopted in 1966 [19], alongside state-level open records laws, grants citizens the right to request public records from government agencies and public educational institutions. As A. Fung demonstrated, citizen participation enhances the legitimacy and accountability of administrative decisions [7].

Nevertheless, this model exhibits specific limitations. G. Biesta criticizes the over-subordination of education to measurable indicators and normative standards, arguing that it risks pushing aside its

broader democratic and ethical aims [20]. Furthermore, access to transparency mechanisms is unequally distributed across social groups: under conditions of socio-economic stratification, public oversight risks becoming a tool utilized primarily by more resource-rich segments of society.

2. The Singapore Model: Meritocracy, Strong Governance, and National Discipline

In a short historical period, Singapore transformed from a country with widespread corruption in the 1960s into one of the least corrupt nations in the world. Lee Kuan Yew attributed this success to the firm political will of the leadership, the selection of the most capable and honest personnel for public service, and absolute intolerance toward corruption [10]. The Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB) reports directly to the Prime Minister's Office and operates independently of other ministries [12]; competitive remuneration for civil servants is combined with strict accountability measures [13]. From a socio-philosophical perspective, this model relies on three core principles:

- **Meritocracy:** Allocates social status based on ability and performance rather than origin or personal connections, establishing "honestly achieved success" as a core moral standard.
- **Strong State (Authoritarian Modernism):** Prioritizes economic development and social order; S. Huntington substantiated the decisive importance of strong institutions and political order in modernizing societies [11].
- **National Discipline:** Draws upon Confucian traditions of social harmony and hierarchical responsibility, subordinating individual interests to the collective good. In education, these principles manifest through a rigorous and transparent examination system combined with highly selective standards for pedagogical personnel.

However, from a philosophical standpoint, the Singapore model contains inherent contradictions. J. Habermas emphasizes that the true source of legitimacy is not economic performance, but social consensus derived from uncoerced communication [17]; in Singapore, consensus largely takes the form of top-down managed agreement. Viewed through M. Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power, norms function here not merely through external coercion, but through internalized control [18]. Furthermore, as P. Bourdieu and J.-C. Passeron observed, meritocratic selection can mask the unequal distribution of cultural capital as a "natural" difference in talent, thereby reproducing social stratification [21]. Thus, while the institutional elements of the Singapore experience (an independent anti-corruption body, meritocratic selection) can be adopted, its socio-cultural context cannot be mechanically copied.

3. The Finnish Model: Trust-Based Social Capital and the Prestige of the Teaching Profession

The Finnish experience represents a "soft" yet highly sustainable form of anti-corruption strategy. Here, the educational system is governed not by external inspections or rigid control, but by trust extended to teachers, schools, and students. As F. Fukuyama noted, high-trust societies require fewer formal rules and controls to achieve social cooperation, which significantly reduces the "transaction costs" of social relations [8]. In Finnish education, this principle is deeply institutionalized: teaching is one of the most prestigious professions, admissions to teacher training are highly competitive, and teachers are required to hold a Master's degree.

S. Shomurodova highlights that teacher-student relationships in Finnish schools are built on mutual trust and respect, fostering a stress-free educational environment [15]. J.Q. Yusubov and Z.A. Ochilova point out that teacher performance in Finland is driven not by punitive measures or external supervision, but by self-development, collaboration, and collective trust [16]. From the perspective of

R. Putnam's theory, social capital — mutual trust, shared norms, and civic networks — acts as a natural "immunity" against corruption [9]: teachers value their professional reputation and public trust far above any personal gain.

The primary limitation of the Finnish model lies in its reliance on historically formed high social trust, a relatively small and homogeneous society, and a strong welfare state. Trust cannot be instituted by decree; it emerges from long-term institutional consistency. Therefore, borrowing from this model is best done selectively through elements such as elevating teacher status and shifting assessment from control toward developmental support.

4. Comparative Synthesis of the Models

The main socio-philosophical parameters of the three models are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Socio-Philosophical Comparison of Anti-Corruption Models in Education

Criterion	United States	Singapore	Finland
Philosophical Foundation	Liberalism, individual freedom, and human rights	Synthesis of Confucianism and rational-bureaucratic governance	Humanism, egalitarianism, and social solidarity
Primary Mechanism	Public oversight, information transparency, independent judiciary	Independent anti-corruption agency, meritocratic selection, strict accountability	Social trust, professional ethics, self-evaluation
Source of Legitimacy	Law and civic participation	System efficiency and social order	Social consensus and mutual trust
Social Role of Teachers & Education	Cultivating citizenship and critical thinking	Fostering discipline and social responsibility	Representative of public trust, moral subject
Key Systemic Limitation	Inequality of opportunities, over-standardization of education	Restriction of civil liberties and open dialogue	Difficulty of replicating a high-trust environment

The comparative analysis demonstrates that despite their differences, an invariant socio-philosophical core exists across all three models: anti-corruption norms are internally accepted (internalized) and recognized as legitimate by society. In the US, legitimacy is ensured through law and civic engagement; in Singapore, through administrative efficiency and order; and in Finland, through trust and professional ethics. In other words, the success of anti-corruption efforts depends less on the severity of laws than on the degree to which those laws are recognized in the public consciousness as an ethical necessity.

5. Socio-Philosophical Recommendations for Uzbekistan

When adopting foreign experience, mechanical replication must be avoided. In the spiritual heritage of Uzbekistan, justice, honesty, and respect for knowledge are established ancestral values: Abu Nasr al-Farabi, in his vision of the "Virtuous City," linked social happiness directly to the ruler's knowledge and moral perfection, combined with mutual cooperation among citizens [22]. This national axiological foundation can provide foreign institutional solutions with genuine social legitimacy.

On this basis, we propose the conceptual model of "Transparency – Trust – Responsibility." In this model:

- The Transparency component is adapted from the US experience (openness of decision-making processes and public oversight);
- The Responsibility component is adapted from Singapore (meritocratic selection, independent oversight, and the inevitability of accountability);
- The Trust component is adapted from Finland (elevating teacher status, professional autonomy, and ethics), all harmonized with national values.

While digital governance technologies serve as important tools for transparency [23], technology alone cannot replace an individual's internal moral responsibility; it produces sustainable results only when paired with a culture of trust and personal responsibility.

From a practical perspective, the following directions are recommended:

1. Enhance Institutional Openness: Publish decisions regarding admissions, grading, certification, finance, and procurement in higher education on open digital platforms, while strengthening public councils that include student and parent representatives.
2. Develop Independent Monitoring: Support structures that independently assess corruption risks in education and ensure the strict inevitability of legal accountability.
3. Elevate Teacher Status & Meritocracy: Raise the social status and material remuneration of the teaching profession while strengthening meritocratic criteria in teacher recruitment.
4. Reorient Educational Evaluation: Shift pedagogical evaluation away from a punitive control mindset toward a framework centered on professional development and collaboration.
5. Promote Academic Integrity: Integrate academic integrity and anti-corruption culture as value-oriented educational modules across all levels of continuous education.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study lead to several key conclusions. The experiences of the United States, Singapore, and Finland demonstrate three ideal-typical paths toward combating corruption in education: liberal-institutional, state-disciplinary, and trust-based. Each model has proven effective because it relies on its own historical, cultural, and philosophical foundations; consequently, none of these models can be fully transferred into a different context in its entirety. The common invariant across all successful models is the internal acceptance and perceived legitimacy of anti-corruption norms within society.

For Uzbekistan, the optimal path involves synthesizing foreign institutional solutions within the triad of "Transparency – Trust – Responsibility," grounding them in national spiritual values. Anti-corruption in education must be implemented not merely through punitive measures, but as a long-term strategy aimed at restoring the moral and ethical essence of education itself.

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