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# SOCIO-CULTURAL DETERMINANTS OF MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE INNOVATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Nowadays, socio-cultural dynamics brings to the fore the question of the ability of national societies to ensure the actualization of their innovation potential. This article attempts to identify the socio-cultural determinants of innovative development in Malaysia and Singapore. As of today, the socio-philosophical discourse has not accumulated sufficiently comprehensive generalizations about the socio-cultural mechanisms for ensuring the innovative development of societies in Malaysia and Singapore. The socio-philosophical generalization of the progress on the innovative development of these two societies, proposed in the framework of policy, economic, educational discourses, was carried out. As a research methodology, the approaches of cultural and religious studies were used to analyze the socio-cultural context of innovative development of the studied societies, as well as classical and modern approaches of the theories of post-industrial (information, knowledge) societies. There is reason to believe that the innovative society of East Asian countries, such as Singapore and Malaysia, is approaching in its development to a qualitatively new period, characterized by a paradigm shift in the role of information and ICT in all spheres of public life. It was possible to substantiate the thesis that the paradigmatic shift to the information society of a new model, namely the innovation society, in Malaysia and Singapore is an accentuation of the intellectual component of information. In particular, it is demonstrated that the structural organization of integrity, both at the level of society of these states and the level of individual institutions, acquires the characteristics of rhizomorphism, networking to change the hierarchy and rigid management vertical. It has been demonstrated that Malaysia and Singapore's public governance strategies, such as government programs or large-scale business projects, often based on the principles of integrativeness, complementarity, and interchangeability.

**Keywords:** innovative society; Malaysia; Singapore; socio-philosophical analysis; socio-cultural mechanisms of innovative development; East Asian socio-cultural landscape.

# Introduction

Modern socio-cultural dynamics, which is globalizing in nature, brings to the fore the question of the ability of national societies to ensure the actualization of their innovation potential. It is clear that in line with this trend, some countries and regions are showing significant success, and some, unfortunately, are not able to demonstrate considerable achievement in building effective mechanisms for the disclosure and sustainable development of innovation potential. An example of successful models for the realization of innovation potential in society is the East Asian region, where we can identify successful innovation projects of societies in Japan, South Korea, China, Singapore, Malaysia.

Each of these countries is based on specific sociocultural mechanisms of innovation development, which combine features of cultural and religious tradition, the specifics of the political and legal system, and so on. The study of the particulars of innovative development of each of these countries using the methodological approaches of social philosophy is an urgent and large-scale task. This article will attempt to identify the socio-cultural determinants of innovative development in Malaysia and Singapore.

Traditionally, Asian culture forms a social order according to a clear vertical hierarchy. The so-called "Asian

Tigers" - innovative countries in the East Asian region owe their rapid development to consistent government reforms. Alexius A. Pereira and Chee Kiong Tong examine the content of the economic restructuring policies of the governments of Singapore, Malaysia, and China (Pereira & Tong, 2005). According to them, the specifics of state influence on the economy in Singapore were necessary for industrial transformation, in Malaysia economic programs should be assessed as a way to level the ethnic conflict, in China - as a way to commercialize the "socialist" economy. All these strategies have one thing in common the long and intense influence of the state has led to a successful restructuring of the economy, a positive impact on living standards, and the general social situation. The authors note, that if governments could not only retain power in time but also ideologically "merge" the state and society through "hegemonic projects", the development state would become a permanent "development regime", setting the content of the political agenda of the nation, defining and updating their issues at the expense of their opponents (Pereira & Tong, 2005: 131). Thus, the state policy of support of innovations that successfully realizes socio-cultural mechanisms of innovative progress in concrete social realities, balancing in the system of national and global challenges, looks relief.

This is the situation of state influence in determining

the trajectories of social development. The authors call if not eternal, then long enough for the future. The group's study of Singapore suggests that in recent decades, state-owned enterprises have focused on restructuring the economy to overcome global and regional pressures due to the country's relative weakness and relatively small size (Pereira & Tong, 2005: 135). The authors note, that the state consistently and confidently demonstrates that it should become a key business agent not only in the domestic economy but also in the regional (global) economy, based on the prominent presence of the Singapore government in society and the high level of trust it has in people in the management of the national economy (Pereira & Tong, 2005: 135).

The same situation occurs in futurological projections on the innovative progress of Malaysian society. The authors try to explore the features of the development of the innovation potential of both countries (Singapore and Malaysia), looking for standard and specific features. Given a particular social aspect of the phenomenon of poly-ethnic Malaysia, the authors conclude on some features that characterize the dynamics of the innovation potential of Malaysian society. In particular, the authors argue that Malaysia's policy of innovative development was not entirely based on the idea of achieving economic growth, but rather, the goal was the sustainable redistribution of wealth in the economy and society. Some progress has been made in this direction, although much remains to be done (Pereira & Tong, 2005: 141). Thus, the Malaysian regime of innovation has specific features, not being fundamentally focused on the idea of "free market", but on the concept of ethnic redistribution (Pereira & Tong, 2005: 141). We agree with the authors' thesis that as long as this model works effectively in favor of sustainable innovation, it will remain relevant within the innovation policy of this country in the East Asian region.

## Methods

East Asian countries are not the only countries where an innovative society is becoming a reality. On the contrary, countries such as Malaysia and Singapore are sometimes spontaneously, sometimes consciously involved in the global process of developing an information space of an innovative nature. Their specific difference is the much greater participation of the state in the innovation processes of society in East Asia, compared with Western countries. The role of the economy as the flagship of innovation processes remains common. But the content of economic processes is also changing. There is a transition from resource and raw material production to the economy of knowledge and technology. It is not a question of displacing the material by the ideal, but of their optimal combination and expediency of use. Therefore, the state policy on innovation is not limited to stimulating the economy and production, but above all, investment in education and

As of today, the socio-philosophical discourse has not accumulated sufficiently comprehensive generalizations about the socio-cultural mechanisms for ensuring the innovative development of societies in Malaysia and Singapore. Based on this fact, in the study, we plan to carry out a socio-philosophical generalization of progress on the innovative development of these two societies, proposed in the framework of policy studies, economic studies, educational studies. The very concept of "innovation" arose in economic discourse, and it is the economic and managerial mechanisms of different levels that remain the driving force of innovation. At the same time, social and

cultural landscapes in different ways, ensure the effective implementation of these mechanisms, as well as determining their specific content.

That is why the proposed study as a methodology uses the approaches of cultural and religious studies to analyze the socio-cultural context of innovative development of the studied societies. Also, as a methodological tool, classical and modern approaches to theories of post-industrial (information, knowledge) societies were used.

#### Results and discussion

In the countries we study, it is possible to eliminate unproductive differences between ethnic, social, age, professional groups of the population by reorienting the content and techniques of daily activity. The introduction of ICT is a factor in social development, which makes no sense the criteria of individualization: race, nation, culture, history. Virtual space, as an artificial formation, makes the same artificial what constitutes the content of self-identification in the traditional sense. However, depriving the meaning of fixed procedures and criteria for definition, the virtuality of ICT offers other paradigmatic foundations.

A. Genus and M. Nor argue that multilevel and multifactorial processes of ICT implementation reflect the joint dynamics of technology and society: "This was not surprising with regard to societal and user regimes in which one might expect personal variations to diverge from any regime-wide 'deep structure', owing to lack of coordination over individuals. It also applied, however, to the technological/product regime, where there was disagreement about what Malaysian firms ought to be doing regarding home-grown innovation in ICTs even from interviewees working for the same organization. Lack of 'sharedness' may be explicable by reference to the uncertainty of rules and social networks where sociotechnical systems are in flux" (Genus & Nor, 2007: 110). According to them, technological transformations in the East Asian region contribute to the realization of the "desired" goal of social development and stimulate the economic growth of the information society. Thus, innovations are focused on the project of the desired future in the exposition of which there is no place for the priority of differences.

Singapore's innovation society has its specifics. Hing Ai Yun analyzes the current transitional state of Singapore society (Hing Ai Yun, 1999). Today requires a transition from an export-oriented economy based on cheap labor to a high-tech service economy. The author assesses the strategies of such restructuring and the policy decisions that underlie such a strategy. Their content is, in essence, to optimize and stimulate the development and dissemination of information technology. This transition is due to the desire to increase competitiveness in the global economy. Besides, the author considers the experience of Singapore indicative in understanding technology as a socially constructed phenomenon that enhances the effectiveness of power: "The question here is whether the shift to a hi-tech development strategy can contribute to eroding the totalizing system of authority extant. We will use the criteria of Habermas, i.e. principle of nonexclusability to assess whether IT implementation in Singapore will enhance the growth of civil society and the democratization process. Habermas has suggested that communication relations have become more inclusive as the requirement for property and gender have minimized and the range of public discourse expanded" (Hing Ai Yun, 1999: 200).

The problem of the social context of the introduction of

innovations in production, education, and methods of interaction, in general, is crucial in determining the feasibility of reforms implemented by Singapore. Alexius A. Pereira argues that the state's participation in economic reforms is due to the weakness of the Singaporean capitalist class, as well as significant cooperation with transnational capital and corporations: "The main conclusion that can be drawn from the Singapore case is that the developmental state, as an entity, can delay devolution, if it can continue to deliver economic growth, while at the same time implementing strategies to carefully 'manage' class relations in society. As shown in the paper, it is possible for a strong developmental state to privilege transnational capital over domestic capital, effectively removing one significant threat to the developmental state's supremacy" (Pereira, 2008: 1201). The author notes the consistent focus of the Singapore government on involving all segments of the population in intellectual and high-tech work, such as biomedical sciences and technology. Thus, the policy of stabilization of the social situation and sustainable social development is implemented.

In our view, innovation and entrepreneurship are the most essential components of Singapore's sustainable economic growth. Their effectiveness is ensured by initiative both at the national level and at the level of state institutions. This socio-cultural mechanism for the development of an innovative society is implemented as follows: the decisions of the Government of Singapore have always been important for the development of the country's economy; concerning innovation and entrepreneurship, the private sector needs to grow from the bottom up; Singapore's approach to innovation and entrepreneurship is an example of its measured, focused and manageable approach. In other words, the formation of an innovative society in Singapore followed the following logic: borrowing of advanced technologies in the field of production and industry, intensive development of local industrial facilities: increase in applied research and relevant institutions that carry it out; stimulation of academic studies and introduction of high-tech methods of production. We see, that innovative society development as well as political transition causes the serious redistribution of the power between the state and business (Svyrydenko & Yatsenko,

This ambitious task is possible with the widespread introduction of ICT in Singapore. Therefore, the government seeks to popularize computer literacy, spread the use of ICT in public administration and the private sector, to make progress in computer technology. This is the main characteristic of Singapore's economy - innovation is an integral attribute not only of development but also of the daily existence of the economic system of this society. On the other hand, the innovative society of this state is a clear embodiment of productive life, which is not determined by the base of natural resources.

Innovative society means the internalization of the need for operational change in adaptive practices as well as in the everyday practices of life. In other words, Singapore's success in shaping an innovative society is explained by the penetration of the belief in the need for innovation in the public consciousness, in the mentality of the population, and the matrix of social practices. It is impossible to form an innovative economy based on a society with archaic views of the world. Support for innovation is also reflected in the formation of the country's budget: up to 40% of taxes are returned to businesses with investment in innovative research and technology, preferential lending and taxation for innovative startups, grant support for inventions,

encouragement of their innovative developments and research projects.

Logically, an innovative society needs innovative approaches to the implementation of management strategies. That is why the Singapore government is actively implementing information technology in the government apparatus. The so-called "e-government" is a set of products and practical innovations that significantly increase the efficiency and effectiveness of systemic change and reform. In other words, Singapore's e-government is a government body that operates critically and pragmatically according to the algorithm of a commercial corporation. Its functionality is multi-tasking: setting up and harmonizing the activities of various spheres of public life: economics, production, education, science, social rights, and guarantees. Also, a single e-government platform eliminates bureaucratic obstacles to the communication of individual agencies, institutions, organizations, and individuals. With the help of e-government, it is possible not only to develop educational and cultural projects but also to simplify the relationship between government and society, to form a direct format of interaction between the people and the government. Representative functions of power become fully expressed and meaningful, and the government gets the opportunity to directly influence, both informational and managerial, following the general population.

Edmund Terence Gomez argues that the analysis of economic growth in Asian countries, in particular Malaysia, should be carried out regarding their political component, without which such transformations are impossible: "Changes in business strategies, organisational structure and management style within these firms suggest that new generations of Chinese and Malays, unlike their forebears, appeared more inclined to forge inter-ethnic corporate ties. These developments implied that there was a greater openness to inter-ethnic business cooperation for mutual benefit among this new generation" (Gomez, 2009: 363). Recalling the ability of cyberspace to bridge the gap, the concepts of human capital and innovative technologies, rather than cultural and ethnic stereotypes, are becoming more important in social development strategies. Thus, as recent research shows, approaches to multicultural cooperation, openness, and mobility as ontological characteristics of socio-cultural mechanisms for ensuring the innovative development of society play a significant role in Malaysia's innovation strategies.

Governance in the context of innovation highlights the need for human capital development, and Malaysia is a prime example in this regard. Transformations of economic life in Malaysia in the second third of the twentieth century due to long-term government support not only for the agricultural sector, which greatly contributed to the stabilization of the domestic situation in the country but also supported for a broad growth strategy ahead, namely the development of industry competitive in the global market. In a concentrated form, this strategy is presented in the New Development Policy for 1991-2000. Its goal was not only to overcome poverty, hunger, and basic living needs, but also the long-term development of civil society by harmonizing and balancing the functions on the personality level. The implementation of this program involved a qualitative leap in the way of life of Malaysians, the search for a specific anthropological project to ensure the innovative development of Malaysia, as well as the creation of conditions for its implementation in social

From archaic forms of activity, the population had to be involved in high-tech processes. In other words, the

development of industry in the country is possible not only through investment but primarily through investment in human capital development. Researchers are often convinced that the results of the Asian financial crisis have led to a reorientation towards the development of human capital. These authors note a significant gap between the declarations of governmental and regional associations and the demands of civil society. In this matter, the measures of the state are usually reactionary and belated.

Accordingly, the remark of Avvari V. Mohan is apt, in which the author consistently argues that the development of human resources in modern Malaysian companies is carried out at the transnational level, and its content depends solely on management or management decisions. The author notes that organizations moving up the ladder of technological capabilities have shown internal mechanisms beyond the usual training and recruitment: an appropriate management infrastructure has been created to support innovative development (scientific committee, interdisciplinary teams based on the project, etc.) (Mohan, 2017: 264). Given the effectiveness of such measures, the content of government policy has been adjusted.

The next stage in the formation of an innovative society in Malaysia was called the New Vision Policy. In this tenyear state development program, in addition to overcoming poverty and industrial development, significant attention is paid not only to urban development and metropolises but also to optimizing regional development, qualitative transformations at the regional level and the level of individual families and their immediate well-being.

The next stage in the development of an innovative society in Malaysia is related to the formation of the knowledge economy. Its implementation is connected not only with the high-tech industries but also with the activities of all public and private organizations that have access to the Internet anywhere in space and time. Thus, the innovation society is an "information society for everyone." A qualitative leap from the archaic to innovation in Malaysia is made possible by free access to information, both through classical education and through the introduction of ICT as a strategic resource for social development. For the rest, in an innovative society, information becomes a productive resource, which significantly changes the format of social relations. On the one hand, this process is associated with a knowledge-intensive component of modern production, and hence a significant demand for information. On the other hand, social stratification under the influence of information pressure acquires fundamentally different features and characteristics. Success and high social status are identified not only through quantitative indicators of wealth, but the effectiveness of activities in the information environment is quickly and clearly commercialized. Not only traditional sources of over-profit, such as oil, gas, or the sale of rubber, receive support from the Malaysian government. On the contrary, interest, and demand for information that is the most popular product in an innovative society is stimulated.

Access to this resource is not only a guarantee of stable social and economic development but also an indicator of the level of democracy and liberalism in society. It is known that Malaysia has long been a colony of Great Britain. This historical heritage allows us to explore the preconditions for the formation of an innovative society in this country. Malaysia's colonial past testifies to the system of public administration borrowed from the metropolis, developed infrastructure, and a reasonably high level of science and technology. Such knowledge, combined with a small

territory of the country, significant natural resources, favorable geographical location, and poly-ethnicity - all this has necessitated the formation of an export-oriented economy. It is these priorities and aspirations that are focused on Malaysia's main development strategies - the development and commercialization of innovations.

Not only must people and technology be smart, but cities must be built on the same principles. So, Daniel Brooker calls the ambitious Malaysian project to create a "smart city" Cyberjaya utopian. On the one hand, the purpose of its creation was to prepare citizens for a giant leap into the coming "information age", the development of the "knowledge economy" at the national level: "Interviews with Cyberjaya's planners and business community suggested the design of an "intelligent" garden city was mobilized primarily as a (1) a psychological space for creativity; (2) a disciplined space for productivity" (*Brooker, 2012: 46*). On the other hand, the realities of today indicate the impoverishment of the business park and the reduction of innovative opportunities for economic and social development.

## Conclusions

There is reason to believe that the innovative society of East Asian countries, such as Singapore and Malaysia, is approaching in its development to a qualitatively new period, characterized by a de facto paradigm shift in the role of information and ICT in all spheres of public life. Knowledge becomes a complete resource, space, and context in which and thanks to which all social processes take place: production and distribution, learning and invention, management and implementation, the realization of rights and freedoms.

The innovative society of these countries is one of the most competitive in the modern world. The stability of its existence and development is explained not by a linear but by a network form of system organization. Thus, business structures are actively implementing strategies of "soft-management", mobility and efficiency of response to market competition. A wide range of educational and information resources, distance education technologies, informal communication channels are being created. Public administration is also showing signs of mobility and the assertion of liberalism. Besides, such transformations are caused by the global trend towards innovation and information transformation. Fundamental structural changes in the economy, its internationalization and informatization strengthen regional cooperation and integration of individual regions into an extensive network of interaction (Svyrydenko & Mozgin, 2019).

Significant investments in ICT development not only significantly increased the overall level of computer literacy of the population, but also significantly affected the nature of staff involvement in production, especially given the rapid development of "creative industries", promotion of invention and high profitability of this cluster economy. The paradigm shift to a new type of information society, namely the innovation society in Malaysia and Singapore, is the focus of the intellectual component of information. If information is a set of data, then innovation is a qualitative assessment of the content of information. Logically, the intellectual potential of innovation requires creativity, creativity, and perception, i.e., interpretation, and variability of application and testing. That is, the global trend of increasing the degree of liberalism and personal freedom is a kind of manifestation of the release of the creative potential of the activity. Accordingly, the structural organization of the integrity of both society as a whole and individual institutions,

acquires the characteristics of rhizomorphism, networking to change the hierarchy and rigid management vertical.

Due to the increasing influence and importance of creativity in modern economic, political, and social processes, the concepts of intellectual, human, and social capital are formed. Thus, the networking of the organization is not identical to the chaos. This way of structuring allows you to identify the accents and priorities necessary for innovative development. The Asian version of building an innovative society is based on a specific understanding of the sustainable cultural tradition of partnership. If Western individualism absolutizes competition in all manifestations of social life, the Asian mentality includes as an advantage a willingness to cooperate, cooperate, and work as a team. Management strategies in East Asian countries (Malaysia, Singapore, etc.), such as government programs or business projects, are often built on the principles of integrativeness, complementarity, and interchangeability.

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# СОЦІОКУЛЬТУРНІ ДЕТЕРМІНАНТИ ІННОВАЦІЙНОГО РОЗВИТКУ МАЛАЙЗІЇ ТА СИНГАПУРУ

Поточна соціокультурна динаміка висуває на передній план питання здатності національних суспільств забезпечувати актуалізацію власного інноваційного потенціалу. У межах даної статті здійснено спробу виявити соціокультурні детермінанти інноваційного розвитку Малайзії та Сингапуру. Станом на сьогодні у соціальнофілософському дискурсі не накопичено достатньо комплексних узагальнень відносно соціокультурних механізмів забезпечення інноваційного розвитку суспільств Малайзії та Сингапуру. Було здійснено соціальнофілософське узагальнення напрацювань щодо інноваційного розвитку цих двох суспільств, запропонованих у межах політологічних, економічних, освітологічних дискурсів. В якості методології дослідження використано підходи культурологічних та релігієзнавчих студій для аналізу соціокультурного контексту інноваційного розвитку досліджуваних суспільств, а також класичні та сучасні підходи теорій постіндустріального (інформаційного, знаннєвого) суспільств. Є підстави стверджувати, що інноваційне суспільство Східноазійських країн, таких як Сингапур та Малайзія, наближається у своєму розвитку до якісно нового періоду, що характеризується фактично парадигмальним зрушенням у ролі інформації та ІКТ в усіх сферах суспільного життя. Вдалося обґрунтувати тезу, що парадигмальне зрушення до інформаційного суспільства нового зразка, а саме інноваційного суспільства, у Малайзії та Сингапурі є акцентуацією інтелектуальної складової інформації. Зокрема, продемонстровано, що структурна організація цілісності, як на рівні соціуму цих держав, так і на рівні окремих установ, набуває характерних рис ризоморфності, мережевості, що йдуть на зміну ієрархічності та жорсткої вертикалі управління. Вдалося продемонструвати, що державні управлінські стратегії Малайзії та Сингапуру, як-то урядові програми, або масштабні бізнес-проекти, часто побудовані за принципами інтегративності, комплементарності і взаємозамінності.

**Ключові слова:** інноваційне суспільство; Малайзія; Сингапур; соціально-філософський аналіз; соціокультурні механізми інноваційного розвитку; Східноазійський соціокультурний ландшафт.

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