The Rule of Law as Economic Infrastructure: summary

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Singapore's courts are the independent republic's continuation of the colonial Supreme Court, made national by the Supreme Court of Judicature Act 1969, freed from the Privy Council in 1994 and restructured in 2021, with judges whose tenure until the age of 65 and whose remuneration are protected by Article 98 of the Constitution. The Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau, founded in 1952 after police officers were found among the robbers of an opium consignment, enforces the Prevention of Corruption Act 1960 in both the public and the private sector and has prosecuted ministers from Wee Toon Boon in 1975 to S. Iswaran, who was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment in 2024. Legal certainty in Singapore rests on an accessible statute book, a common law in English that has become autonomous without losing its familiarity, fast and inexpensive enforcement of contracts and a regulator that announces and explains its rules. The international rankings place Singapore at the top of the world for the absence of corruption, regulatory enforcement and civil justice and in the upper middle for constraints on government powers, open government and fundamental rights, a spread that reflects a thin rule of law of very high quality within a strong state. That model has

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served the financial centre well because the political leadership has treated clean government and reliable courts as conditions of national survival, although its durability depends on the continuation of that commitment.

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