

MANAGING THE CORRUPTION DEGREE

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Abstract: The corruption phenomenon is, more or less, an acute problem in all the world's societies, regardless their political stand, or the level of their economic development. In transitional countries like Serbia, the corruption presents, perhaps, the most significant obstacle to its society's development and prosperity. Undoubtedly, though, the corruption is a complex phenomenon that has more than one reflection. Among all the possible definitions of it, found in literature, the most common is the one that states that "the corruption is misuse of a trusted empowerment in order to realize some personal gain". This work presents an attempt to enlighten the phenomena of bribery and corruption, from a social-psychological point of view.

Transition societies represent a fertile ground for the flourishing or corruption, since the ruling political structures can easily hide the corruptive activities behind the relative economic successes (which are initialized by the inflow of foreign aid), and the cases of corruption they can easily justify by the state of changes that are: difficult to control efficiently". Besides that, countries in transition are always the recipients of foreign financial aid whose placement is the best "moisture for germination" of corruptive activities. This year's index of corruption in Serbia is 3.0, which means that it is ranked at 91.place on the list of 163 world countries. Corruption index of Serbia is far beyond the ideal index 10, which marks the non-existence of corruption, and the index 5 – tolerant level, when the corruption ceases to be an urgent problem. The citizens of Serbia think of corruption as one of the most serious problems that our society faces with today.

According to the research of non-governmental organization Transparency International, there was a survey conducted in the period from the 23rd of June to the 31st of September 2007, on a sample of 2000 respondents, in the territory of Serbia excluding Kosovo and Metohija, which has shown that Serbian citizens think of corruption as one of the most serious problems that our society faces with today. When respondents' answers to the question about the most serious social problem at this moment are analyzed, the corruption problem (12%) stands out parallelly with social problems such as poverty (26% of answers), political instability (22%) and criminal (15%). Every tenth citizen believes that the emergence of corruption is a primary problem, judging by the degree of social danger or harm (and another 14% puts its on the second place by importance in this sense). It is good to mention that the corruption is, at this point, taken as a serious social problem, even in relation to „poor economic activity“, „unemployment“, „poor health and education“, „environmental pollution“ and „bad interethnic relations“. [1]

Although the emergence of corruption is classified among the most important problems at social level, it rarely stands out as the most important individual problem (7% only). In this aspect, the problems of low living standard, i.e. poverty, will take precedence for most of the citizens (48%), and it is followed by emergencies that are considered to be their cause of accompanying effects – „poor economic activity“ (9%) and „unemployment“ (9%).

When assessing the harmful effects of corruption at the individual level, slightly higher percentage of citizens (9%) considers that corruption is at the second place by the importance, but it is still perceived as less important issue than poverty, criminal, unemployment and poor health services.

Table 1. The most serious problem for society and individual (cumulatively, at I and II place by the importance) in %

occurrence	Social problem	Individual problem
Political instability	16	8
Bad interethnic relations	6	3
corruption	12	7
Poor economic activity	10	9
Criminal	17	10
unemployment	7	12
Environmental pollution	2	3
Poor health care	3	9
Problems in education	1	3
Poverty, low standard	24	33
Something else	1	1
Don't know/ no reply	1	2
total	100	100

Based on the same table, it is possible to repeat the conclusion that corruption is somewhat more increasingly perceived as a serious social, rather than serious individual problem: generally observed, 12% of the citizens perceive it as one of the most serious (most harmful) occurrences for the society as a whole (among the four most important), and 7% of citizens are personally affected by corruption (seventh by the importance). The order is also altered, since many other problems (unemployment, poor health care, political instability) have a greater significance for an individual. Indirectly, this information can point out to the existence of relative habituation of an individual to the emergence of „small“ corruption in which he participates as well and which brings him certain benefit.

There are no records kept about corruptive transactions, and thus all possible measures are indirect, which does not lessen the significance of results or the need of conducting the measurements, in one way or another. Very often, the following question is asked: Are the subjective data sufficiently reliable for the defining the measurements for struggle against the corruption? The practice has shown that they are. Namely, the recommendations of the World Bank and Transparency International, based on subjectively obtained data, have appeared to be efficient in many states.

In 1993, in some state, Non-governmental organization Transparency International has introduced a parameter “index of corruption perception” as a measure of corruption degree. From 1996, that measure is widely accepted by all institutions, national and supranational, which are dealing with this phenomenon. Index of corruption perception is determined on the basis of examining the attitudes of individuals towards various aspects of corruption in public sector. Sample of respondents includes business people from the country and from abroad, politicians, civil servants, citizens of various professions and economic status and professional analysts. It is interesting to mention that answers of respondents from abroad have a high level of agreement with the answers of respondents from the country. [2] Transparency International does not perform own research but it compiles the data from various sources.

In a simplified way, the methodology is the following: [3]

1. Researches of all institutions included are analyzed by independent experts. The rule is that the expert who analyzes the data for a state cannot be the citizen of that state.

2. By statistical methods, having in mind the reliability of data and number of data sources, the rank of corruption presence in a state is reduced to the index in the range from 0 to 10. Larger number represents a less corrupt society, and a smaller number represents the society with higher corruption degree.

The list of the index of corruption perception includes that states that have at least 3 independent researches and for which the researches have been conducted during previous three years at least. For the year 2009, the data are the following [4]:

Table 2. States perceived as the least corrupt

Rank	State	Score (1-10)	Research no.
1	Iceland	9,7	8
2	Finland	9,6	9
	New Zealand	9,6	9
3	Denmark	9,5	10

Table 3. States perceived as the most corrupt

Rank	State	Score (1-10)	Research no.
157	Haiti	1,8	4
	Myanmar	1,8	4
	Turkmenistan	1,8	4
158	Bangladesh	1,7	7
	Chad	1,7	6

Serbia is ranked as 91. state (among 163) with the corruption index of 3.0. for comparison, Slovenia is ranked as the 29th with the index 6.4 (low corruption level), and as for the neighbour countries, Bosnia and Herzegovina has index of 2.9 (ranked as the 95th), Macedonia 2.7 (ranked as 108th), Croatia has the index of 3.4 and it is ranked as 69th and Hungary with the index of 5.2 takes the 42nd place.[4]

Although by the methodology of Transparency International the index of corruption perception is based on subjective initial data, it was demonstrated that, during more than ten years, this index has a high agreement with other methods for determining the corruption degree of some society.

By the analysis of psycho-social profile of respondents, we will try to find connections between the attitudes of respondents towards life and ethnic values and their attitudes towards bribery and corruption. Determination of connections between psycho-social profile of respondents and attitudes towards corruption will enable the efficient discovery of measures and activities for elimination of corruption. If it is determined what kind of attitudes an individual or group of people have towards an occurrence, we will be able to predict, relatively good, how will that individual, i.e. that group behave in a similar situation. For the needs of research, the questionnaire was created, which is designed on a sample of 500 respondents from the two groups of professions. The first group of 185 respondents consisted of teachers, as a profession that is (according to previous relevant research) conditionally incorrupt.

Table 4. Frequency of attitudes towards the phenomena of bribery and corruption

STATEMENTS	DEGREE OF AGREEMENT									
	Completely agree		Mostly agree		Not sure		Mostly disagree		Completely disagree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. Corruption is the greatest impediment of the development of our society	175	35	139	27,8	73	14,6	59	11,8	54	10,8
2. In a poor society, only the one that takes should be responsible	89	17,8	91	18,2	87	17,4	98	19,6	135	27
3. I think it is acceptable to give a present to the person who helps you	69	13,8	91	18,2	89	17,8	108	21,6	143	28,6
4. Corruption is equally present in all countries	105	21	124	24,8	103	20,6	84	16,8	84	16,8
5. Corruption is justified if it enables a more rapid resolution of major projects of the society and organization	55	11	65	13	99	19,8	87	17,4	194	38,8
6. Only the people who are not in the position to give or receive bribe, speak negatively about corruption	65	13	88	17,6	86	17,2	94	18,8	167	33,4
7. Penalties for corruption should be much more severe	233	46,6	92	18,4	65	13	56	11,2	54	10,8
8. Corruptive transactions are largely improvable	119	23,8	138	27,6	91	18,2	77	15,4	75	15
9. Corruption is the best indicator of the decline of values and moral principles of one society	207	41,4	131	26,2	58	11,6	53	10,6	51	10,2
10. People who expose corruption should be provided with protection	258	51,6	82	16,4	55	11	51	10,2	54	10,8
11. Many people should dedicate themselves to their jobs instead of taking care about who is bribing whom and the like	88	17,6	92	18,4	98	19,6	102	20,4	120	24
12. Corruption is a completely normal occurrence for transitional countries	82	16,4	97	19,4	128	25,6	80	16	113	22,6
13. The media exaggerate when they point out to the harmful effects of corruption	55	11	61	12,2	71	14,2	116	23,2	197	39,4
14. There are very few people who haven't succumbed to some form of corruption today	107	21,4	163	32,6	87	17,4	73	14,6	70	14
15. Corruption is a traditional characteristic of our mentality	94	18,8	140	28	108	21,6	77	15,4	81	16,2
16. The corruption is minimal in our country.	2	0,4	2	0,4	89	17,8	166	33,2	241	48,2

As the second group of 105 respondents projected on three, conditionally corrupt professions, according to the same previous research, and this group includes: public

administration officials, customs officials and doctors. The research was conducted on the territory of the Republic of Serbia, excluding Kosovo and Metohija. [5]

The respondents were asked to express their agreement or disagreement regarding sixteen statements that make a scale of general attitudes about bribery and corruption. Questionnaire with the statistics of responses is given in table 4. Each of the five columns that refer to possible attitudes provides the information about frequencies and percentage of respondents who have provided that answer [5].

35% of respondents completely, and 28% mostly agree with the statement „corruption is the greatest impediment of the development of our society”. Such agreement percentages confirm the starting assumption that the corruption problem is present in Serbia to a significant extent and that it deserves greater attention of organizational and subjective factors of society.

The table 5 presents the statistics of attitudes about the question: „To what extent are the bribery and corruption present in our organizations in Serbia?”. The scale has 12 statements, and five possible answers are graded from 1 to 5.

Table 5. Presence of bribery and corruption in particular organizations

STATEMENTS	DEGREE OF PRESENCE									
	Very present		Mostly present		I am not sure		Mostly not present		Not present at all	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. In the economy	261	52,2	185	37	48	9,6	3	0,6	3	0,6
2. In state companies	367	73,4	85	17	40	8	7	1,4	1	0,2
3. In private companies	61	12,2	124	24,8	185	37	124	24,8	6	1,2
4. In monopolistic state companies	241	48,2	169	33,8	88	17,6	1	0,2	1	0,2
5. In health care organizations	287	57,4	201	40,2	10	2	2	0,4	0	0
6. In sports	265	53	185	37	39	7,8	9	1,8	2	0,4
7. In state and municipal services	210	42	189	37,8	96	19,2	5	1	0	0
8. In judiciary	225	45	187	37,4	81	16,2	5	1	2	0,4
9. In educational organizations	96	19,2	132	26,4	123	24,6	94	18,8	55	11
10. In political parties	229	45,8	219	43,8	47	9,4	5	1	0	0
11. Among people at high positions	276	55,2	153	30,6	71	14,2	3	0,6	0	0
12. Somewhere else (specify):	21	4,2	15	3	9	1,8	0	0	0	0

Ranking the organizations according to respondents' attitudes about the presence of corruption will be performed in such a way to make it possible to calculate the mean value of the statement's weight factor (1 for „very present“ to 5 for „not present at all“) for each organization. Smaller mean value stands for greater presence of bribery and corruption.

45 respondents have filled in the field „somewhere else“ (statement 12). Among those 45 respondents, there were 11 who mentioned the police as a corrupt institution and they have all marked that it is „very present“, 7 respondents have written the response „in all spheres of life/in all fields“, 3 respondent have mentioned non-governmental organizations and 3 have mentioned culture and art. Social insurance, military, music festivals, journalism, humanitarian organizations, ecology, press and electronic media, religious communities were each mentioned once. All the answers given are indicative, each in its way.

In table 6, there is an overview of respondents' answers and statistical parameters from which the distribution of the answers obtained can be seen. Statistical mean value is determined by multiplying the number of answers with the belonging weight factors (from 1 for «I am completely satisfied» to 5 «I am not satisfied at all»).

By analyzing the answers, it can be concluded that the respondents are rather hesitant, according to this scale as well. Degree of hesitancy ranges from 13% to 30% and 23% is the average. This fact is an important indicator for finding the efficient measures in the struggle against corruption, especially in subjective sphere.

Table 6. To what extent are you satisfied with the following?

STATEMENTS	DEGREE OF SATISFACTION				
	I am completely satisfied	I am mostly satisfied	I am not sure	I am mostly dissatisfied	I am completely dissatisfied
1. Overall social attitude towards bribery and corruption	1	3	92	195	209
2. Development degree of anti-corruption thinking in organization	2	11	105	212	170
3. Prevention that organization's management assumes in struggle against the corruption	1	2	34	285	178
4. Ethical principles of employees	1	54	74	251	115
5. Height of stipulated penalties for the initiators of bribe and corruption	2	9	14	238	237
6. Possibility to obtain the information about the work of the responsible people in organization/institutions.	3	5	96	190	206
7. Personal professional development	15	20	82	155	228
8. Social conditions for to ensure existence exclusively by work	2	3	11	241	243
9. Attention that is paid to elimination of corruption in your organization	4	7	89	256	144
10. Attitude of the environment in which you work towards the emergence of corruption	1	2	166	163	168

The table clearly shows that respondents are largely dissatisfied with the condition of social phenomena that are related with bribery and corruption. Only one respondent is completely satisfied with the overall social attitude towards bribery and corruption, and only three of them are mostly satisfied. 382 respondents or 76.4% are mostly or completely dissatisfied with the development degree of anti-corruption thinking in the organization. Slightly higher dissatisfaction, although rather high (92.6%), is noticed with the prevention in struggle against corruption. Ethical principles of employees completely or mostly satisfy only 11% of respondents. Similar percentage is also in case of satisfaction with the attitude of employees towards the emergence of corruption in the environment in which the respondents work (statement 10). From all this, it can be concluded that there is a high correlation between ethical principles applicable in an environment and attitudes about corruption of the people in that environment. 95% of respondents are dissatisfied with the height of stipulated penalties, while there are 2.2% of respondents who are more or less satisfied. This attitude is a reliable indicator towards some measures that need to be taken in the struggle against the corruption. Very small number of respondents is satisfied with the possibility of obtaining the information about the work of responsible

people in organization/institution, which indicates that the transparency of the work of public institutions in Serbia is at a very high level. Few respondents who are relatively satisfied by professional development (completely or mostly satisfied 7%). The reason of the relative dissatisfaction can be found in the fact that own professional development largely depends on personal motivations and personal engagement of individual, in other words, the individual can influence the professional development if he has motivation. Thus, we can conclude that the problem of corruption also affects the motivation and the respondents do not pay much attention to professional training. Respondents are rather dissatisfied with the possibility to ensure the existence exclusively by work (96.8% of respondents are mostly or completely dissatisfied). This implies that respondents have a strong preference that the existence of the man should be ensured by (honest) work exclusively.

In order to form new scientific information, it was necessary to make and illustrate new model for discovering the corruption. Research result should lead to the increased control of certain employees (not all), which would greatly reduce operating costs (costs that are meant for the control of employees). Control of employees is an important step towards the business success. In order for the society to be „purified“ from corruption, it is necessary to start with the individual. It is necessary to discover what the individual thinks about the corruption, about elimination and struggle against the corruption, as well as whether he has any information about corruption activities in his immediate surroundings. After those findings, we can easily reach the answer to the question which are the sectors where it is necessary to increase the control of employees. For that purpose, we have created a questionnaire that can be implemented in any work organization. While analyzing the answers, we can also „deal with“ the statistics in relation to demographic characteristics of respondents. Certainly, it is the most important to observe whether the corruption is present in the given enterprise. In the end of the survey, the interpretation of results is given. As we can see, the survey consists of two parts, the first part includes 4 demographic questions and the second part serves for the interpretation and calculation of the corruption factor. The maximum score is 80 and the minimum is 16. In order to interpret the results, it is necessary to calculate overall arithmetic mean of all respondents. Firstly, we count the answers that carry 1 point (they appear A times), then those who carry 2 points (they appear B times), then those that carry 3 points (they appear C times), 4 points (they appear D times) and 5 points (they appear E times). Then, we calculate the overall arithmetic mean, using the following formula:

$$X_{AS} = \frac{1 * A + 2 * B + 3 * C + 4 * D + 5 * E}{16}$$

You are looking at the questionnaire that is distributed within a business company. The questionnaire is anonymous, so please do fill it with maximum concentration, patience and honesty:

1. Your personal data that are necessary to us. Please circle one of the answers offered for the questions 1, 2, 3 and 4.
2. For each statement that is mentioned below, you should decide to what extent you agree with it and mark one of the answers offered:
 - Completely false (5 points)
 - Mostly false (4 points)
 - I am not sure (3 points)
 - Mostly true (2 points)
 - Completely true (1 point)

There are no right or wrong answers to these statements. What interests us is Your personal opinion about these statements. In blank fields (below the desired claim) write X if you agree with the statement.

Interpretation of results:

1. From 1,00 to 2,00 – Non-existence of corruption – The following measures should be taken: The usual control
2. From 2,01 to 3,00 – Low level of corruption – The following measures should be taken: Increase the control in services with the higher corruption coefficient
3. From 3,01 to 4,00 – Expressed corruption – The following measures should be taken: Increase the control in services with the higher corruption coefficient
4. From 4,01 to 5,00 – High corruption degree – The following measures should be taken: Increase the control in all services

Table 7. Questionnaire – Independent variables

Question 1.	Answers offered
Respondent's gender	Masculine
	Feminine
Question 2.	Answers offered
Work experience	0-5
	5.oct
	oct.15
	15-20
	Over 20
Question 3.	Answers offered
Number of years spent in this company	0-2
	2.may
	Over 5
Question 4.	Answers offered
Education degree	No education
	Elementary school
	Secondary school
	College
	Faculty
	Master
	Magistrate
	PhD

When defining the model of corruption prevention, we should have in mind a few important factors:

1. Application of anti-corruption measures is a long-term process in which corruptive behaviour and practice are gradually being observed and eliminated. Prevention measures in one segment of the state and/or society will not have an effect if the actions are not simultaneously taken in other segments.
2. State and/or social system, based on discretionary rights of institutions and individuals is more subject to corruption than the system in which there is a distribution of responsibilities under public supervision.

3. Citizens' confidence in ruling structures and their intentions, when it comes to prevention of corruption is an important motivation factor for the citizens to actively participate.
4. Penal policy should be balanced in such a way to severely punish the initiators of bribery and corruption, but it should protect the citizens who contribute to the detection of corruption.
5. Communication between the authorities and citizens must be open in both directions, and especially in the direction citizens-authorities.
6. The authorities must support the institutions of the citizen society, providing the citizens to be active participants in prevention and struggle against the corruption through those institutions.
7. Although, for the sake of mutual interactions, it is not possible to completely separate the measures of corruption prevention, the measures should be systematized into two groups, organizational (objective) and subjective. Organizational measures are aimed towards an individual as a community member, and subjective towards the same individual as an individual that makes and creates that community.

Table 8. Questionnaire – dependent variables

No.	Statement	Completely false	Mostly false	I am not sure	Mostly true	Completely true
1	I was never offered a bribe					
2	I have never received a bribe					
3	None of my colleagues from the office has never received a bribe					
4	I think that bribery is an offense for which one should be severely punished					
5	I avoid working with people who are involved in „suspicious activities“					
6	I do not socialize with my colleagues in private life					
7	If somebody offered me a bribe I would report him to competent services					
8	I believe that corruption should be struggled against in a honest way					
9	I would report each suspicious transaction or activity to my superiors					
10	I will put my interests aside for the welfare of the group					
11	I act in such a way that makes other people respect me					
12	I search for various perspectives when I solve a problem					
13	I am always engaged when it comes to serious problems					
14	I fight for justice					
15	I clearly express a strong vision for the future					
16	I encourage the others to aspire for more					

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