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# A Comparative Study of Corruption and Government Efforts to Combat it Across Borders: the Case For South Africa and Serbia

**Cornelis J. Roelofse**

University of Limpopo, Republic of South Africa

**Branislav Simonovic**

University of Kragujevac, Serbia

**Phillip J. Potgieter**

University of Zululand, Republic of South Africa

**Abstract.** South Africa and Serbia are emergent democracies that both suffered under authoritarian governments and both engaged in political violence to gain freedom. In the post-democratic dispensations in both countries, corruption, accompanied by nepotism, escalated to such an extent that it negatively impacts on social life and good order. The opportunity for a comparative study between the two countries is based on common ground embedded in quite a number of characteristics: oppressiveness, economic disparity and underdevelopment of certain population groups, misuse of powers by the ruling elite, impunity and apparent lack of political will to root out corruptive practices. The 2013-Corruption Perception Index ranked both countries 72nd out of 177 countries according to the prevalence of corruption with a CPI score of 42 out of 100 (0=most corrupt and 100=cleanest). Data reveal that both governments are not open and transparent enough and that freedom of the media is often impeded by formal proscriptions. The police and courts through bribery, followed by government officials involved in wrangling with state contracts, are singled out as the most corrupt institutions by both samples. Corruption is also rife when senior government appointments are made and it transpires that not enough steps are being taken by both countries to counteract corruption. Apparently, corrupt employees gain impunity through protection by government officials. Whether any anti-corruption units would be successful in their endeavours to root out corruption remains unfathomable because of political interference. Citizens are, however, thoroughly aware of allegations made from time to time regarding the bribery of politicians and government officials. Corruption is tangentially more widespread among Serbian police and court officials compared to South Africa. The recently introduced hotline (0800-071-71) for corruption in the civil service next to speedy criminal trials may do much as preventive measures.

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**Keywords:** corruption, democracy, police, courts, government, nepotism (cronyism), impunity

## Introduction

South Africa and Serbia are both democracies that are still in their infant stages. Both were ruled by authoritarian governments with an oppressive past. Having been ruled by an authoritarian government and communist domination, both South Africa and Serbia were plagued by political violence and a transition to constitutional democracies. Furthermore, there is a growing body of evidence of corruption in both countries, particularly as a result of political impunity. The researchers will endeavour to compare the levels of corruption between the two respective countries in a quantitative (empirical) fashion. The study is exploratory-descriptive



















































































