

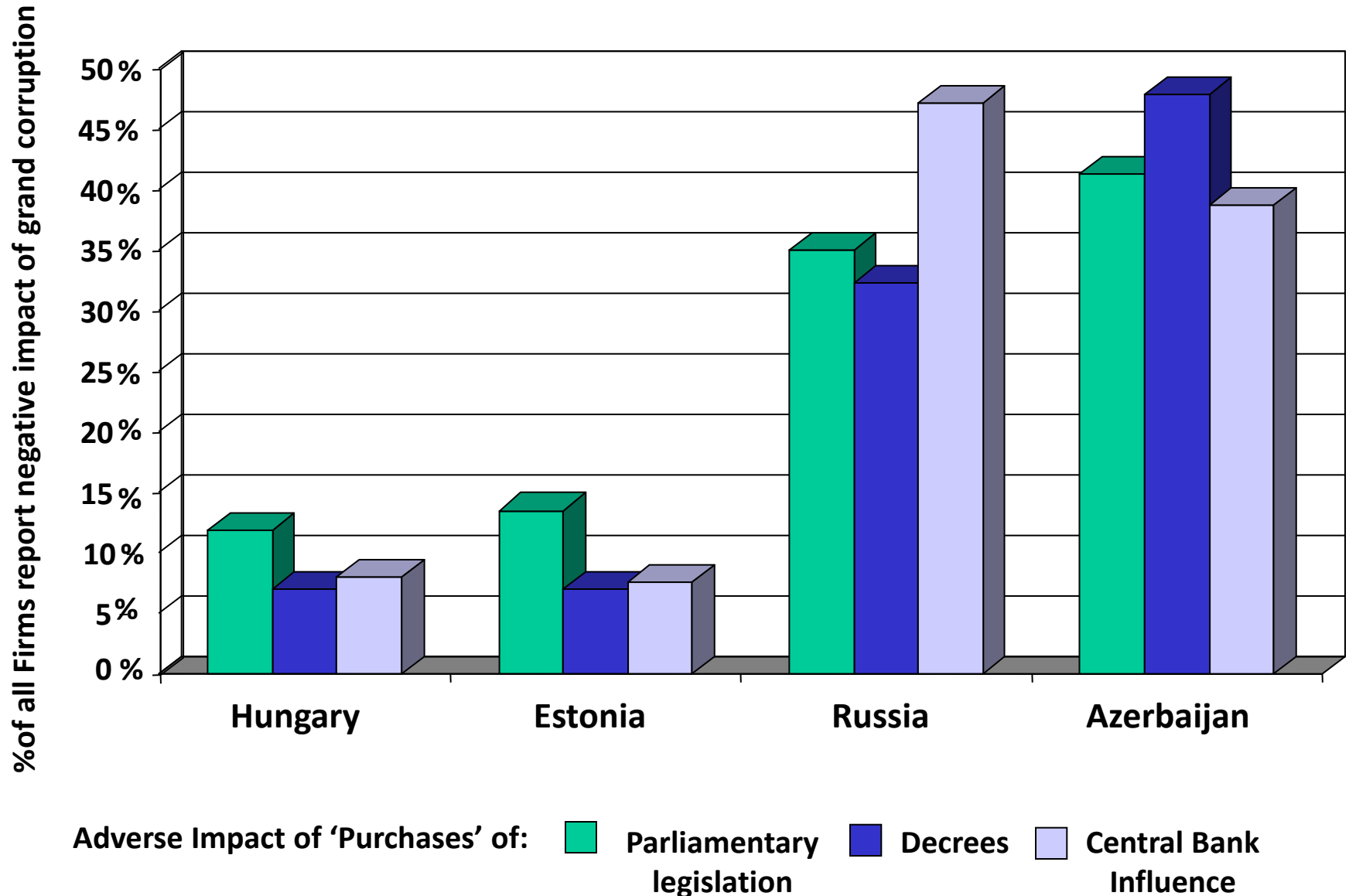
**State Capture Matters:**  
*A global comparative and empirical perspective*

**Daniel Kaufmann**

***Sr Fellow, R4D; Brookings; President Emeritus NRG***  
**[r4d.org/resources/state-capture-index/](http://r4d.org/resources/state-capture-index/)**

**Special Panel on Global Lessons of State Capture,  
hosted by NSI, GAH/R4D, and OTT  
*Johannesburg, June 18, 2025***

# **‘Seize the State, Seize the Day’ Research on Capture, 1999-2000: Differences in Transition Countries on the Extent of State Capture**



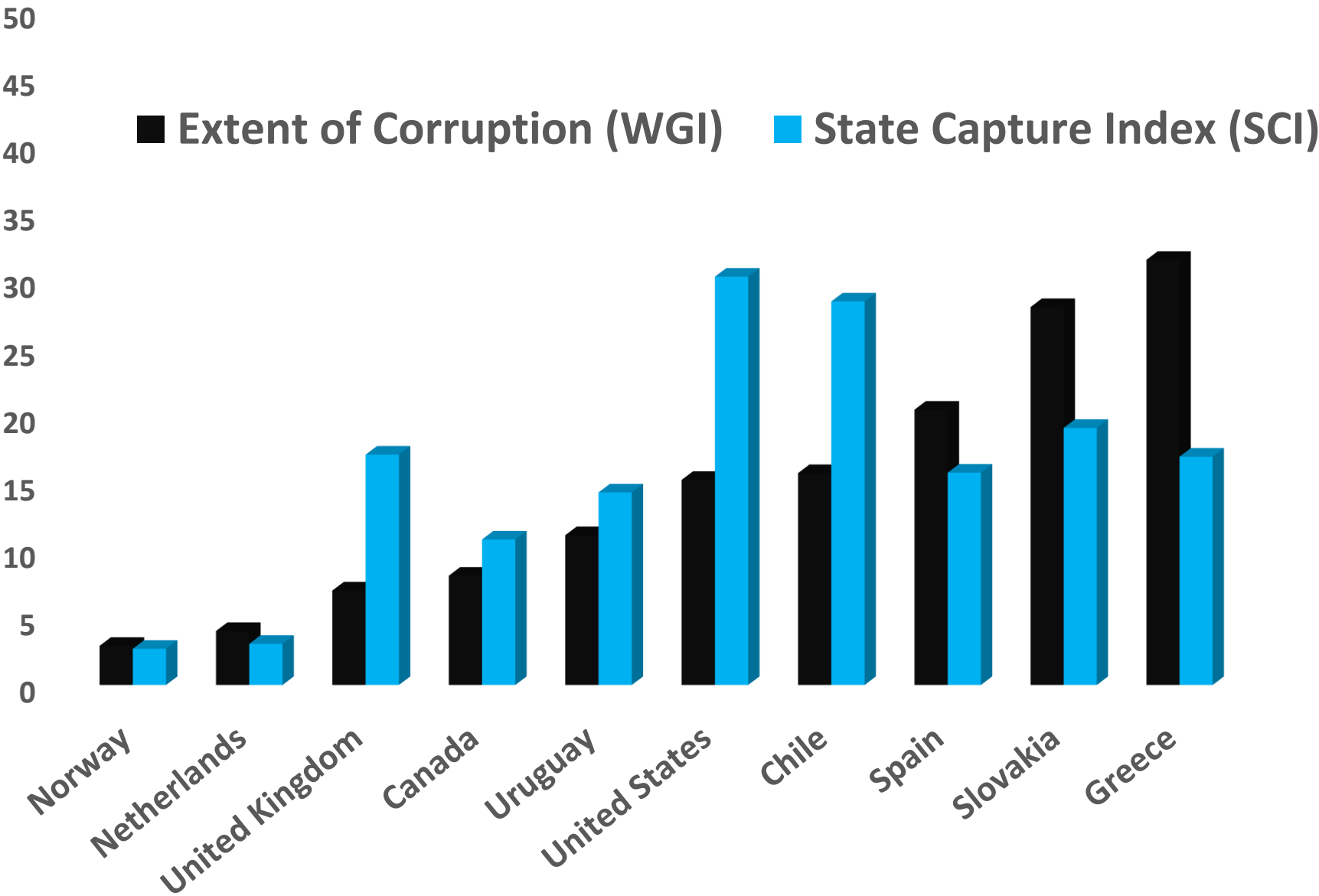
# State Capture – *what were we talking about?*

- ***Contrast -- Traditional notion of Administrative Corruption as acts in the *Implementation of the pre-set Rules of the Game*, vs. State Capture = *Shaping of the Rules of the Game (incl. Institutions, budget) by the Economic & Politically Influential, at the expense of the public good****
- ***The focus shifts away from a ‘corrupt public servant’ to the economic & politically influential ‘captor’: it can be *a powerful non-state actor, or a politician, or both colluding****
- ***State Capture can be Legal, by design (even if far from ethical)***
- ***Related to acute Inequality of Influence by the few***
- ***A fundamental driver of socio-economic and political outcomes (*vs. corruption – more often a symptom*)***
- ***Rethink of corruption definition: from ‘abuse’ to ‘privatization’***

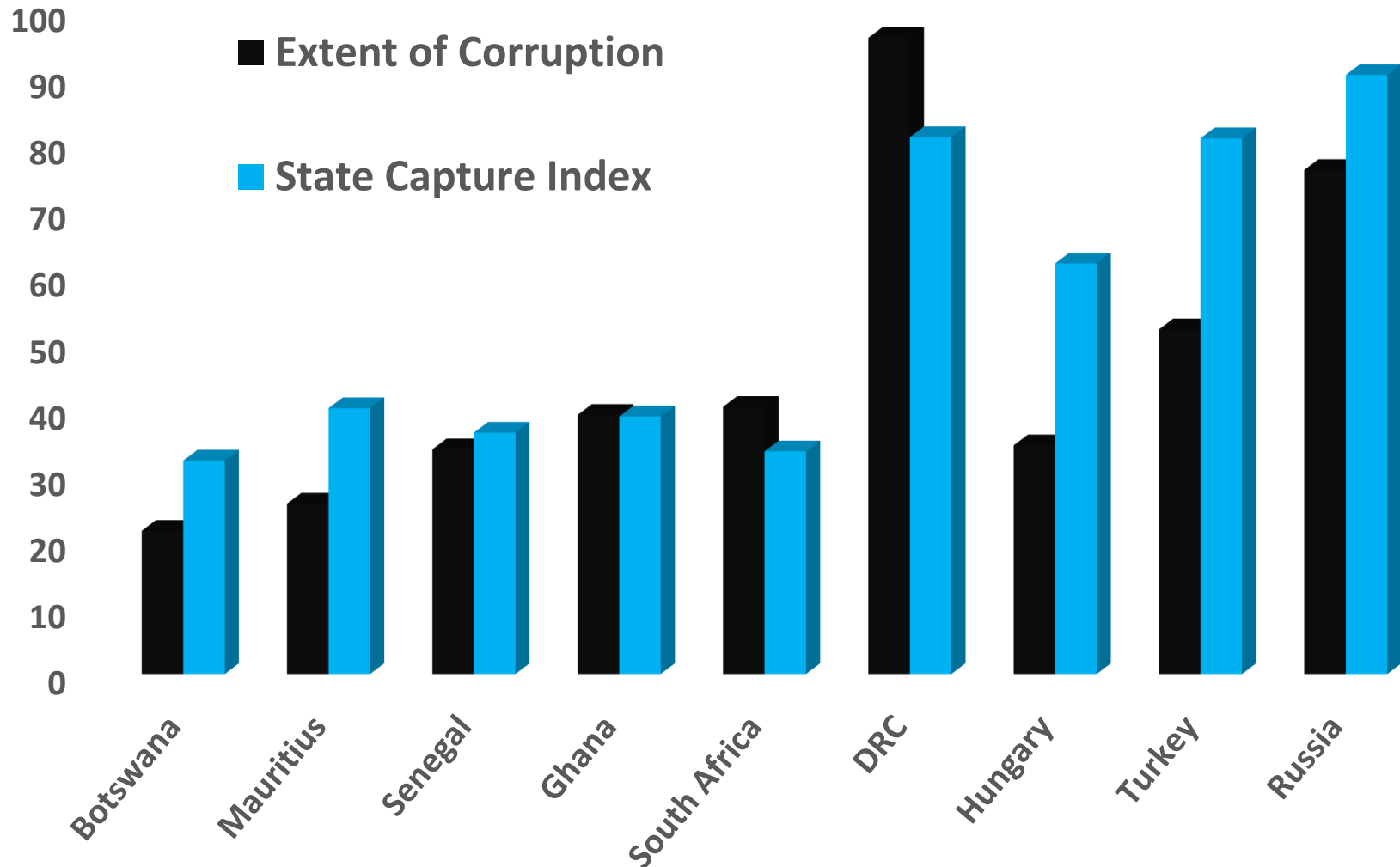
# Evolution in the study of State Capture since the '90s

1. State Capture concept, and the field, has expanded, with a more political and interdisciplinary treatment
2. Scope of actors engaging in capture is larger. State actors can also be captors as well. Non-state & state actors can collude.
3. In-depth inquiry into the process of capture, & on the '*objects of capture*' – the institutions, policies, regulations, laws.
4. Empirical work expanded from initial focus on FSU/CEE transition (e.g. *SAfr*): *a universal challenge, yet country variation*
5. Awareness about the dire consequences & costs of capture, leading to Commissions of Inquiry and to focus on prevention

# Extent of Corruption vs. State Capture (2020-2022): *Countries in OECD*

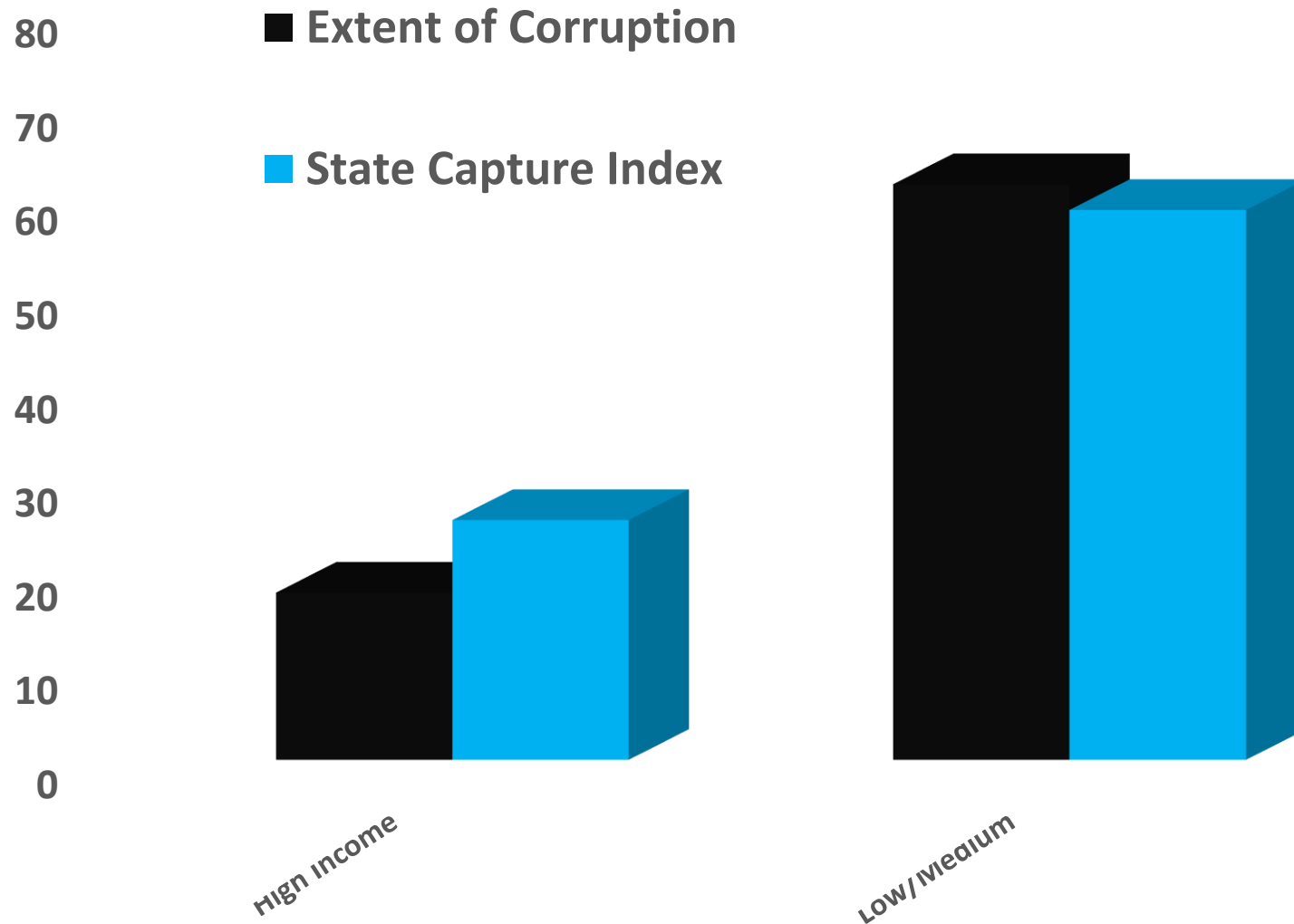


## Extent of Corruption & State Capture (2020-2022): Selected Countries

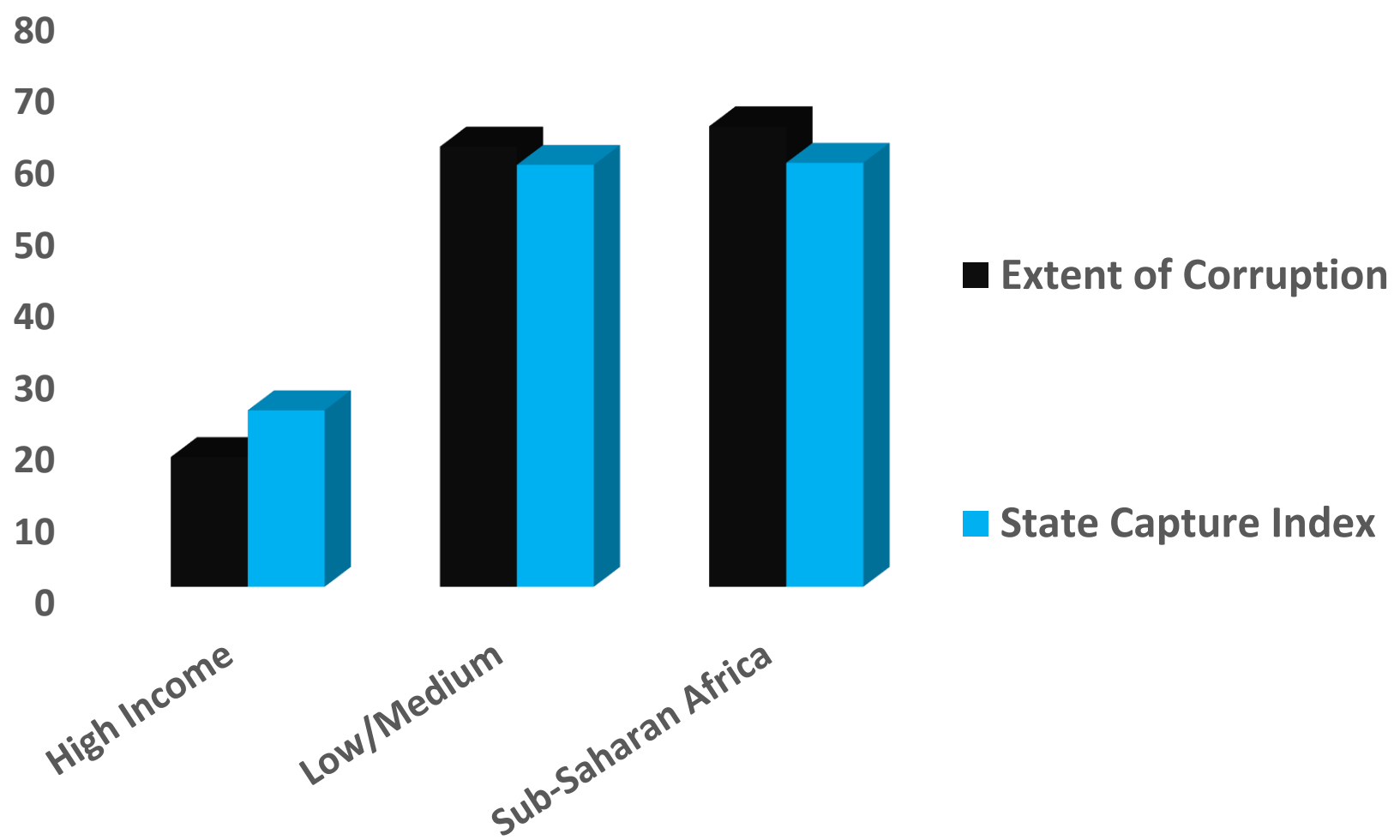


**Source:** Kaufmann, D. (2024). State capture matters: Considerations and empirics toward a worldwide measure. In S. Rose-Ackerman (Ed.), *Public sector performance, corruption, and state capture in a globalized world* (pp. 31). Routledge.

# Extent of (traditional) Corruption (WGI) vs. State Capture Index (SCI) for High Income and Low/Medium Income Countries (2020-22 period)



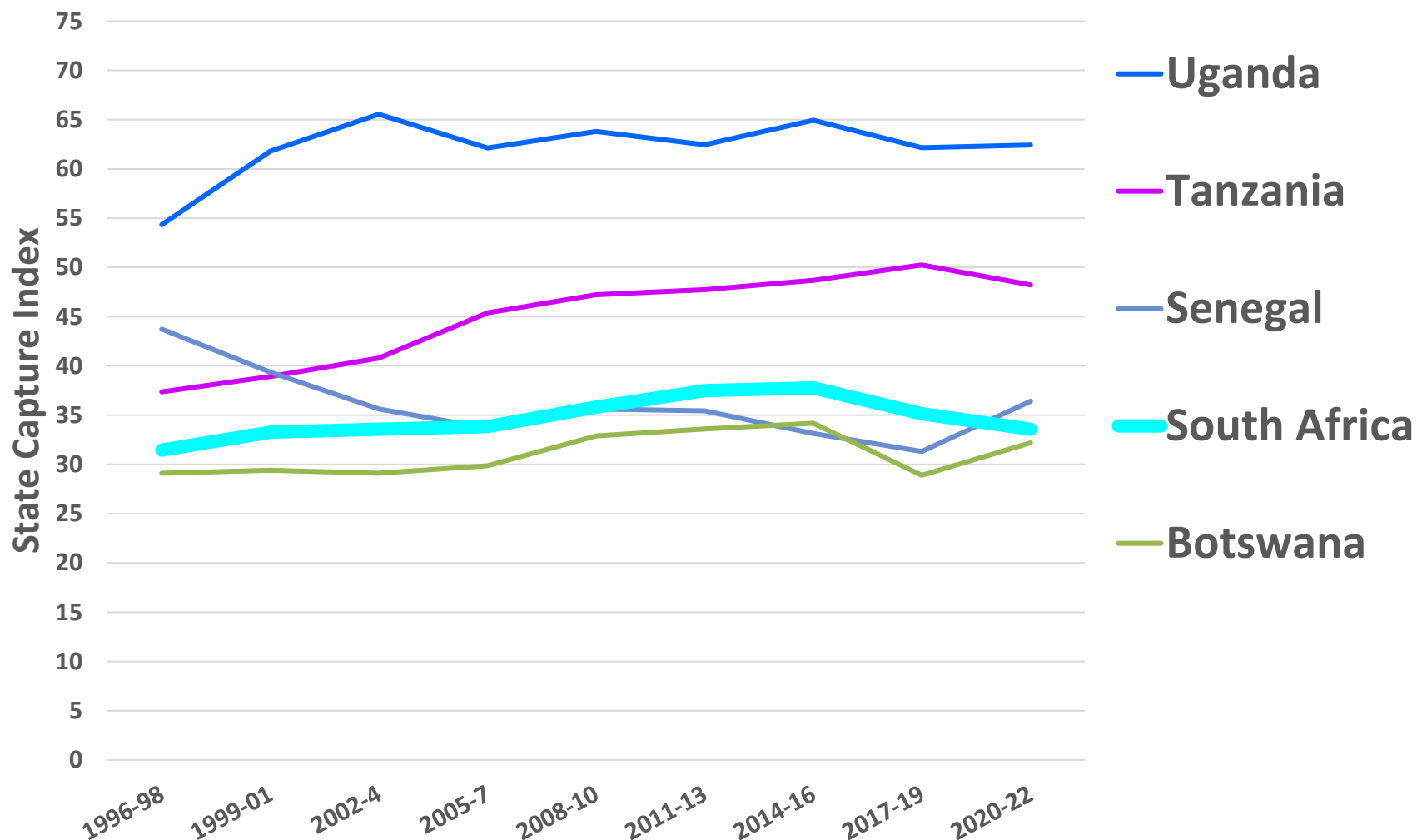
# Extent of Corruption & State Capture (2017-2020) : Selected Countries



Source: Kaufmann, D. (2024). State capture matters: Considerations and empirics toward a worldwide measure. In S. Rose-Ackerman (Ed.), *Public sector performance, corruption, and state capture in a globalized world* (pp. 31). Routledge.

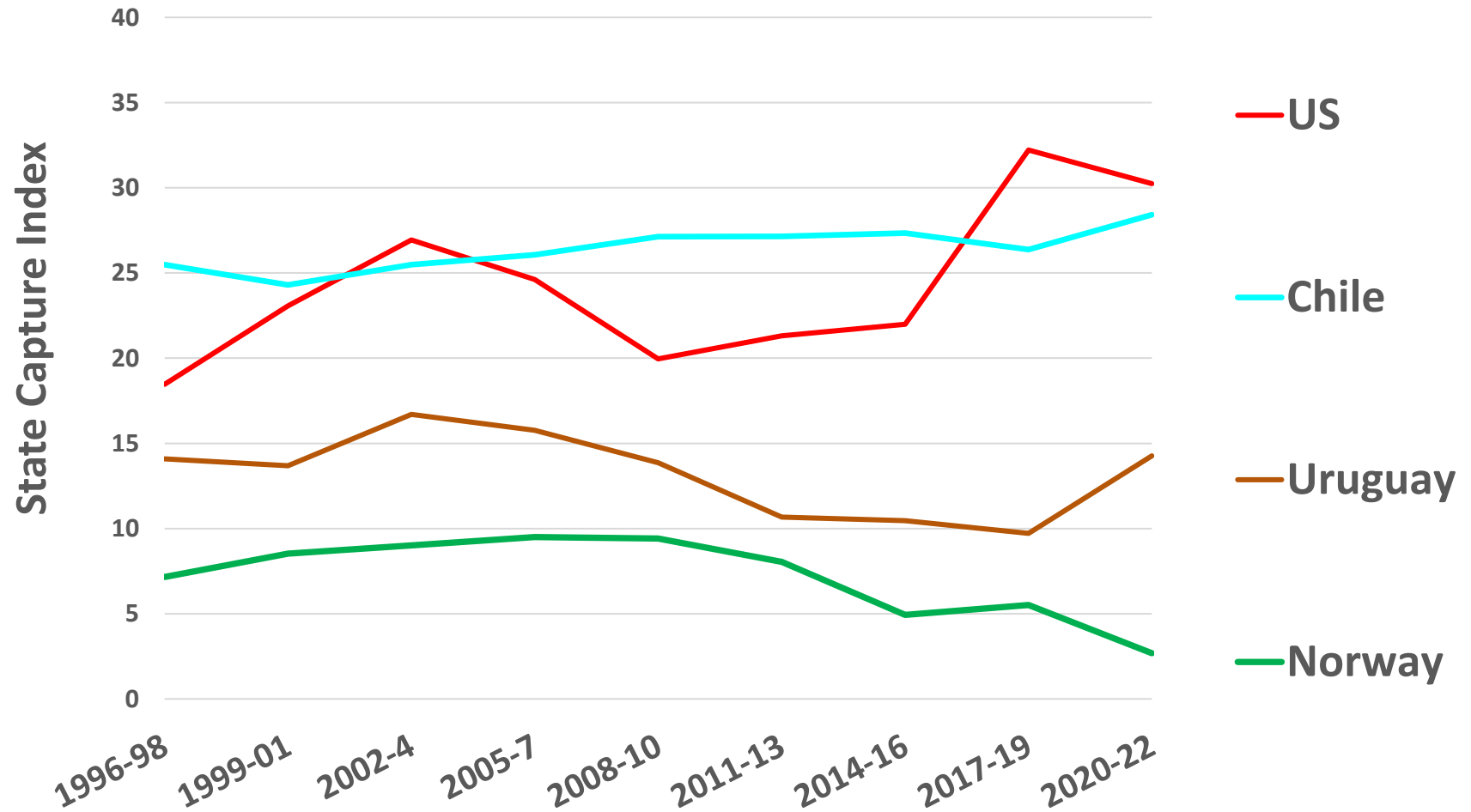


# State Capture: some countries in Africa, 1996-2022

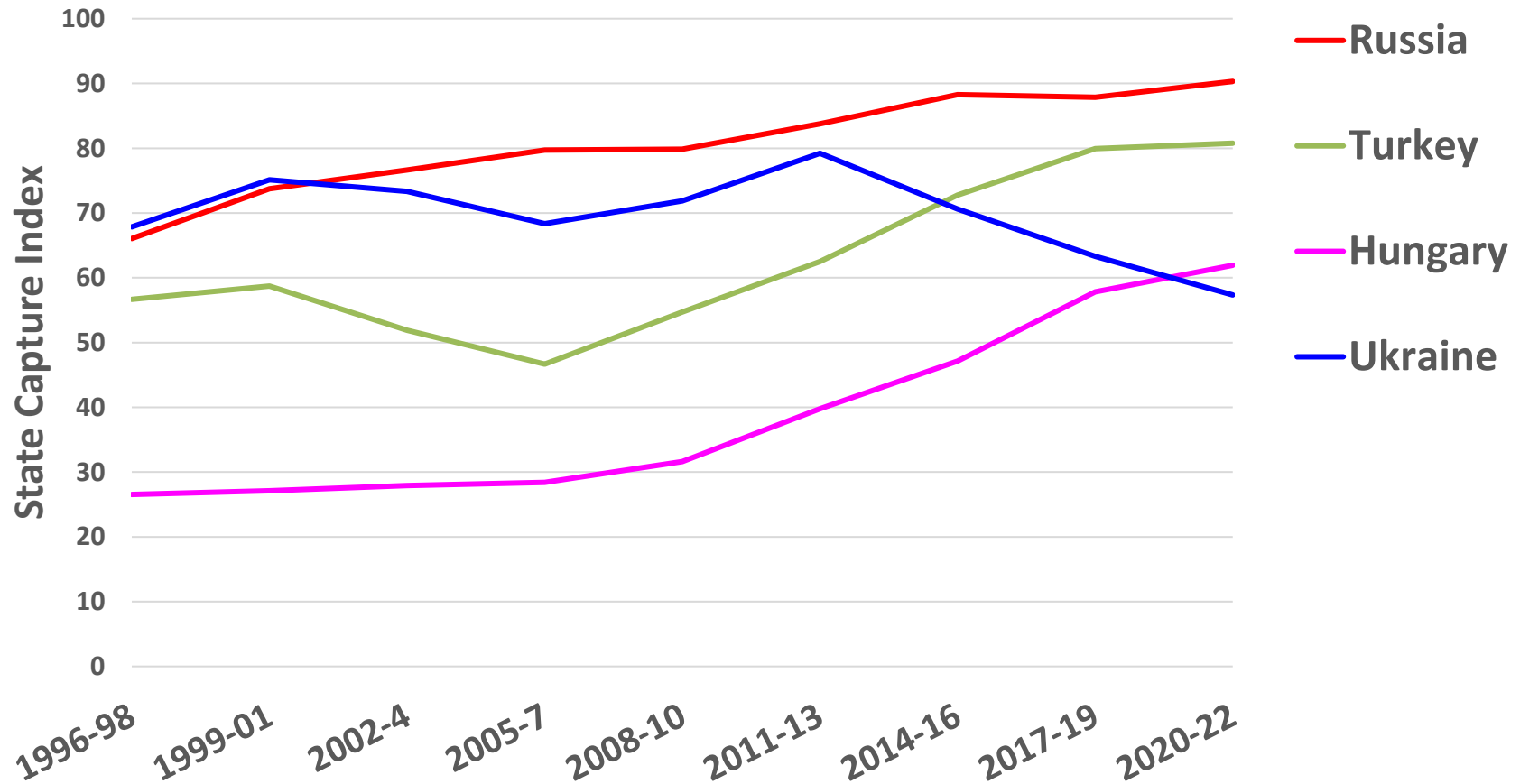


**Source:** Kaufmann, D. (2024). State capture matters: Considerations and empirics toward a worldwide measure. In S. Rose-Ackerman (Ed.), *Public sector performance, corruption, and state capture in a globalized world* (pp. 31). Routledge.

# Evolution of State Capture, selected countries: 1996-2022

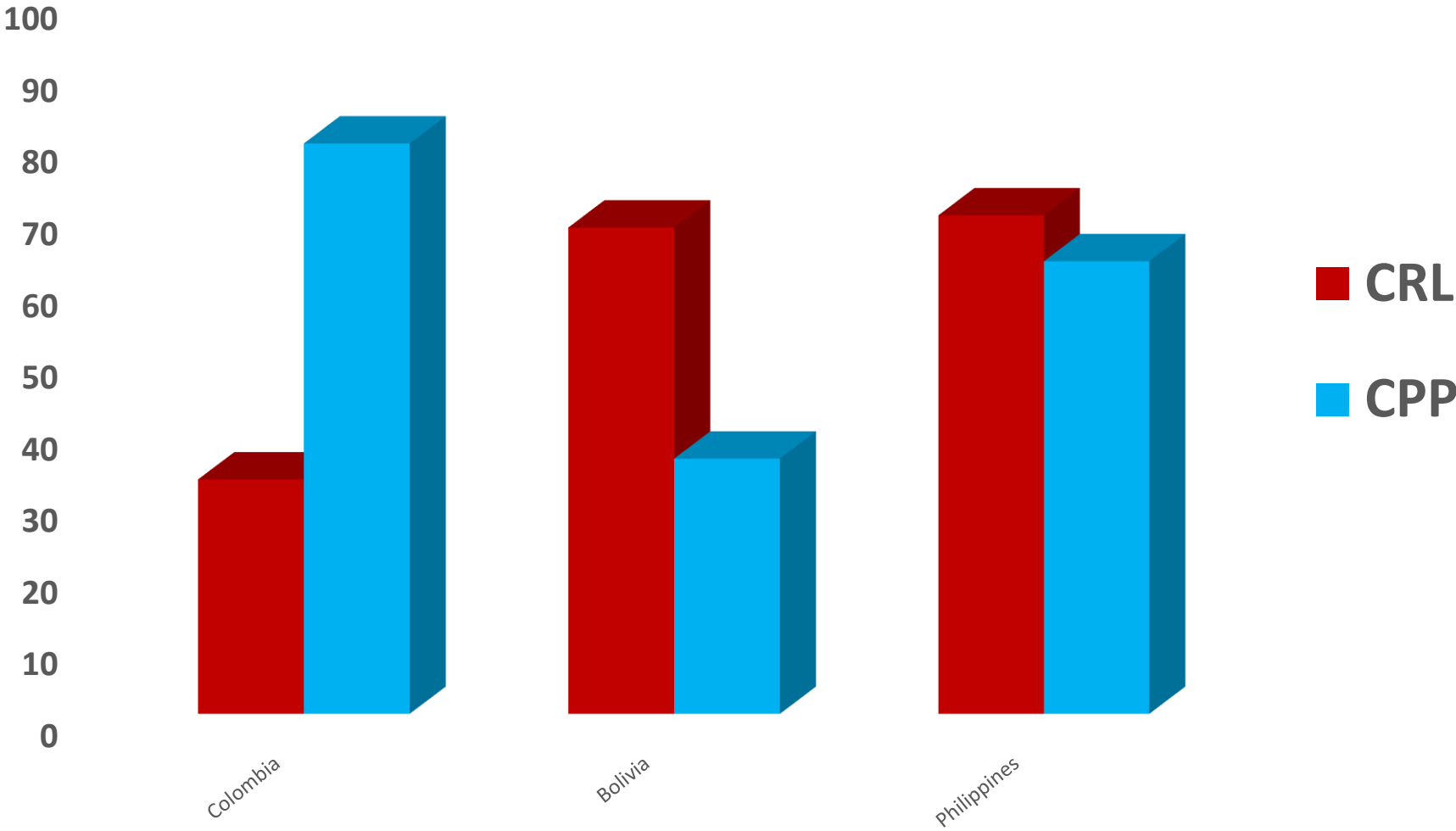


# Evolution of State Capture, selected countries: 1996-2022



Source: Authors' calculations based on the ongoing construction of the SCI, September 2023 Initial draft not for circulation.

**Unbundling: manifestations & Extent of State Capture differ across countries**  
*Capture of Rule of Law (CRL) vs. of Polity & Policy (CPP) in select countries*



# **State Capture can be confined or broad in scope.**

## ***Dire societal consequences***

**Scope: 5 broad pillars which are capture targets –**

- 1. Constitutional/Rule of Law (parliament, High Court, Intel..)**
- 2. Economic Policy/Administrative (*Public finances [budget/tax], Central Bank, civil service, regulatory agencies, etc.*)**
- 3. Dismantling Anti-Corruption/AML framework (norms & laws)**
- 4. Cultural/Informational (*incl. media; AI; narrative/cognitive*)**
- 5. Transnational & Sectoral (*incl. Natural Res., finance, trade*)**

**Dire Consequences:**

- Huge Socio-Economic & Developmental Costs: *likely a multiple of the cost of traditional corruption***
- Undermining of civil and political rights**

# Paths to Prevention of State Capture

- I. Contextual elements to develop strategies to prevent state capture -- *recognizing universality & country differences*:
  - 'Early warning system': *diagnostic tools, red flags, data*
  - Probing into Inequality of Influence: *who wields inordinate hold on power & influence; what is direction of travel?*
  - Main vulnerabilities vs. areas of institutional strength for leveraging checks & balances and entry points
  - Multi-stakeholder participation: government + civil society, & role of industry/financial sector also key.

## II. Specific Areas for diagnostic

1. Public Access in Norm-Producing Process
2. Regulatory & Oversight Mechanisms
3. Electoral Process and Political Engagement Standards
4. Information, Transparency & Technology Integration
5. International, Systemic and Sectoral areas and reforms

## ***In sum***

- Moving beyond traditional corruption notions and templates: *State Capture* -- *to assess fundamentals, not symptoms. It can be broad.*
- Prevention of full capture: possible -- *via timely identification and exposure, collective action, & 'no resting on laurels'*
- In-Country Diagnosis to understand: *i) the vulnerabilities (judiciary, police, parliament, conflicts of interest in gov't?); ii) the strengths (media, citizens/civil society -incl. think tanks-, & iii) agents of change (exec/judiciary/legislative). Identify points of entry/actions*
- Audacity: in exposing & addressing state capture, with evidence

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[r4d.org/resources/state-capture-index/](http://r4d.org/resources/state-capture-index/)

# State Capture data in the FT & the Economist, 2025 articles

## FT: In Defense of the State, Martin Wolf

Capture of the state by private interests has risen substantially in the US since the 1990s



FINANCIAL TIMES Source: Daniel Kaufmann • A combination of three measures: 'corrupt & captured rule of law'; 'captured political access & policy'; 'capture (or capturing) enabling environment'

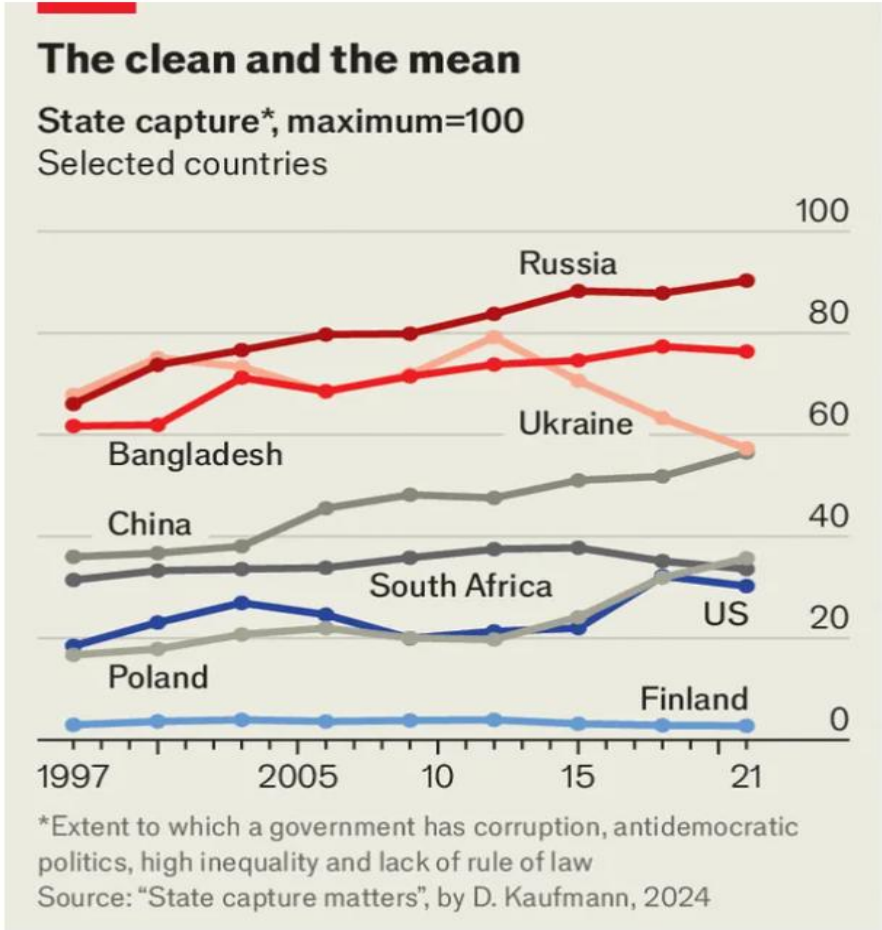


CHART: THE ECONOMIST

## State Capture is a Growing Threat