APPLES AND PINEAPPLES
WHY DO CORRUPTION AND TRUST LEVELS DIFFER BETWEEN DENMARK AND MEXICO? A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TWO EXTREME OECD COUNTRIES

David Gomez-Alvarez*
Gert Tinggaard Svendsen**

ABSTRACT
Why do corruption and social trust levels differ so drastically between Mexico and Denmark, despite both being OECD members? This article compares Mexico-first, positioning it as a paradigmatic Latin American case of low social trust and high corruption, with Denmark as a contrasting extreme. Drawing on institutional theory, social capital theory, and historical institutionalism, we develop a dynamic feedback model in which institutional quality, corruption incentives, social trust, and collective action co-evolve in either vicious or virtuous equilibria. Using theory-guided process tracing and descriptive indicators, we show how weak enforcement, patrimonial legacies, and recent populist institutional reversals in Mexico have undermined trust

* Associate professor at the Public Policy Department of Guadalajara University, Mexico and executive director of Transversal think tank. His latest book is *Who Holds the Keys: The Politics of Public Appointments in Latin America* (Palgrave, 2025). His main areas of research are governance, innovation, democracy and accountability in Mexico. He served as president of the Citizen Participation Committee of the AntiCorruption State System in Jalisco, Mexico.
david.gomezalvarez@academicos.udg.mx
** Gert Tinggaard Svendsen es catedrático y doctor en Ciencias Políticas por la Universidad de Aarhus. Sus principales áreas de investigación son la confianza, el capital social y la política climática. Un ejemplo de la divulgación de su investigación es el libro *Trust* (Johns Hopkins University Press). En 2016, Svendsen fue nombrado Caballero de la Orden de Dannebrog por su investigación pionera sobre la confianza, y en 2025 recibió uno de los premios nacionales del Ministerio de Cultura por “The Trust Society” como patrimonio cultural inmaterial, obra que actualmente se está nominando para su inclusión en la Lista del Patrimonio Mundial de la UNESCO.
gts@ps.au.dk.

and entrenched corruption, while early meritocratic reforms and sustained bureaucratic professionalism in Denmark generated durable high-trust institutions. The article contributes to Latin American debates on governance by demonstrating why formal reforms alone are insufficient without credible enforcement and trust-building. Policy implications highlight enforcement sequencing, bureaucratic incentives, and institutional resilience as prerequisites for sustainable anti-corruption reform.

Keywords: Mexico; Denmark; corruption; social trust; institutions; OECD

1. INTRODUCTION

Mexico is frequently cited as a critical test case in Latin American debates on corruption, institutional weakness, and democratic erosion (Lotta et al., 2024). Despite being a member of the OECD and formally committed to rule-of-law standards, Mexico continues to exhibit persistently high levels of corruption and low levels of social trust, placing it among the weakest performers in comparative governance rankings. This persistence constitutes a central puzzle for scholars and policymakers alike and motivates the present study.

In comparative political economy, the metaphor of "Getting to Denmark" has become shorthand for explaining how countries achieve high-quality institutions, low corruption, and high social trust. Denmark and the other Nordic countries consistently rank among the least corrupt societies in the world and display exceptionally high levels of trust in other people, public authorities, courts, and the police. These characteristics are widely regarded as cornerstones of Nordic socio-economic success and democratic stability (Serritzlew et al., 2014). Trust in the courts, in particular, is a fundamental precondition for democracy and for a state governed by the rule of law –conditions that would be severely undermined if courts were politicized, susceptible to bribery, or failed to sanction corruption.

For Latin American scholars and policymakers, however, the more pressing question is the inverse: why do countries such as Mexico fail to converge toward this high-trust, low-corruption equilibrium, and in some cases even diverge, despite adopting formal institutional reforms and international governance commitments? This question is especially salient given that both Denmark and Mexico are OECD members and are formally classified as "developed countries", notwithstanding their stark differences in rule of law, enforcement capacity, accountability, and social trust.

This article addresses that question through a structured comparison of Mexico and Denmark, treating them as extreme cases within the OECD. While Denmark represents a high-trust, low-corruption equilibrium that has proven remarkably stable over time, Mexico illustrates a low-trust, high-corruption equilibrium that has likewise shown strong resilience to reform. Our central research question is therefore: *Why do corruption and social trust levels differ so radically between Mexico and Denmark?*

We argue that the answer lies in the dynamic interaction between institutions, corruption incentives, social trust, and collective action over time. Rather than viewing trust or corruption as isolated outcomes, we conceptualize them as components of self-reinforcing equilibria shaped by historical trajectories and critical junctures. As Fukuyama (2011) and Jensen and Svendsen (2020) note, how societies reach and sustain a "good equilibrium" –in which most people trust other people in general, including courts and law enforcement– remains a core unresolved puzzle in political economy.

Mexico stands in stark contrast to Denmark on these dimensions. According to recent country reports, Mexico has experienced increases in both perceived and experienced corruption at all levels of government (IIRCCC, 2022). This development helps explain why Mexico has consistently fallen in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, where it is now ranked 140th out of 180 countries (Transparency International, 2024). Using data from the Americas Barometer, Morris and Klesner (2010) document a strong relationship between perceptions of corruption and distrust in political institutions in Mexico, concluding that a vicious cycle exists in which corruption breeds distrust, which in turn perpetuates further corruption and impunity. Rather than converging as OECD members, Denmark and Mexico are diverging at an alarming rate. This divergence must be understood in historical perspective. In Latin America, colonial legacies and post-independence elite formation produced extractive institutions that have proven highly persistent (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2013).

In Mexico, more than seven decades of dominance by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) entrenched patronage-based governance structures that survived democratization and persisted even during periods of opposition rule in the early twenty-first century. While these extractive institutions have evolved over time, they have not been eradicated. More recently, Mexico's current governing coalition –led by the National Regeneration Movement (Morena)– has dismantled several incipient anticorruption institutions and weakened judicial independence through constitutional reforms introducing popular elections of judges. These developments represent a significant institutional reversal, echoing features of Mexico's earlier hegemonic, non-democratic period. As a result, rule-of-law and accountability institutions are arguably weaker today than at the time of democratic transition as populism and institutional erosion prevail (Dussauge-Laguna, 2022).

To explain why Denmark has achieved and sustained high levels of social trust and low corruption while Mexico has not, this article adopts a path-dependent perspective emphasizing critical junctures. Following Thelen (1999), critical junctures are understood as formative moments of institutional change that send countries onto distinct developmental paths. While path dependency explains long-term institutional stability, disruptive political shocks –such as constitutional reforms or major shifts in executive power– can also accelerate divergence or redirect institutional trajectories.

At first glance, comparing Denmark and Mexico may appear to be a case of comparing "apples and pears". We intentionally embrace this asymmetry. As OECD members, both countries are expected to meet similar democratic and governance standards, yet they occupy opposite extremes of the corruption and trust spectrum. Denmark and Mexico represent the two OECD endpoints in Transparency International's index, making their comparison analytically valuable rather than arbitrary.

To capture this contrast, we title the article "Apples and Pineapples". The expression builds on the familiar metaphor of comparing unlike cases, while also invoking the historical association of weak states with so-called "banana republics", whose economies were once dominated by export monocultures such as bananas and pineapples. Denmark, by contrast, is symbolically associated with fertile orchards producing apples –an image reflecting institutional stability, predictability, and trust.

The remainder of the article proceeds as follows. Section 2 develops the theoretical framework and method linking institutions, corruption incentives, social trust, and collective action. Section 3 presents Anti-Corruption Efforts in Denmark and Mexico. Section 4 examines contemporary patterns of social trust and corruption. Section 5 concludes with implications for governance reform in Latin America.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This article draws on four complementary theoretical traditions: North's institutionalism, Putnam's and Uslaner's social capital theory, Olson's collective action framework, and historical institutionalism. Rather than treating these approaches separately, we integrate them into a single dynamic framework that explains how institutions, corruption, and social trust co-evolve over time.

From an institutionalist perspective, institutions structure incentives by defining the expected costs and benefits of behavior (North, 1990). Where formal institutions are impartial, predictable, and credibly enforced, corruption becomes a high-cost, low-reward activity. Where enforcement is weak or selective, the expected costs of rule-breaking decline and corruption becomes rational. In this sense, corruption can be broadly defined as "the misuse of public power for private gain" (Rose-Ackerman, 1999, p. 91) –a condition that arises when the rule of law and the principle of impartiality are not respected. Laws, however, are only as effective as their enforcement. High-quality formal institutions are therefore a prerequisite for both a functioning market economy and a modern welfare state.

Social capital theory complements this institutional perspective by emphasizing how corruption affects social trust, understood here as generalized expectations of honest and cooperative behavior beyond close personal networks. When corruption is widespread, citizens anticipate opportunism, favoritism, and unfair treatment. Trust in other people –and crucially in courts, police, and public authorities– erodes. Robert Putnam's (1993) historical analysis of southern Italy provides a classic illustration: centralized and autocratic governance, combined with corruption and weak enforcement, produced a Hobbesian environment characterized by civic disengagement, lawlessness, and distrust. Public affairs came to be seen as the business of elites rather than ordinary citizens, and laws were widely regarded as rules to be broken rather than collectively binding commitments.

The erosion of trust has important consequences for collective action. As Olson (1965) emphasizes, cooperation in large groups is inherently fragile when individuals expect others to defect. Low social trust raises transaction and monitoring costs, weakens compliance, and undermines the provision of public goods. In such contexts, corruption and distrust reinforce one another, producing what can be described as a vicious equilibrium: weak institutions encourage corruption; corruption erodes trust; low trust undermines collective action; and poor collective outcomes further weaken institutional performance.

From a social capital perspective, widespread corruption also tends to foster closed and exclusionary networks, often described as negative bonding social capital (Uslaner, 2009). These networks allow privileged actors to exploit access to bureaucrats and manipulate rules through bribery and patronage, often at the expense of outsiders. While informal networks may in some exceptional cases temporarily compensate for state failure –so-called "greasing the wheels" effects (Aidt, 2019)– the broader and long-term consequence is economic inefficiency, inequality, and declining trust.

Conversely, when institutions are impartial and enforcement is credible, corruption becomes risky and unattractive. Citizens observe that rule-breaking is sanctioned, which increases confidence that others will also comply. Social trust rises, transaction costs fall, and collective action becomes easier to sustain. Over time, this generates a virtuous equilibrium in which strong institutions, low corruption, high trust, and effective collective action mutually reinforce one another.

These dynamics are summarized in Table 1, which presents a dynamic feedback model linking institutional quality, corruption incentives, social trust and collective action capacity which again generates self-reinforcing feedbark loops to institutional quality. Importantly, the model is not static. Historical shocks and critical junctures –such as constitutional reforms, regime changes, or major political disruptions– can shift societies from one equilibrium to another. Historical institutionalism highlights how early institutional choices create path dependencies, but also how disruptive events can accelerate divergence or redirect trajectories (Thelen, 1999).

TABLE 1.
A DYNAMIC MODEL OF INSTITUTIONS, CORRUPTION, SOCIAL TRUST AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

Institutional Quality	**Corruption Incentives**	**Social Trust**	**Collective Action Capacity**
Strong institutions raise costs of corruption; weak institutions lower costs.	Low incentives in virtuous equilibrium; high incentives in vicious equilibrium.	Trust rises with fair enforcement; erodes with corruption.	High trust enables cooperation; low trust undermines cooperation.

Source: Self-reinforcing feedback loops generate virtuous or vicious equilibria.

Within this theoretical framework, the inverse relationship between corruption and social trust is not merely correlational but structurally grounded. Countries characterized by high corruption are expected to exhibit low social trust, while countries with low corruption should sustain high trust. This expectation aligns closely with the empirical contrast between Mexico and Denmark. In Mexico, high levels of corruption, violence, and impunity generate uncertainty and unpredictable behavior, undermining trust in both institutions and other citizens. In Denmark, by contrast, low corruption and credible enforcement support exceptionally high levels of trust in courts, police, and fellow citizens.

In the following sections, we use this integrated theoretical framework to analyze how different historical trajectories and institutional configurations have placed Denmark and Mexico on sharply divergent trust-corruption equilibria. This study employs a Most Different Systems Design (MDSD). Mexico and Denmark differ along nearly all historical, cultural, and institutional dimensions, yet both are OECD members formally committed to similar governance norms. This makes them analytically useful extreme cases for theory testing.

The analysis relies on theory-guided process tracing rather than causal identification. Quantitative indicators (CPI; WVS/EVS) are used descriptively to document patterns, while historical analysis explains how institutional trajectories produced divergent corruption-trust equilibria.

3. ANTI-CORRUPTION EFFORTS

3.1 Denmark

Historical developments in combating corruption and fostering social trust appear to be closely correlated. This process has arguably played a central role in the establishment and financing of the Nordic welfare state, also helping to determine its size and structure (Bjørnskov & Svendsen, 2013). A long-term historical perspective is crucial to understanding Denmark's shift toward a Weberian-style bureaucracy characterized by minimal corruption.

Notably, Danish historian Mette Frisk Jensen has conducted groundbreaking research in this field. Her studies on the history of corruption and the ethics of public office in Denmark reveal that bureaucratic corruption was relatively low even before the modern Nordic welfare state emerged. As early as the post-1660 period, King Frederik III (r. 1648-1670) and his successor Christian V (r. 1670-1699) began implementing anti-corruption reforms, laying the foundations for the rule of law and a loyal civil service. These early steps toward bureaucratic integrity were both a strategy to consolidate the newly established absolute monarchy in 1660 and a response to heightened geopolitical tensions – particularly the rivalry with Sweden. After Denmark's defeat in 1658, which resulted in the loss of strategic control over the Baltic Sea, the need for a strong and loyal state apparatus became more urgent than ever. In this context, both Denmark-Norway and Sweden-Finland, as fiscal-military states, required substantial tax revenues to fund their military capacities and public institutions (Jensen, 2017).

To improve the efficiency of tax collection, the Danish monarchy eliminated the traditional privileges of the nobility after 1660, stripping them of their monopoly over land ownership and high-ranking positions in the military and civil service. These institutional changes represent a critical juncture in Denmark's administrative history. Over the following decades, a reliable and rule-bound administration was gradually built. By the late 18th century, corruption-related offenses such as bribery, embezzlement, and fraud had been formally criminalized, and civil servants were given increasingly detailed codes of conduct reflecting expectations of loyalty and integrity. As a result, by the mid-19th century, corruption in Denmark had been significantly reduced (Jensen, 2018).

A key element of this transformation was the shift in bureaucratic incentives. The early reforms altered the cost-benefit calculations for civil servants: corruption was no longer a rational choice. In other words, the total costs (C) of engaging in corruption –such as the risk of detection, legal punishment, damage to reputation, or loss of pension– came to outweigh the potential benefits (B), such as favoritism, bribes, or embezzlement. Thus, when C > B, corrupt behavior was effectively discouraged (Jensen & Svendsen, 2020).

By the mid-19th century, all Nordic countries had established a Weberian-style bureaucracy grounded in the rule of law. Remarkably, this occurred before Max Weber published his seminal work on ideal bureaucracy in the early 20th century –leading scholars to describe the Nordic experience as "Weber before Weber" (Bågenholm, 2018). Similar processes unfolded in Sweden, where anti-corruption reforms were also linked to efforts to outcompete Denmark and assert dominance in the Baltic region (Teorell & Rothstein, 2015a; 2015b). Over time, the cost of being corrupt for public officials steadily increased, further reinforcing a culture of integrity and trust. That critical juncture in 1660 laid the foundation for the anti-corruption reforms outlined in Table 2 below, establishing a stable developmental path characterized by high institutional quality –ultimately leading to the emergence of the contemporary Nordic welfare states. see table 2 below.

Notably, all Nordic countries share a common Lutheran heritage, which may have played a role in shaping prosocial norms and fostering trust-based governance. In this light, future research could fruitfully explore the role of religion in curbing corruption and promoting social trust (Weber, 2009; Graeff & Svendsen, 2020). A key question for future research emerges: Do certain religions foster relatively lower levels of corruption and higher levels of social trust than others? Investigating this relationship could provide further valuable insights into the institutional underpinnings of cultural development.

TABLE 2.
THE DEEP HISTORY OF ANTI-CORRUPTION REFORMS IN DENMARK, 1660-1866

Year	Ten Main Anti-Corruption Reforms
1660-1700	**1. Hierarchical Reorganization** Increasing the hierarchy of offices, professionalization and loyalty also increases the incentives among civil servants to refrain from corruption.
After 1660	**2. An Oath to the King** The civil servant had to swear an oath promising to perform duties, be honest, work hard and follow the king's laws.
1676-1690	**3. Criminalizing Corruption** New laws introduced severe punishments (life imprisonment, loss of office etc.) for being corrupt (bribery, fraud and embezzlement).
1700-1800	**4. Meritocratic Appointment** Recruitment of civil servants based on formal qualifications and merit further strengthens the rule of law.
1736-1821	5. University Examination in Law Jurists gradually take over bureaucratic offices following their formal qualification from the new university examination in law at the University of Copenhagen (introduced in 1736).
1803-1830	**6. Closer Monitoring** New procedures strengthen the monitoring system of civil servants ensuring that their practices were conducted according to instructions and law.
1841	**7. Accounting and Audits** A new law introduced a more detailed keeping of accounts (such as abolishing civil servants' right to borrow from public funds) backed by more audits.
1849 (The Danish Constitution)	**8. Retirement Pensions** Civil servants become entitled to retirement pension at the age of 70 or in case of illness which again could be lost in case of misconduct in office.
1861	**9. Salary** A new law granted fixed salaries to all categories of officials abolishing the former fee system.
1840 & 1866	**10. New Penal Codes** Two new penal codes defined even clearer standards for corruption crimes, punishments and ethics of office.

Source: Jensen & Svendsen (2020, pp. 187-88).

3.2 Mexico

The institutional development of Mexico has been marked by turbulence and disruption. Following its independence (1810-1821), the country first emerged as a monarchy under the Imperio Mexicano. In 1823, the republic was formally established as the Estados Unidos Mexicanos, the official name for Mexico. However, the 19th century was characterized by significant foreign interventions: by France (1838-1839), the United States (1846-1848), and again by France (1862-1867), culminating in the short-lived restoration of the monarchy under Maximilian von Habsburg. During this period, patrimonialism was practiced by all rulers and accepted by the people. For centuries, government was a swag for winners (Frasquet, 2021).

The republic was restored in 1867 but the state remained weak. In 1876, Porfirio Díaz rose to power, ushering in the Porfiriato, a prolonged period of authoritarian rule that lasted until 1911. This period is considered as a dictatorship, but not a as a corrupt regime (Krauze, 2019). This era laid the groundwork for the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), which led to the adoption of the current Constitution in 1917. This violent period undermine the few state institutions built during the previous century. In 1929, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) was founded, and it maintained political dominance for seventy years, from 1930 to 2000. Under this long period patrimonialism evolved into political corruption and molded political culture (Paolino, 2009).

Mexico's enduring problems with corruption and patronage are rooted in its colonial institutional legacy, the instability between 1838 and 1867, the authoritarian rule of Díaz, and the "party dictatorship" maintained by the PRI. These factors entrenched patterns of executive dominance and discretionary distribution of public sector positions for personal or political gain. The origins of corruption can be traced back to the colonial times, but the irruption of grand corruption surged at the end of last century under the PRI era (Paolino, 2009).

The weakening of the PRI began between 1988 and 1997, and culminated in its loss of the presidency to the Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) in 2000. A decade earlier, in 1990 the Federal Electoral Institute was created, and free and fair elections took place in Mexico. While this transition marked a significant step toward democratization (Olvera, 2026). It did not lead to immediate reforms in the corruption-prone system of public sector employment. As early as the 1990s, scholars such as Grindle (2012) advocated for a merit-based career system as a solution to corruption, although the main goal was to create state institutional capacities. During this period corruption rapidly increased, but it was hidden through media control and political opacity (Dávid-Barrett, 2023). Clientelistic and political relationships continued to shape public administration (Pérez-Chiqués & Meza, 2021). Presidentialism played a central role in shaping these dynamics.

In 2000 with the triumph of the opposition, corruption irrupted in the public agenda. Notably, a federal law on transparency and access to public information was first enacted in 2002 and replaced in 2014 by a new national version aimed at strengthening oversight. At the same time, each state created its own local transparency agency. However, in 2025 the INAI (National Institute of Public Information Access) was eliminated, and the people's right to know jeopardized (Castillo, 2025).

After a series of corruption scandals, the anti-corruption reforms gained momentum under Peña Nieto administration. In 2015, constitutional amendments focused on anti-corruption efforts were passed, leading to the creation of the Sistema Nacional Anticorrupción (National Anti-Corruption System) in 2016 to implement these policies. Mexico's federal structure allows each subnational state to adopt variations in accordance with the Federal Constitution, resulting in heterogeneous outcomes in the implementation of anti-corruption efforts. Despite the institutional efforts under Peña presidency, Mexico's position in world rankings like Transparency International keep declining because of the corruption scandals (Nieto, 2020).

The arrival of President López Obrador brought challenges to institutional integrity. Lopez Obrador won the elections with the promise of eradicating corruption. However, his government undermined the the National Institute for Access to Information, that ultimately was eliminated, and outcast the National Anti-Corruption System (Peschard, 2020; Loreto, 2021), making it irrelevant. During his administration, important corruption cases irrupted, but none were investigated or sanctioned. The outstanding popularity of López Obrador made him immune to any corruption scandal (Nieto, 2020).

In 2024, the governing coalition won both the presidency and the congress with more than half of the votes. However, the coalition managed to obtain the qualified majority –with an overrepresentation of more than 20 percent of legislative seats– which gave the ruling party the legal power of modifying the constitution by itself. This critical juncture implied the erosion of the division of Powers and the elimination of democratic controls (Olvera, 2026). In 2025 Mexico entered an uncertain non-democratic path that, among other unpredictable consequences, has implied the dismantling of anticorruption institutions.

Unlike Denmark, where anti-corruption reforms have been stable and sound, Mexico's reforms remain shallow. Corruption in Mexico continues to evolve rapidly, finding new ways to capture state institutions and evade accountability. Under the presidency of Claudia Sheinbaum checks and balances have been eroded. According to different classifications Mexico us not a weak democracy but a hybrid regime (Democracy Index 2024). This reclassification reflects the recent institutional involution, see Table 3 below.

TABLE 3.
THE SHORT HISTORY OF ANTI-CORRUPTION REFORMS IN MEXICO 1990-2025

Year	Ten Main Anti-Corruption Reforms
1990	**1. Federal Electoral Institute** With the creation of the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE), Mexico move towards free and fair elections that democratize the political system. In 2014 IFE change to the National Electoral Institute (INE), that was been partially captured and politically restrained.
1997	**2. Divided government and legislative autonomy** The hegemonic party PRI lost the election and therefore the control of the Congress. The first divided government in Mexico led to the oversight of the Presidency for first time. In 2024, the current governing coalition obtained 54 percent of the votes and 73 percent of the legislative seats, controlling Congress.
2000	**3. Political alternation in power** The right wing political party, National Action Party (PAN) won the presidential elections, which implicated alternation in power. In 2012 the PRI returned to power only one term, and since 2018 Morena has been in power.
2002-2003	**4. Transparency and information access reforms** The Federal Law of Public Information Access was approved and the next year the Federal Institute for Public Information Access was created. During two decades Mexico advanced in transparency. However, in 2025 INAI was eliminated.
2016	**5. Anticorruption National System** Through the creation of the Anticorruption Secretariat and assembling of a series of existing institutions, the Anticorruption National System was created. However, since 2024 the system is incomplete and with limited functioning.
2019	**6. Anticorruption Prosecutor Office** The Anticorruption Prosecutor Office was created with the General Prosecutor Office with limited resources and competencies.
2025	**7. Anticorruption and Good Government Ministry** Under the Presidency of Sheinbaum the former Ministry of Public Administration was transformed into the Anticorruption and Good Government Ministry, responsible of the transparency policy and the access to public information.
2025	**8. Judicial elections and judiciary politics** In 2025, half of the Judiciary was renovated through contested and controversial elections. This included the total renovation of the Supreme Court, that it is now politically aligned with the Presidency.

Source: Own elaboration.

3.3 Absence of corruption today

Let us finally move to institutional quality measured as corruption today. Nordic welfare societies are known for having reliable and impartial institutions (Hjorth-Andersen and Bertilsson, 2009). Here, we use Transparency International's annual Corruption Perception Index. Corruption level is measured through the corruption index from Transparency International. The index varies between 10 (no corruption) and 0 (full corruption). Consequently, on this 'non-corruption index' a high score means low corruption and a low score means high corruption. When looking at the corruption numbers, they largely follow the pattern from social trust (as we will get back to in Section 3). Note, that a high score corresponds to a low degree (or absence) of corruption.

TABLE 4.
ABSENCE OF CORRUPTION LEVEL (SELECTED COUNTRIES), 2024

Country	Score (0-100)	Abbreviation
Denmark	90	DNK
Finland	88	FIN
Norway	81	NOR
Sweden	80	SWE
Germany	80	DEU
Netherlands	78	NLD
Iceland	77	ICE
United Kingdom	71	GBR
France	67	FRA
United States	65	USA
Spain	56	ESO
Italy	54	ITA
Greece	49	GRC
Romania	46	ROU
Albania	42	ALB
Colombia	39	COL
Indonesia	37	IDN
Turkey	34	TUR
Philippines	33	PHL
Mexico	26	MEX
Russia	22	RUS
Zimbabwe	21	ZWE
Nicaragua	14	NIC

Source: Corruption data from the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2024.
https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2024?utm_source

As shown in Table 4 below, we see the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway) at the top followed by Netherlands and Germany. All have impressing scores on 80 and above. Iceland is a bit lower with a 77 score. Corruption has consistently been low in the Nordic countries since 1995. Still, it is certainly not unknown, and a number of recent cases exist (Jensen & Svendsen 2020).

The United Kingdom has the relatively high score of 71. Then United States, France and Spain scores 65, 67 and 56 respectively. The average for the whole of Italy is 54. It is hard to find regional data for Italy comparable to the Corruption Perception Index used here, but the European Quality of Government Index (EQI) has some data suggesting that perceived corruption is significantly higher in the South than in the North of Italy (Charron et al. 2021, p. 14). Here it would be most relevant to explore further the current and historical differences between North and South Italy in terms of comparable corruption levels. Next three countries (Greece, Romania and Indonesia) following Italy score 49, 46 and 37 respectively, followed by Colombia (39) which is high above Mexico. Bottom five in this ranking of selected countries are Philippines (33), Mexico (26), Russia (22), Zimbabwe (21) and Nicaragua (14).

4. SOCIAL TRUST AND CORRUPTION

The strength of a trust-based culture in a given country can be assessed through levels of social trust. This indicator essentially reflects whether individuals generally approach others with trust or suspicion. High levels of social trust enable people to cooperate more easily, creating collaborative bonds, without the constant fear of being deceived. In essence, social trust measures the perceived risk of being cheated. Conversely, in low-trust societies, individuals must take additional precautions –such as hiring costly lawyers, drafting complex contracts, or employing private security– which raises transaction costs and makes everyday life both more cumbersome and more expensive (Svendsen & Svendsen, 2016). A commonly used measure for social trust is the percentage of the population who respond “yes” to the question: “Do you think most people can be trusted?” (Haerpfer et al., 2022). Table 5 below presents the social trust scores for the same countries listed in Table 4.

TABLE 5.
SOCIAL TRUST SCORES (SELECTED COUNTRIES)

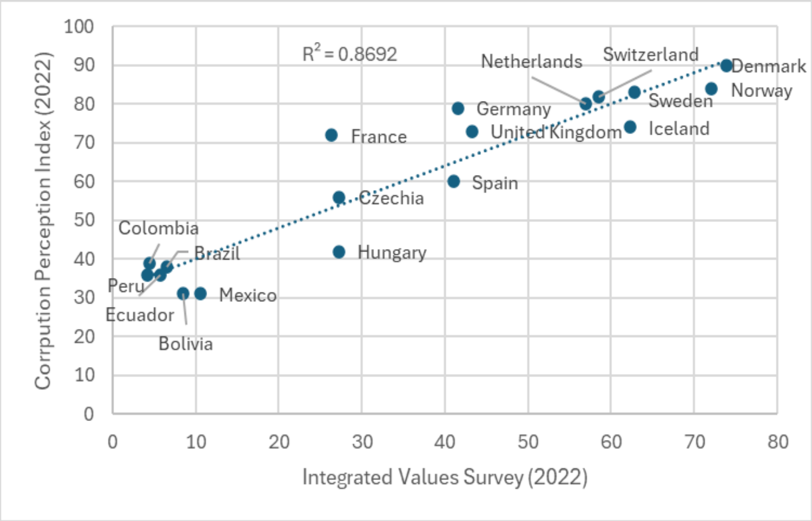
Country	Score ("Yes" %)	Abbreviation
Denmark	74	DNK
Norway	72	NOR
Finland	72	FIN
Sweden	63	SWE
Iceland	62	ICE
Netherlands	57	NLD
United Kingdom	43	GBR
Germany	42	DEU
Spain	41	ESP
United States	37	USA
Italy	27	ITA
France	26	FRA
Russia	23	RUS
Turkey	14	TUR
Romania	12	ROU
Mexico	10	MEX
Greece	8	GRC
Philippines	5	PHL
Indonesia	5	IDN
Colombia	5	COL
Nicaragua	4	NIC
Albania	3	ALB
Zimbabwe	2	ZWE

Source: Social trust data from the European and World Values Surveys 2020-2022.

Once again, Denmark and the other Nordic countries consistently rank at the top globally in terms of social trust. The overall empirical pattern is that higher levels of social trust are associated with lower levels of corruption. This result is confirmed in other social trust surveys such as the Integrated Values Survey (2022). Here, a strong correlation is found between social trust and absence of corruption (0.8692), see Figure 1 below. Again, in Nordic countries, there are high absence of corruption and high social trust, while in Latin American countries is the opposite. Mexico is positioned in the lower left corner, characterized by low levels of social trust and high levels of corruption. Mexicans tend to mainly trust family members, not strangers, neighbors or work colleagues, let alone public servants or police officers (Flores and

Somuano, 2022). Social distrust is correlated with corruption and increasing levels of violence, which extends beyond state institutions.

FIGURE 1.
SOCIAL TRUST AND ABSENCE OF CORRUPTION



Thus, Figure 1 confirms a strong negative correlation between corruption and social trust, with Denmark located in the high-trust/low-corruption quadrant and Mexico in the low-trust/high-corruption quadrant. These empirical patterns are consistent with the proposed feedback model in Table 1 above rather than short-term policy effects.

Other surveys have also found a strong correlation between social trust and absence of corruption and that corruption with some certainty has a causal effect on social trust. In other words, a potential 'double dividend' may be coined from fighting corruption as more social trust can be created at the same time as a positive externality from this activity. Both lower corruption and higher social trust will increase the socioeconomic benefits even further (Serritzlew et al., 2014). This is basically due to lower transaction costs and the fact that control costs are saved. The social and economic costs of overcontrol are extremely high, and the probable result of its increase is the slow depreciation of a society's social trust reserve. Lenin once said "Trust is good, but control is better", but because the presence of trust lowers transaction costs in everyday life, perhaps we should instead say "Control is good, but trust is cheaper" (Svendsen, 2025). In the case of Mexico, the cost of missing trust is extremely high due to the lack of rule of law and enforcement. Cheating or fraud tend to prevail without sanction because of the extremely high levels of impunity, increasing thus transactional costs for citizens.

In the absence of corruption, however, people can, for example, trust that tax payments are not stolen by corrupt bureaucrats and politicians but rather invested in public goods or collective benefits for the state, such as the effective fight against the corona virus. Incorrupt countries provide citizens with good value for their money, whereas taxpayers' money often 'disappears' and 'goes into the wrong pockets' in corrupt countries –to the great detriment of trust. In other words, well-functioning institutions like the Danish courts reduce the likelihood of citizens being cheated. Generally speaking, it makes sense to comply with the recommendations of the scientific authorities in Denmark and the other Nordic countries, therefore, without this leading to criticism and unwanted behavior.

In contrast, property rights and legal certainty in Mexico are frequently distorted or abused, lowering social trust. Judiciary corruption, for example, is provoking extra legal executions and bribery of judges that despite their wrong doing are not punished. Levels of impunity have reached over 95 percent, meaning that only five percent of crimes committed in Mexico end in sanction (OECD, 2024). These trends explain the decline in social trust that has increased transaction costs such as assurance, protection and vigilance.

Overall, for a direct comparative analysis of Mexico and Denmark, both countries can be analyzed along four common institutional dimensions: (1) state centralization and bureaucratic organization; (2) meritocratic recruitment and incentives; (3) enforcement capacity and judicial independence; and (4) historical shocks and critical junctures, see Table 6 below.

TABLE 6.
DENMARK AND MEXICO COMPARED ACROSS INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSIONS

Institutional Dimension	Denmark	Mexico
1. State centralization and bureaucracy	Early centralization; professional bureaucracy	Fragmented authority; politicized bureaucracy
2. Meritocratic recruitment and incentives	Merit-based recruitment; career incentives	Clientelism; weak meritocratic incentives
3. Enforcement and judicial independence	Credible enforcement; independent judiciary	Weak enforcement; politicized justice system
4. Historical shocks and critical junctures	Institutional continuity	Repeated political shocks and reversals

Denmark is characterized by early and sustained reforms with a professional bureaucracy including meritocracy, credible enforcement, and institutional continuity, which transformed corruption into a high-cost, low-reward activity, enabling trust to accumulate over time.

In contrast, Mexico's trajectory is characterized by fragmented authority, politicized bureaucracy, clientelism, weak meritocracy and enforcement, and repeated political chocks. Recent populist reforms have further weakened accountability institutions, reinforcing corruption and eroding trust.

5. CONCLUSION

This article set out to explain why corruption and social trust levels differ so drastically between Mexico and Denmark, despite both being OECD members formally committed to similar governance standards. The comparative analysis shows that these differences are not accidental or purely cultural, but the result of long-term, self-reinforcing institutional trajectories.

Denmark represents a virtuous equilibrium, shaped by early meritocratic reforms, professional bureaucratic incentives, credible enforcement, and remarkable institutional continuity. Historically, strong regional competition in the Nordic region –particularly among early fiscal-military states– created powerful incentives to curb corruption in order to collect taxes, finance armies, and sustain the rule of law. Improvements in institutional quality, especially within the courts and enforcement agencies, gradually reduced corruption and fostered generalized social trust. Over time, this path dependency has locked Denmark into a high-trust, low-corruption equilibrium that underpins its contemporary welfare state, democratic stability, and economic prosperity.

Mexico, by contrast, illustrates a vicious equilibrium. Persistent corruption is rooted in a historical legacy of patrimonialism, clientelism, and elite dominance, reinforced by weak enforcement and recurrent political shocks. Although Mexico undertook ambitious constitutional and institutional reforms during its democratic transition, recent developments have reversed many of these gains. The dismantling of checks and balances, the politicization of oversight institutions, and the concentration of power in the executive have weakened state capacity and accountability. At the same time, organized crime has expanded its influence, further eroding trust and undermining the state's monopoly on violence. Militarization of civilian functions and large-scale cash transfer programs may offer short-term stability, but they do not build social capital and risk reinforcing dependency and clientelistic relationships rather than trust-based cooperation.

The comparison also highlights an important warning: low corruption and high social trust cannot be taken for granted, even in countries such as Denmark and the other Nordic states. Trust is a fragile asset. Once eroded –as the Mexican case illustrates– it is difficult and costly to rebuild, and societies often only recognize its value once it has been lost.

The policy implications for Latin America are therefore clear. Sustainable anti-corruption reform requires more than formal institutional change or symbolic legislation. First, policymakers must prioritize enforcement credibility and bureaucratic professionalism, since weak enforcement undermines both compliance and trust. Second, social trust should be treated as a policy-relevant outcome, not merely a cultural by-product, because it directly affects cooperation, economic performance, and democratic legitimacy. Third, reform sequencing matters: strengthening enforcement capacity is a prerequisite for successful trust-building initiatives. Fourth, reform strategies must explicitly account for path-dependent trust–corruption equilibria, recognizing that abrupt or highly politicized reforms are unlikely to succeed unless underlying incentive structures are fundamentally altered.

More broadly, this study suggests that lessons from the Nordic experience –particularly the deep historical roots of effective anti-corruption efforts– remain highly relevant today. Understanding how countries such as Denmark managed to escape corruption traps helps clarify why others struggle to do so, and how different paths might be forged in the future. With such understanding, it becomes possible not only to preserve existing levels of trust where they are high, but also to rebuild and sustain trust where it has been eroded.

Ultimately, these insights are not only relevant for Latin America, but for the world as a whole. In an era marked by democratic backsliding, geopolitical uncertainty, and declining institutional confidence, learning how to keep corruption at bay and nurture social trust may be one of the most important challenges of our time –and a key to creating a more resilient, prosperous and cooperative future.

REFERENCES

Acemoglu, D. & Robinson, J. (2013). *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty.* Crown Currency.

Aidt, T. S. (2019). Corruption. In Roger D. Congleton, Bernard Grofman and Stefan Voigt, eds, *Oxford Handbook of Public Choice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Altamirano, J. y López, M. (2023). *Balance del modelo de combate a la corrupcion en México.* Biolex.

Bjørnskov, C. and G. T. Svendsen (2013). Does social trust determine the size of the welfare state? Evidence using historical identification. *Public Choice*, 157, 269-286.

Bågenholm, A. (2018). 'Corruption and Anticorruption in Early-Nineteenth-Century Sweden: A Snapshot of the State of the Swedish Bureaucracy', in Ronald Kroeze, André Vitoria, and Guy Geltner (eds.), *Anti-Corruption in History: From Antiquity to the Modern Era*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 239-50.

Castillo. H. (2025). *La desaparición del INAI ¿Reforma constitucional regresiva? Hechos y Derechos.* UNAM

Charron, N., V. Lapuente and M. Bauhr (2021). *Sub-national Quality of Government in EU Member States: Presenting the 2021 European Quality of Government Index and its relationship with Covid-19 indicators*. QoG Working Paper Series 2021:4 April 2021. ISSN 1653-8919. https://www.gu.se/sites/default/files/2021-05/2021_4_%20Charron_Lapuente_Bauhr.pdf

Dávid-Barrett E. (2023). State capture and development: a conceptual framework. *J Int Relat Dev* (Ljubl). Mar 23:1-21. doi: 10.1057/s41268-023-00290-6.Epubahead of print. PMID: 37363285; PMCID: PMC10034251.

Democracy Index (2024). Unit of Intelligence, *The Economist*.

Dussauge-Laguna M. I. (2022). The promises and perils of populism for democratic policymaking: the case of Mexico. *Policy Sci.* 2022; 55(4): 777-803. doi: 10.1007/s11077-022-09469-z. Epub 2022 Aug 5. PMID: 35966811; PMCID: PMC9362330.

Estrada, L. (2021). *El imperio de los otros datos*. Grijalbo.

European Values Study (2022). EVS Trend File 1981-2017 (Version 3.0.0) [Data set]. GESIS Data Archive. https://doi.org/10.4232/1.14021

Flores, J. I. & Somuano, M. F. (2022). *La socialización política de los niños en México.* El Colegio de México.

Frasquet, I. (2021). El ocaso del primer imperio mexicano Agitación política y planes monárquicos en 1823. *Estudios de historia moderna y contemporánea de México*, (spe1), 193-221. Epub 22 de marzo de 2022.
https://doi.org/10.22201/iih.24485-004e.2021.1e.77720

Fukuyama, F. (2011). *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity.* Penguin, London.

Graeff, P. & Svendsen, G.T. (2013). Trust and Corruption: The influence of positive and negative social capital on the economic development in the European Union. *Quality and Quantity,* 47(5), 2829-2846.

Graeff, P. & Svendsen, G. T. (2020). Religion, Crime, and Social Trust in Historic Germany. *Journal of Historical Sociology,* https://doi.org/10.1111/johs.12297

Grindle, Merilee S. (2012). *Jobs for the boys: patronage and the state in comparative perspective.* Harvard University Press.

Gundlach, E. & Svendsen, G. T. (2019). How do high and low levels of social trust affect the long- run performance of poor economies? *Journal of International Development*, 31(1), 3-21.

Haerpfer, C., Inglehart, R., Moreno, A., Welzel, C., Kizilova, K., Diez-Medrano, J., Lagos, M., Norris, P., Ponarin, E. & Puranen B. (2022). World Values Survey Wave 7 (2017-2022) Cross-National Data-Set. Version: 4.0.0. World Values Survey Association. DOI: doi.org/10.14281/18241.18

Herreros, F. (2009). The state. In G.T. Svendsen and G.L.H. Svendsen (eds.), *Handbook of Social Capital. The Troika of Sociology, Political Science and Economics*, Cheltenham, UK, Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar, 179-96.

Hillman, A. L. (2019). *Public finance and public policy: Responsibilities and limitations of government* (3rd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hjorth-Andersen, C. and M. Bertilsson. (2009). The Nordic Welfare State. In *Handbook of Social Capital: The Troika of Sociology, Political Science and Economics*, edited by G.T. Svendsen and G. L. H. Svendsen, 212-227. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Hobbes, T., (1651[1985]). *Leviathan.* Penguin Classics, London.

Instituto de Investigación en Rendición de Cuentas y Combate a la Corrupción [IIRCCC] (2022). *Informe País, 2020. Sobre el combate a la Corrupción en México.* Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara.

Issacharoff, S. (2023), *Democracy Unmoored: Populism and Corruption of Popular Sovereignty*, Oxford University Press.

Jensen, M. F. (2017). Statebuilding, Establishing Rule of Law and Fighting Corruption in Denmark 1660-1900. In Ronald Kroeze, André Vitoria, and Guy Geltner (eds.), *Anti-corruption in History: From Antiquity to the Modern Era*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 197-209.

Jensen, M. F. (2018). The Building of the Scandinavian states: Establishing Weberian bureaucracy and curbing corruption from the mid-seventeenth to mid-nineteenth century. In Haldor Byrkjeflot and Frederik Engelstad (eds.), *Bureaucracy and Society in Tran-*

sition: Comparative Perspective vol. 33. Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited, 179-203.

Jensen, M. F. and G. T. Svendsen (2020). Corruption and Bureaucratic Reforms: "Getting to Denmark?" In: P. M. Christiansen, J. Elklit and P. Nedergaard (eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of Danish Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 177-92.

Krauze, E. (2019). "Los orígenes de la corrupción en México, *Letras Libres*, México.

Loreto, J. (2021). ¿Dónde quedó el Sistema Nacional Anticorrupción? *Gatopardo*.

Lotta, G. S., Piotrowska, B. & Raaphorst, N. (2024). Introduction: Street-level bureaucracy, populism, and democratic backsliding. *Governance,* 37(S1), 5-19. https://doi.org/10.1111/gove.12906

Mata, M. (2025). *Análisis de las perspectivas sobre corripcion en México*. Albores.

Merino, M. (2013). La captura de los puestos públicos. *Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales*, 58 (219), 135-156.

Morris, S. D. & Klesner, J. L. (2010). Corruption and Trust: Theoretical Considerations and Evidence From Mexico. *Comparative Political Studies*, 43(10), 1258-1285. https://doi.org/10.-11-77/0010414010369072

Nieto, F. (2020). El legado del "sexenio de la corrupción": los retos del sistema nacional anticorrupción. *Foro internacional*, *60*(2), 683-715. Epub 14 de agosto de 2020. https://doi.org/10.24-201/fi.v60i2.2736

North, Douglass C. (1990). *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance,* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

North, Douglass C. and Barry R. Weingast (1989), Constitutions and Commitment: The Evolution of Institutions Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth Century England. *The Journal of Economic History,* 49 (4), 803-32.

OECD (2024) OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions. 2024 Results: Building Trust in a Complex Policy Environment, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9a2055-4b-en.

Oliver, P. (1980). Rewards and Punishments as Selective Incentives for Collective Action: Theoretical Investigations. *American Journal of Sociology 85*(6): 1356-75.

Olson, M. (1965). The Logic of Collective Action. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Olson, M. (1993). Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development. *American Political Science Review*, 87, 567-76.

Olson, M. (1996). Big bills left on the sidewalk: Why some nations are rich, and others poor. *Journal of Economic Perspectives, 2*, 3-24.

Olson, M. (2000). *Power and Prosperity: Outgrowing Communist and Capitalist Dictatorships*, New York: Basic Books.

Ostrom, E. (1990). *Governing the Commons. The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. UK: Cambridge University Press.

Ostrom, E. and T. K. Ahn (2009). The Meaning of Social Capital and its Link to Collective Action. In G. T. Svendsen and G. L. H. Svendsen (eds.) *Handbook of Social Capital. The Troika of Sociology, Political Science and Economics* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar), 17-35.

Olvera, Alberto (2026). "Reinterpreting Democratization, Democratic Backsliding, and the Potential for Democratic Resiliense in Mexico", *Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales*, 7(256), México.

Paolino, P. (2009). La posición del PRI en la política mexicana. *Política y gobierno*, *16*(2), 321-348. Recuperado en 21 de marzo de 2026, de http://www.scielo.org.mx/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1665-20372009000200003&lng=es&tlng=es.

Paldam, M. & G. T. Svendsen (2000). "An essay on social capital: Looking for the fire behind the smoke". *European Journal of Political Economy,* 16, 339-66.

Panniza, F., Guy Peters & Conrado Ramos, (2022). *The Politics of Patronage Appointments in Latin American Central Administrations*, University of Pitssburg Press.

Peschard, J. (2020). El dudoso combate a la corrupción. In R. Becerra & J. Woldenberg (Eds.), *Balance temprano*, 59-71. IETD-Grano de Sal.

Pérez-Chiqués, E. & Meza, O. (2021). Trust-based corruption networks: A comparative analysis of two municipal governments. *Governance,* 34(4). 1039-1056.

Putnam, R. (1993) *Making Democracy Work. Civic traditions in modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling Alone. The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster).

Rose-Ackerman, S. (1999). *Corruption and Government: Causes, Consequences, and Reform*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rothstein, B. (2009). 'The universal welfare state', in G.T. Svendsen and G. L. H. Svendsen (eds.), *Handbook of Social Capital. The Troika of Sociology, Political Science and Economics*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 212-27.

Rothstein, B. (2013). *Corruption and social trust: Why the fish rots from the head down*.

Serritzlew, Søren, Kim M. Sønderskov, and Gert T. Svendsen (2014). 'Do Corruption and Social Trust affect Economic Growth? A Review', *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis*, 16/2: 121-39.

Smith, A. (1976[1776]). *The Wealth of Nations. An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Smith, A. (1997[1766]). Lecture on the influence of commerce on manners.

D.B. Klein (ed.), *Reputation: Studies in the Voluntary Elicitation of good Conduct*. University of Michigan Press.

Svendsen, G. T. (2025). *Trust*. John Hopkins University Press. (Reflections).

Svendsen G.T. (2020a). Collective Action Problem. In: Harris P., Bitonti A., Fleisher C., Skorkjær Binderkrantz A. (eds.), *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Interest Groups, Lobbying and Public Affairs*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-13895-0_34-1

Svendsen G. T. (2020b). Olson, Mancur. In: Harris P., Bitonti A., Fleisher C., Skorkjær Binderkrantz A. (eds.), *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Interest Groups, Lobbying and Public Affairs.* Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-13895- 0_47-1

Svendsen, G. T. and G. L. H. Svendsen (2009). In Svendsen, G. T. & G. L. H. Svendsen (2009). The troika of sociology, political science and economics, *Handbook of Social Capital*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, 1-13.

Svendsen, G. T. and G. L. H. Svendsen (2016). *Trust, Social Capital and the Scandinavian Welfare State: Explaining the Flight of the Bumblebee*. Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, UK.

Teorell, J. & B. Rothstein (2015a). Getting to Sweden, Part I: War and malfeasance, 1720-1850. *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 38 (3), 217-237.

Teorell, J. & B. Rothstein, (2015b). Getting to Sweden, Part II: Breaking with corruption in the nineteenth century. *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 38(3), 238-254.

Thelen, K. (1999). Historical institutionalism in comparative politics. *Annual Review of Political Science* (2), 369-404.

Transparency International (2024). Corruption Perceptions Index. https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2023/index/mex

Uslaner, E. M. (2008a). Where You Stand Depends Upon Where Your Grandparents Sat: The Inheritability of Generalized Trust. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 72, 725-40.

Uslaner, E. M. (2008b). Trust as a Moral Value. In D. Castiglione, J. W. Van Deth, and G. Wolleb (eds.), *The Handbook of Social Capital,* 101-121. New York: Oxford University Press.

Uslaner, E. M. (2009). Corruption. In G. T. Svendsen and G. L. H. Svendsen (eds.), *Handbook of Social Capital: the Troika of Sociology, Political Science and Economics*, Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 127-42.

Uslaner, E. M. (2013). Trust and corruption revisited: how and why trust and corruption shape each other. *Quality and Quantity* 47, 3603-8.

Weber, C. (2009). "Religion-philosophical roots". In G. T. Svendsen and G. L. H. Svendsen (eds.), *Handbook of Social Capital: The Troika of Sociology, Political Science and Economics*, (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing), 107-23.

Weber, M. (1946). Politics as a Vocation. In: From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology, translated and edited by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, New York: Oxford University Press.

Zaid, Gabriel (2019). *El poder corrompe, México: Debate Random.* Penguin.