

Social contracts in the Arab Region

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Why do we care about social contracts?

- **Multiple international crises** (most recent conflicts in Gaza, Lebanon)
- **Uprisings in the MENA 2009-2016 have led to many changes, but no stable social contracts**
- **Socio-economic well-being of people in the MENA region has suffered on average**



SDG 16

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels _____

→ **Need for inclusive state-society relations**

→ **changes in social contracts**

What is a social contract?

([Loewe et al. 2021](#); Loewe, Trautner & Zintl 2019, available in [Arabic](#), [English](#), [French](#), [German](#))

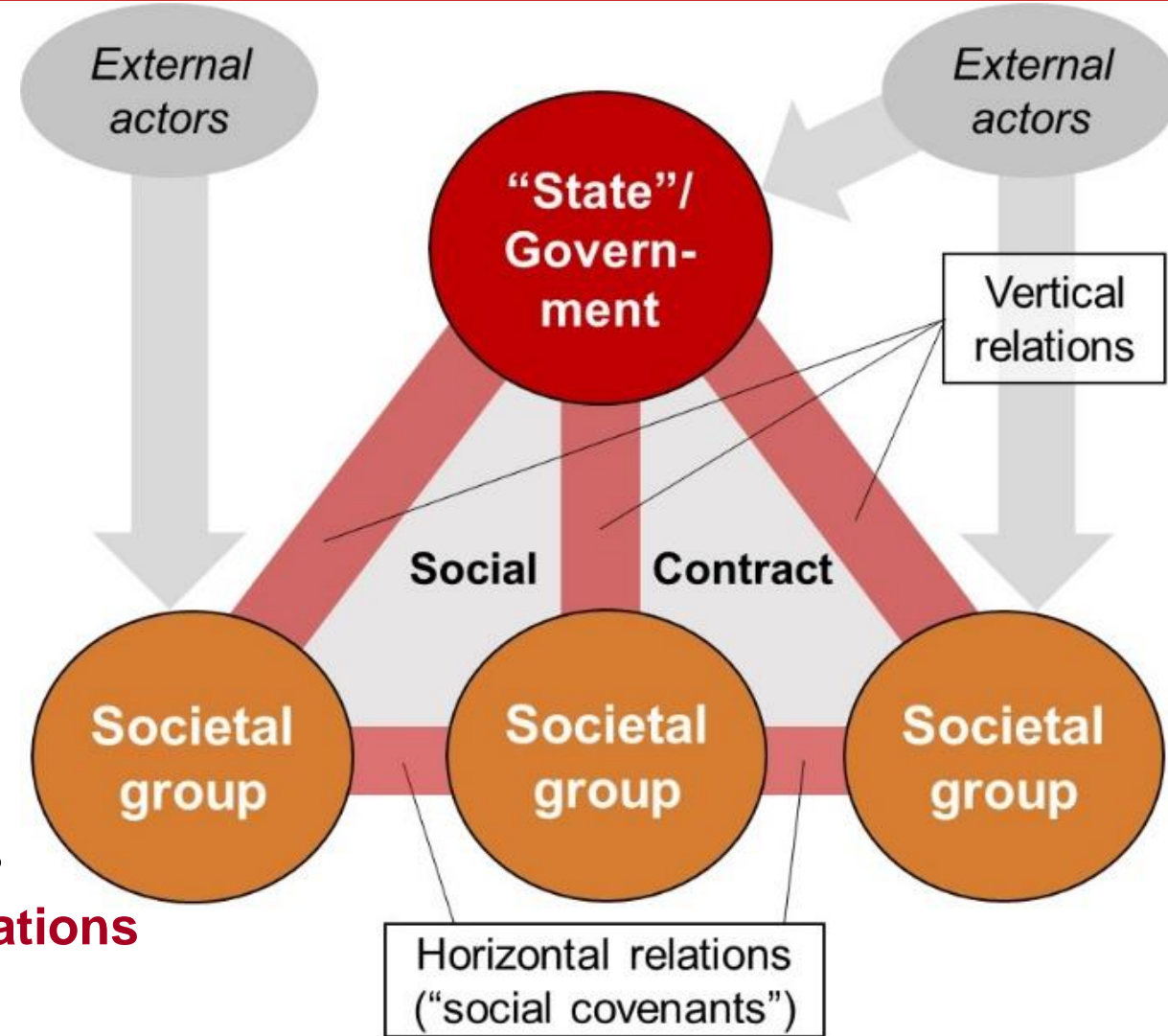
Social contracts are a

“*set of explicit and implicit agreements of the various groups of society*

- *with each other*
- *and with the government*

defining rights and obligations towards each other.”

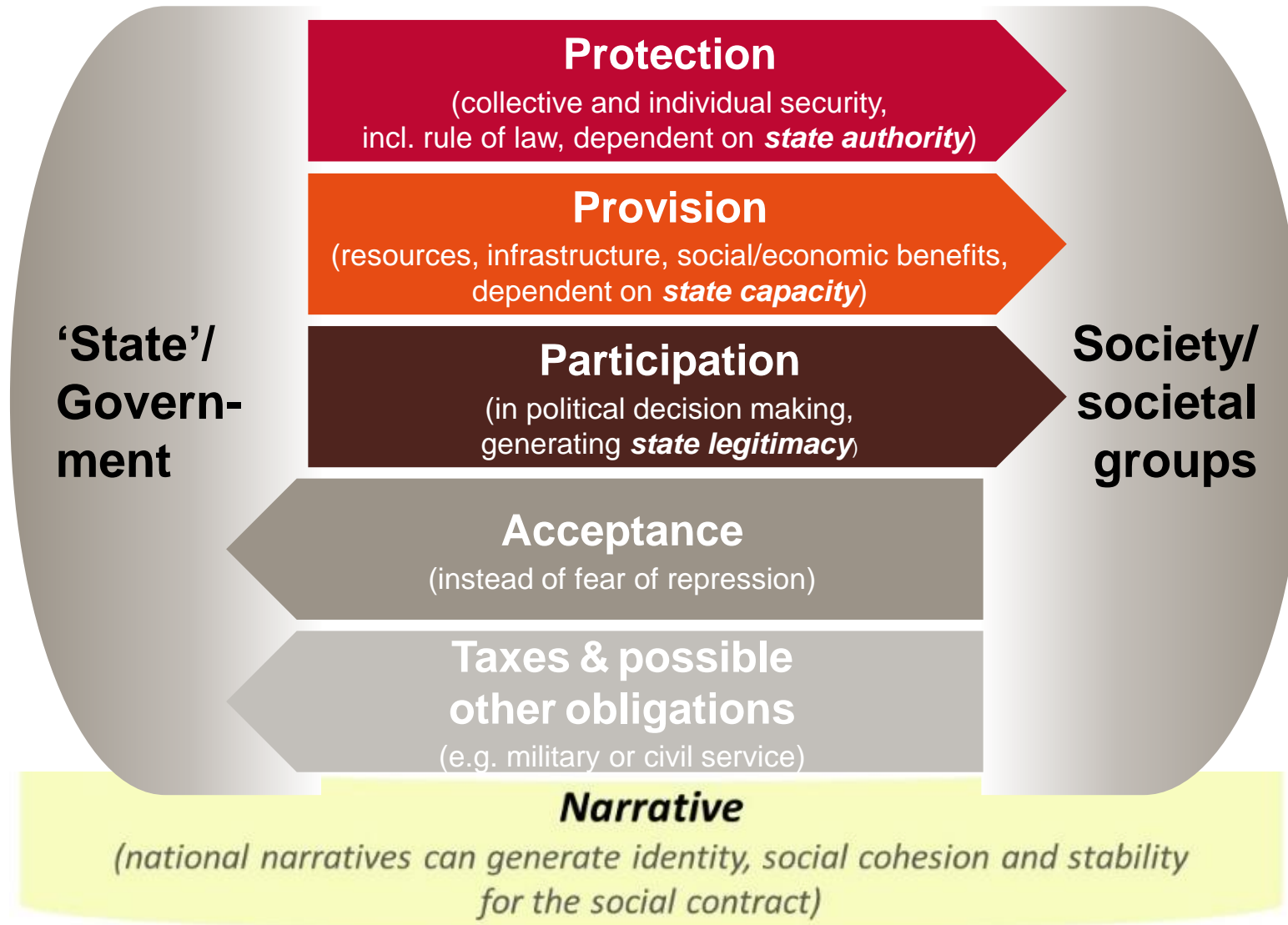
- exist **in almost every country**
- are **quite different in different countries**
- **relieves parties** of cont. renegotiating obligations
→ **more predictable and stable state-society relations**
- ! can **treat different groups differently**
- ! descriptive **not normative**



Loewe et al. (2021); Loewe, Trautner & Zintl (2019)

What is the substance of social contracts?

([Loewe et al. 2021](#); Loewe, Trautner & Zintl 2019, available in [Arabic](#), [English](#), [French](#), [German](#))



Loewe et al. (2021)/Loewe, Trautner & Zintl (2019)

Measuring the 3 Ps in social contracts *and* SDG 16

(IDOS DP: “Operationalising social contracts...”, [Loewe, El-Haddad, Zintl, 2024](#))

| | Aspect | Weight | Index | Source |
|----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Protection | External threats | 20.00% | FFP Fragile States Index X1 | The Fund for Peace |
| | Civil wars | 20.00% | UCDP data on fatalities in civil wars | University of Uppsala |
| | Criminal acts | 20.00% | Global Competitiveness Index Pillar 1 (Security) | World Economic Forum |
| | State terror | 20.00% | Political Terror Scale | Univ. of North Carolina |
| | Rule of law (human rights) | 20.00% | FFP Fragile States Index P3 | The Fund for Peace |
| | Environmental threats | <i>(not yet included)</i> | | |
| Provision | Water, land | <i>(not yet included)</i> | | |
| | Infrastructure | 6.25% | Global Competitiveness Index Pillar 2 (Transport and utilities) | World Economic Forum |
| | | 6.25% | Telecommunication Infrastructure Index | UN Statistics Division |
| | Education | 6.25% | Gov't expenditure on primary and secondary education (% of GDP) | World Bank |
| | | 6.25% | Global Competitiveness Index Pillar 6.4 (Skills of future workforce) | World Economic Forum |
| | Health | 6.25% | Gov't health expenditure (% of GDP) | World Bank |
| | | 6.25% | Out of pocket expenditure (% of total national health care spending) | World Bank |
| | Social protection | 6.25% | Public social protection expenditure excl. health (% of GDP) | World Bank |
| | | 6.25% | Share of people above retirement age receiving an old-age pension | International Labour Office |
| | Poverty reduction | 6.25% | Public expenditure on social safety nets (% of GDP) | World Bank |
| | | 6.25% | Vulnerable persons covered by social assistance (%) | International Labour Office |
| | Employment | 6.25% | Share of wage employment on work age population (%) | International Labour Office |
| | | 6.25% | Working poverty head-count rate (%) | International Labour Office |
| | Rule of law (economic) | 6.25% | Global Competitiveness Index Pillar 1F (Property rights) | World Economic Forum |
| | | 6.25% | Global Competitiveness Index Pillar 1E (Incidence of corruption) | World Economic Forum |
| | Markets | 6.25% | Global Competitiveness Index Pillar 7A (Market competition) | World Economic Forum |
| 6.25% | | Global Competitiveness Index Pillar 1E (Public-sector performance) | World Economic Forum | |
| Participation | | 50.00% | V-Dem Index on electoral democracy | University of Gothenburg |
| | | 50.00% | Voice and Accountability Indicator | World Bank |

Loewe, El-Haddad, Zintl (2024)

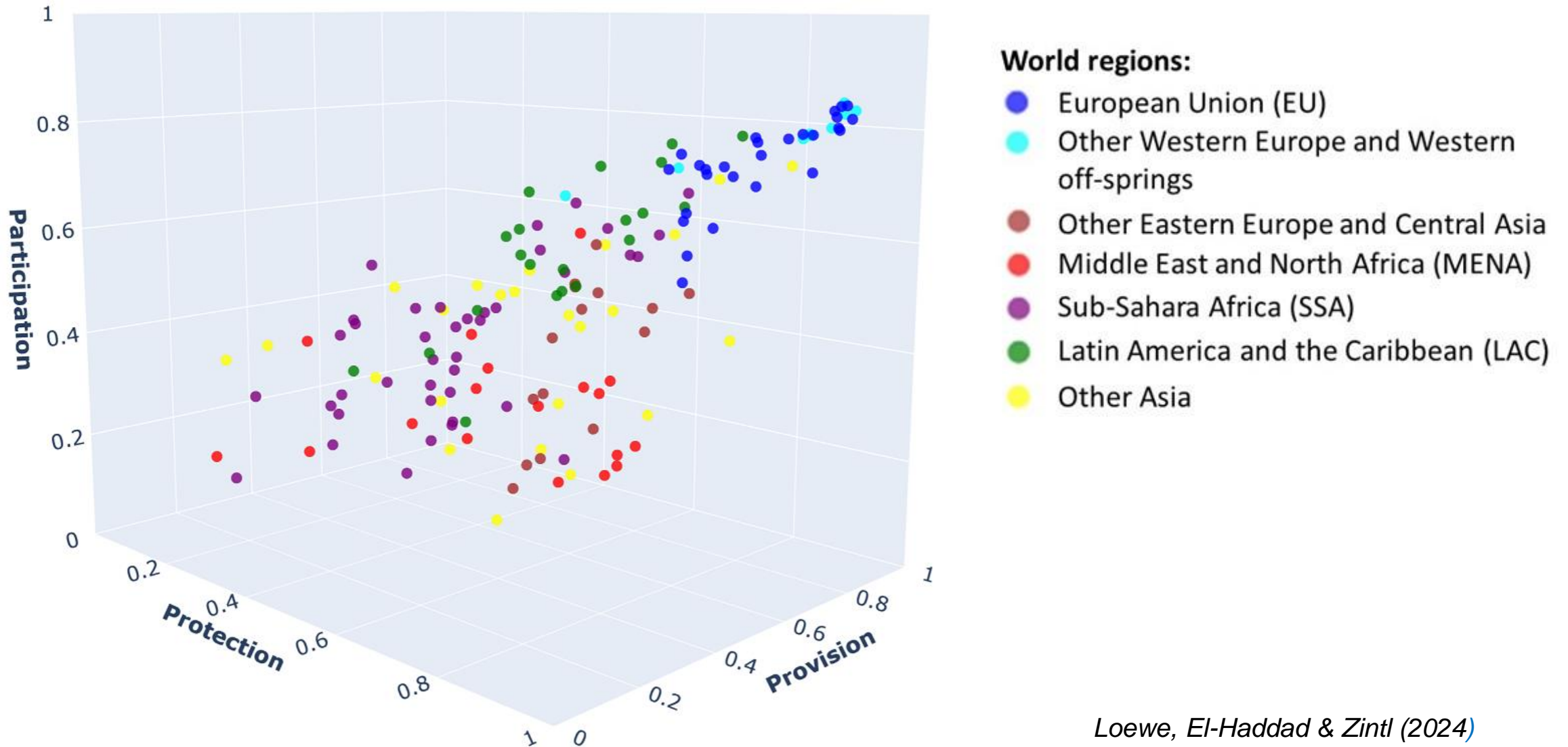
Measuring the 3 Ps in social contracts *and* SDG 16

(IDOS DP: “Operationalising social contracts...”, [Loewe, El-Haddad, Zintl, 2024](#))

| | Aspect | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Protection | External threats | SDG 16 targets 16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere 16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children 16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all 16.4 By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows , strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime 16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms 16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels 16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels 16.8 Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance 16.9 By 2030, provide legal identity for all , including birth registration 16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms , in accordance with national legislation and international agreements 16.A Strengthen relevant national institutions , including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime 16.B Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development (Source: https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/peace-justice/) |
| | Civil wars | |
| | Criminal acts | |
| | State terror | |
| | Rule of law (human rights) | |
| Provision | Environmental threats | |
| | Water, land | |
| | Infrastructure | |
| | Education | |
| | Health | |
| | Social protection | |
| | Poverty reduction | |
| | Employment | |
| Participation | Rule of law (economic) | |
| | Markets | |

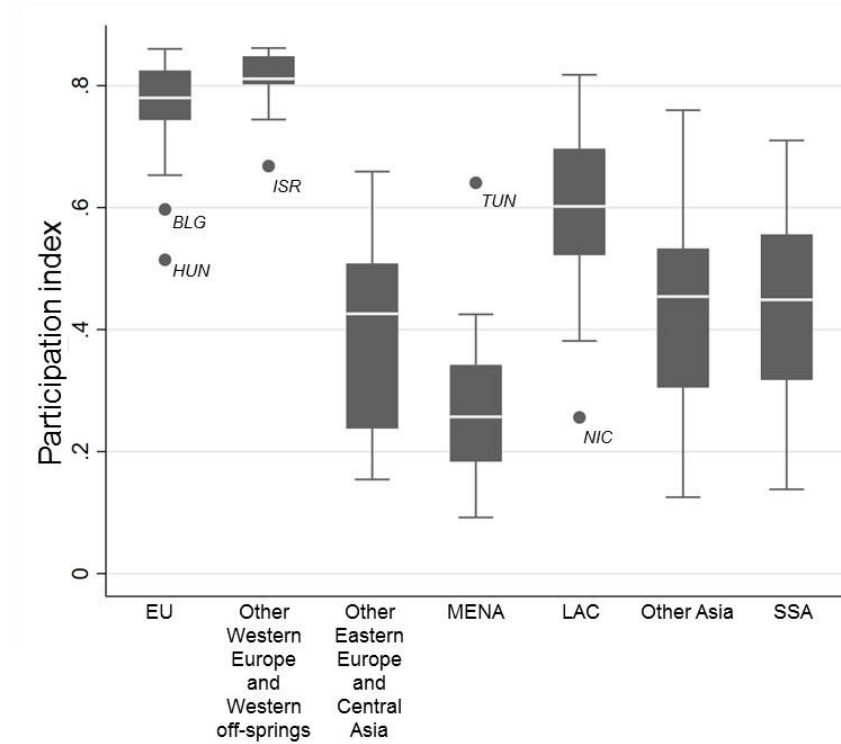
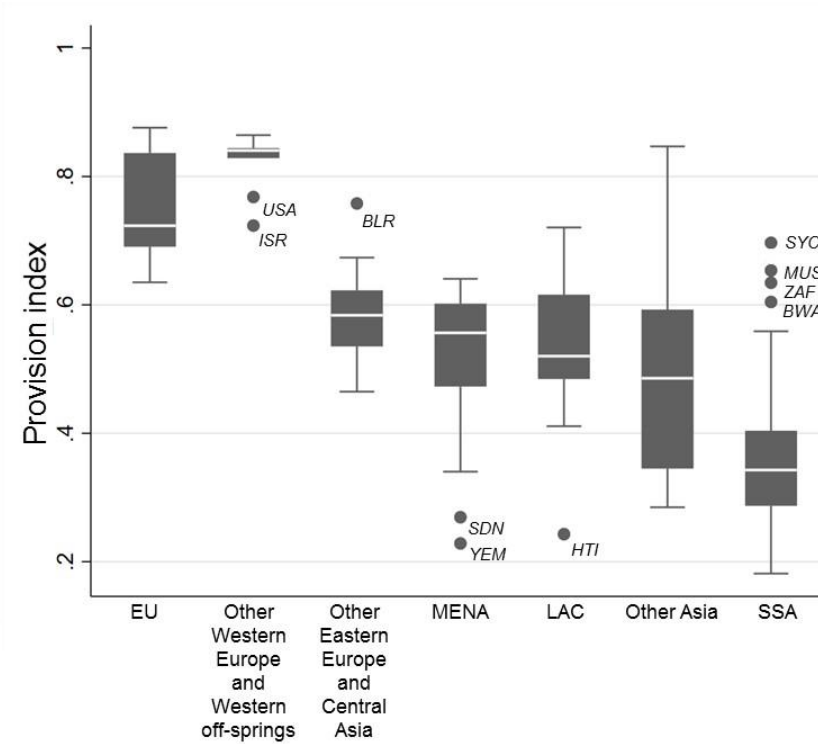
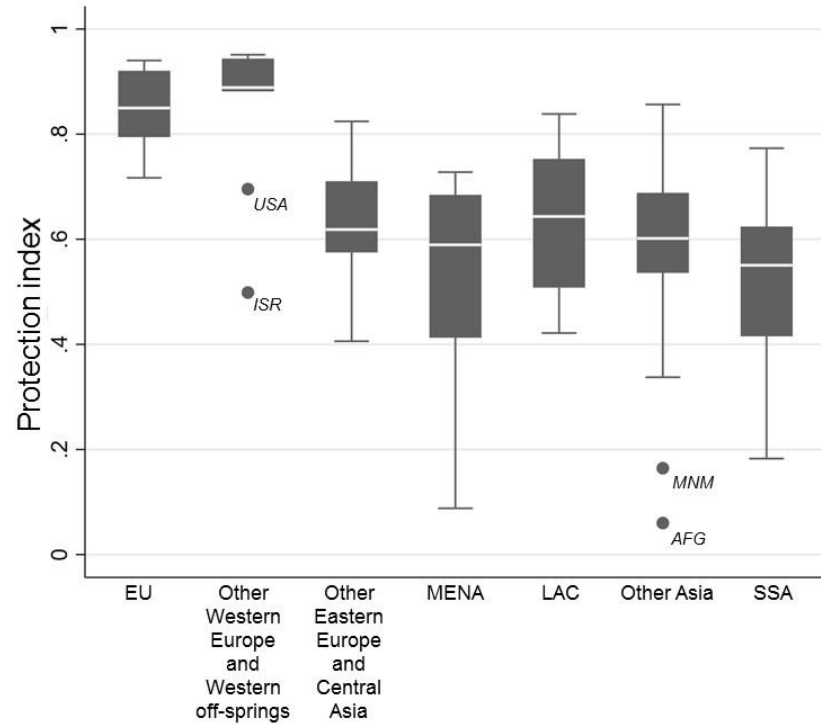
Measuring the 3 Ps in social contracts

(IDOS DP: “Operationalising social contracts...”, [Loewe, El-Haddad, Zintl, 2024](#))



Measuring the 3 Ps in social contracts – by region

(IDOS DP: “Operationalising social contracts...”, [Loewe, El-Haddad, Zintl, 2024](#))



Loewe, El-Haddad & Zintl (2024)

When do social contracts change?

(Special issue: “Drivers of change in social contracts”, [Loewe et al. 2024](#))

More stable but not necessarily static:

- **prevail as long as the contracting parties adhere to them**
but: can be adjusted, replaced by new ones or overthrown
- **more stable if they are adjusted in time to take account for**
 - changes in the framework conditions (e.g. environmental)
 - changes in the relative distribution of power between their contracting parties
 - changes in the prevailing norms

Often, social contract reform does not take place, because of:

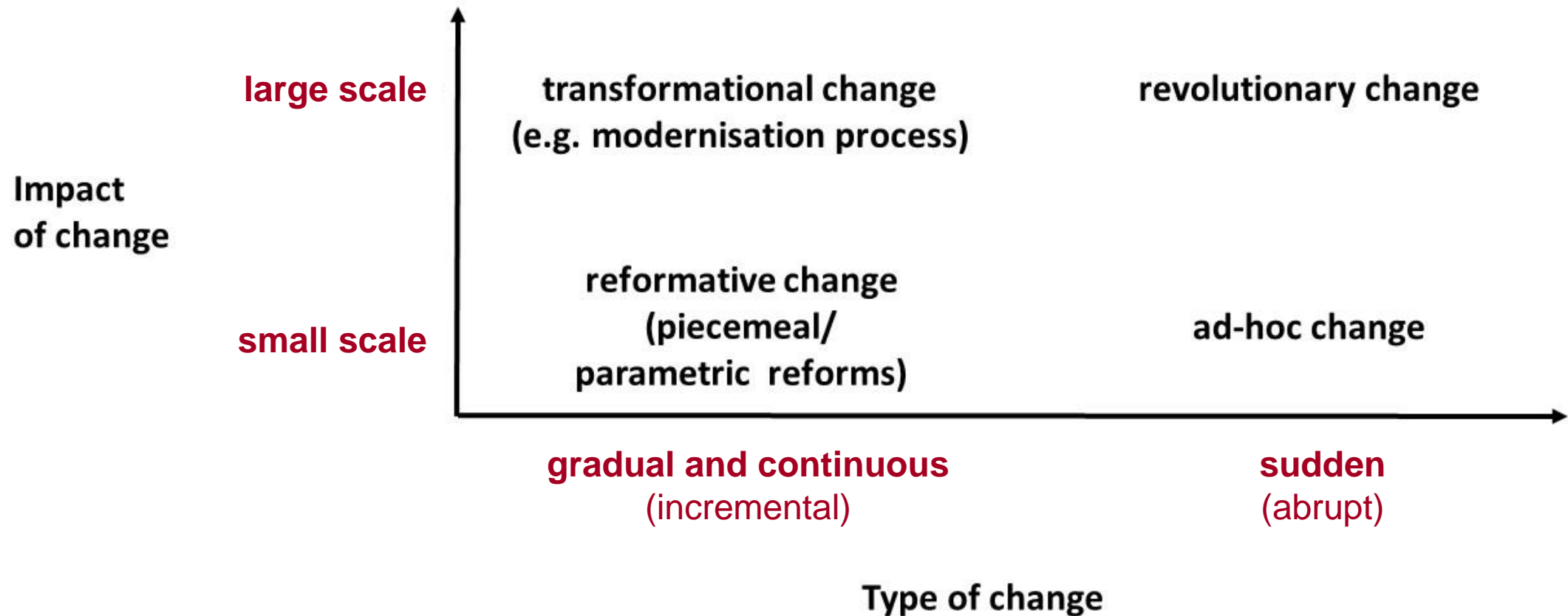
- lack of joint vision of the contracting parties
- internal spoilers
- external spoilers

→ **Change requires institutionalized negotiations or extraordinary “windows of opportunity”**

How can social contracts change?

(Special issue: “Drivers of change in social contracts”, [Loewe et al. 2024](#))

Changes can take different forms:



Loewe et al. (2024)

- Social contracts as **simplified model of state-society's give-and-take**
- **Benchmarking can help to discern critical gaps** (similarly: Voluntary National Reviews)
- **Continuous dialogue** between governments and societies **eases change** without ruptures and **stabilises social contracts**
- **National actors need to**
 - talk about pressing needs and agree on reforms
 - react to changing framework conditions
 - find windows of opportunity
- External actors can support by
 - facilitating negotiations & point to windows of opportunity
 - giving incentives or exerting pressure on spoilers of reform

Thank you very much!

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- Loewe, Markus / Amirah El-Haddad / Mark Furness / Annabelle Houdret / Tina Zintl (2024) Drivers of change in social contracts: building a conceptual framework, in: Mediterranean Politics, first published 17.07.2024 <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629395.2024.2379733>
- Loewe, Markus / Amirah El-Haddad / Tina Zintl (2024) Operationalising social contracts: towards an index of government deliverables. (Discussion Paper 8/2024) <https://doi.org/10.23661/idp8.2024>
- Furness (2023) The Social Contract: A Framework for Analysing State-Society Relations. Presentation for GIZ Workshop, Sulaymaniyah, 17-18 January.
- Loewe, Markus / Tina Zintl / Annabelle Houdret (2021) The social contract as a tool of analysis: introduction to the special issue on “Framing the evolution of new social contracts in Middle Eastern and North African countries” in: World Development. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2020.104982>
- Loewe, Markus / Bernhard Trautner / Tina Zintl (2019). The social contract: an analytical tool for countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and beyond. DIE Briefing Paper 17/2019 <https://www.idos-research.de/briefing-paper/article/the-social-contract-an-analytical-tool-for-countries-in-the-middle-east-and-north-africa-mena-and-beyond/>
 - German version: Der Gesellschaftsvertrag: ein Analyseinstrument nicht nur für Länder im Nahen Osten und in Nordafrika (MENA). DIE A&S 13/2019 <https://www.idos-research.de/analysen-und-stellungnahmen/article/der-gesellschaftsvertrag-ein-analyseinstrument-nicht-nur-fuer-laender-im-nahen-osten-und-in-nordafrika-mena/>
 - French version: Le contrat social: un outil d’analyse pour les pays de la région Moyen-Orient et Afrique du Nord (MENA), et au-delà. DIE Briefing Paper 5/2020 <https://www.idos-research.de/briefing-paper/article/le-contrat-social-un-outil-danalyse-pour-les-pays-de-la-region-moyen-orient-et-afrique-du-nord-mena-et-au-dela/>
 - Arabic version: العقد الاجتماعي: أداة تحليلية للبلدان في الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا وأبعد DIE Briefing Paper 6/2020 <https://www.idos-research.de/briefing-paper/article/arabic-version-of-the-social-contract-an-analytical-tool-for-countries-in-the-middle-east-and-north-africa-mena-and-beyond/>

Further readings (selection)

(see also: <https://www.idos-research.de/en/social-contract/>)

- Loewe, Markus / Armin von Schiller / Tina Zintl / Julia Leininger (2024) Social Contract and Social Cohesion: Synergies and Tensions between Two Related Concepts. IDOS Policy Brief 3/2024 <https://www.idos-research.de/en/policy-brief/article/social-contract-and-social-cohesion-synergies-and-tensions-between-two-related-concepts/>
- Loewe, Markus / Holger Albrecht (2022): The social contract in Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia: what do the people want?, in: Journal of International Development, first published 04.11.2022, 1-18
- Furness, Mark / Markus Loewe (2021) Focussing European cooperation with the Middle East and North Africa on social contracts. DIE Briefing Paper 18/2021
- Houdret, Annabelle / Mark Furness (2024). Intermediary organizations, international cooperation and the changing social contract: Morocco's new development model, in: Mediterranean Politics <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629395.2024.2379736>
- Furness, Mark / Annabelle Houdret (2020) Development cooperation with conflict-affected MENA countries: refocussing on the social contract. Briefing Paper 7/2020, <https://www.idos-research.de/briefing-paper/article/development-cooperation-with-conflict-affected-mena-countries-refocussing-on-the-social-contract/> (also available in French and German)
- Zintl, Tina / Annabelle Houdret (2024) Moving towards smarter social contracts? Digital transformation as a driver of change in state–society relations in the MENA region, in: Mediterranean Politics, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629395.2024.2379737>