GSDRC Applied Knowledge Services

Governance · Social Development · Humanitarian · Conflict

Political Systems

Topic Guide

About this topic guide

Political systems are the formal and informal political processes by which decisions are made concerning the use, production and distribution of resources in any given society. Formal political institutions can determine the process for electing leaders; the roles and responsibilities of the executive and legislature; the organisation of political representation (through political parties); and the accountability and oversight of the state. Informal and customary political systems, norms and rules can operate within or alongside these formal political institutions. The development of democratic political systems that provide opportunities for all, including the poor, to influence decision-making, is a critical concern for donors.

This guide considers some of the key questions about how political systems evolve, how they can best foster democratic and inclusive politics, and – crucially for development practitioners – under what conditions they most effectively promote poverty reduction. It focuses on strengthening the accountability, responsiveness and effectiveness of political systems and political governance, and includes guidance and case study materials. The GSDRC's guide on Political Economy Analysis also deals with these issues.

This guide was prepared by Zoë Scott and Claire Mcloughlin, and was last updated in December 2014. The GSDRC appreciates the contributions of Professor Brian Smith (Department of Politics, University of Exeter), Dr Martin Rew (International Development Department, University of Birmingham), and Stefan Kossoff (DFID).

About GSDRC

GSDRC is a partnership of research institutes, think-tanks and consultancy organisations with expertise in governance, social development, humanitarian and conflict issues. We provide applied knowledge services on demand and online. Our specialist research team supports a range of international development agencies, synthesising the latest evidence and expert thinking to inform policy and practice.

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Democracy

Democracy is a highly contested concept, both in terms of its definition and its relationship to development. Whilst some understand it in procedural terms – as electoral competition and decision-making – others view it more broadly in terms of civil and political rights and the distribution of power within society. Either way, a central question is how citizens exercise control and scrutiny over political institutions.

This section addresses two specific issues for development practitioners: How can processes of democratisation be supported in different development contexts? How can democracy be pro-poor? A large body of literature on democracy addresses these and many other questions. For further reading, please see the links in the useful websites section.

Processes of democratisation

How are processes of democratisation influenced by economic development, history, state capacity and civil society? Why do some democratisation processes succeed where others fail? Can these processes be effectively supported by external agencies?

The so-called 'third wave' of democratisation during the early 1990s demonstrated that the emergence of democracy is not contingent on a certain level of economic development. But there is considerable ongoing debate about whether and how structural factors – economic, social, and institutional conditions and legacies – impact on the prospects for democratisation and on the sustainability of democratic political systems.

Carothers, T., 2007, 'How Democracies Emerge: The Sequencing Fallacy', Journal of Democracy, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 12-27
Should the rule of law and a well-functioning state be prerequisites for democratisation? Democratic sequencing suggests that they should. This article argues that sequencing is a problematic idea rooted in scepticism about democracy, which helps to postpone democratisation indefinitely. A more useful alternative is gradualism, which aims to build democracy slowly, taking into account the risks and complications of democratisation.
http://faculty.smu.edu/lmanzett/Carothers%20(2007).pdf

Tilly, C., 2000, 'Processes and Mechanisms of Democratization', Sociological Theory, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 1-16
How is the process of democratisation best defined? What are the necessary conditions for successful democratisation? This study attempts to specify the various conditions and processes that promoted or blocked democratisation in different parts of Europe between 1650 and the present. It identifies possible mechanisms in democratisation and specifies likely conditions affecting their emergence.
http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/0735-2751.00085/abstract

Lynch, G. and Crawford, G., eds., 2011, 'Democratization in Africa 1990-2010: an assessment', Democratization, vol.18, no. 2, pp.275-310
This special issue of *Democratization* examines the (lack of) progress made in democratisation processes in Africa from 1990 to 2010. It highlights seven areas of progress and setbacks: 1) increasingly illegitimate, but ongoing military intervention; 2) regular elections and occasional transfers of power, but realities of democratic rollback and hybrid regimes; 3) democratic institutionalisation, but ongoing presidentialism and endemic corruption; 4) the institutionalisation of political parties, but widespread ethnic voting and the rise of an exclusionary (and often violent) politics of belonging; 5) increasingly dense civil societies, but local realities of incivility, violence and insecurity; 6) new political freedoms and economic growth, but extensive political controls and uneven development; and 7) the donor community's mixed commitment to, and at times perverse impact on, democracy promotion.
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13510347.2011.554175

Democratic consolidation and democracy promotion

What factors determine the quality and strength of democratic politics, and what can make democracies susceptible to failure?

There is broad consensus that in order for democratisation processes to be sustainable, they need to come from within. Building democratic institutions alone does not guarantee the spread of democratic politics - the consolidation or 'deepening' of democratic norms and principles in every area of governance and society is a more complex and long-term process of change. While some have argued that existing donor approaches to democracy promotion have neglected local concerns, others argue that the most serious problem with democracy promotion has been a failure to defend core liberal norms.

Kapstein, E., and Converse, N., 2008, 'Why Democracies Fail', Journal of Democracy, vol. 19, no. 4
In explaining why democracies fail, experts have tended to focus on economic performance. Yet this article analyses new data on young democracies and argues that political institutions are crucial for democratic consolidation. Institutions that place effective constraints on executive power are especially important. Donor assistance strategies should aim to help spread political and economic power more widely and must be maintained for a young democracy's first five years.
http://ips.sagepub.com/content/26/3/291.refs

Rakner, L., Rocha Menocal, A. and Fritz, V., 2007, 'Democratisation's Third Wave and the Challenges of Democratic Deepening: Assessing International Democracy Assistance and Lessons Learned', Research Paper for the Advisory Board to Irish Aid, Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London
What are the main challenges facing incipient democratic regimes in the developing world? How can donors best support democratisation in these countries? This paper argues that incomplete democratisation processes and the predominance of 'hybrid regimes' pose serious challenges to the sustainability, capacity, responsiveness and effectiveness of democratic institutions. In order to be sustainable, democratisation impulses need to come from within. External actors have a positive role to play in strengthening democratic structures, but they cannot act as substitutes when domestic support is lacking.
http://www.cmi.no/publications/file/2761-democratisations-third-wave-and-the-challenges-of.pdf

Luckham, R., Goetz, A. M. and Kaldor, M., 2003, 'Democratic Institutions and Democratic Politics' in Can Democracy be Designed? The Politics of Institutional Choice in Conflict-Torn Societies, eds. S. Bastian and R. Luckham, Zed Books, London
Contemporary governance debates often assume the positive contribution of democracy to civil and political equality, poverty reduction, and conflict resolution. Yet, is the evidence for this conclusive? This chapter makes a distinction between institutions and politics, seeking to demonstrate that the spread of democratic institutions does not guarantee the spread of democratic politics. It investigates ways in which democratic institutions can be designed to foster democratic politics that embody popular demands for participation, social justice and peace.
http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=xJgBroRWX_MC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false

A growing body of literature discusses how democratic politics can embody popular demands for participation, social justice and peace. Approaches to building democratic political systems need to go beyond the introduction of minimal, procedural democracy.

Siegle, J. et al., 2011, 'Africa and the Arab Spring: A New Era of Democratic Expectations', Special Report, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Washington DC
This paper suggests that the Arab Spring is a trigger for further democratic reforms in Africa, rather than a driver. There are few linear relationships linking events in North Africa to specific shifts in democratisation on the continent. However, the frustration propelling the protests in North Africa resonates with many Africans. The Arab Spring is instigating changes in the expectations that African citizens have of their governments.
http://www.cissm.umd.edu/papers/files/acss_special_report_1.pdf

Radelet, S., 2010, 'Success Stories from "Emerging Africa"', Journal of Democracy, vol. 21, no. 4, pp. 87-101
What changes have occurred among sub-Saharan African nations since the mid-1990s? This essay highlights 17 African countries that have achieved dramatic improvements in economic growth, poverty reduction and political accountability. Another six 'threshold' countries have experienced promising change. The turnaround was ignited by a combination of economic reform and political change. While the countries of 'emerging Africa' face challenges and risks, they seem likely to continue their progress. This is due to the combination of five key factors: the rise of more democratic and accountable governments; the implementation of better economic policies; the end of the debt crisis; the spread of new technologies that promote political accountability and new business opportunities; and the emergence of new policymakers, activists and business leaders.
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/summary/v021/21.4.radelet.html

Gaventa, J., 2006, 'Triumph, Deficit or Contestation: Deepening the "Deepening Democracy" Debate', IDS Working Paper 264, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton
What are the strengths and weaknesses of current approaches to democracy? What challenges exist in efforts to promote "deeper" democracy? This paper surveys current debates about democracy, covering four main strands: "civil society" democracy, participatory democracy, deliberative democracy and empowered participatory governance. It argues that democracy is an ongoing process of contestation, rather than a set of standardised institutional designs: approaches to democracy should combine a range of democratic models.
https://www.ids.ac.uk/publication/triumph-deficit-or-contestation-deepening-the-deepening-democracy-debate

Horner, L. and Puddephatt, A., 2011, 'Democratic Space in Asia-Pacific: Challenges for Democratic Governance Assistance and Deepening Civic Engagement', Working Paper, UNDP
This paper examines the factors that affect the capacity of democratic space to give poor and marginalised groups meaningful opportunities to exercise their human rights. It shows that democracy in many Asia-Pacific countries consists mainly of formal democratic institutions rather than substantive democratic processes, values and relationships. This leaves democratic space prone both to manipulation and to closure by powerful individuals and groups.
http://gaportal.org/sites/default/files/democratic-space-a-background-note.pdf

Ottaway, M. and Hamzawy, A., 2009, Getting to Pluralism: Political Actors in the Arab World', eds. M. Ottaway and A. Hamzawy, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, DC
Why has political pluralism in the Arab world not yet matured into functional democratic politics? This book examines the weakness of the secular parties, the complexities of Islamist participation in politics, and incumbent regimes' grip on power. Formal political spaces are tightly controlled and have failed to achieve democratic dividends. Informal protests are increasingly popular as a way of making demands on leaders, but have not yet reinvigorated formal politics or generated concessions from governments.
http://carnegieendowment.org/2009/08/26/getting-to-pluralism-political-actors-in-arab-world/224

Schattan, V., Coelho, C. and von Lieres, B., eds., 2010, 'Mobilizing for Democracy: Citizen Action and the Politics of Public Participation', Zed Books, London
This book is an in-depth study into how ordinary citizens and their organisations mobilise to deepen democracy. It features a collection of new empirical case studies from Angola, Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa, to illustrate how forms of political mobilisation, such as protests, social participation, activism, litigation and lobbying engage with the formal institutions of representative democracy in ways that are core to the development of democratic politics.
A preview of the introductory chapter is available at: http://www.drc-citizenship.org/system/assets/1052734695/original/1052734695-coelho_etal.2010-introduction.pdf

Youngs, R., 2011, 'Misunderstanding The Maladies of Liberal Democracy Promotion', Working Paper 106, FRIDE, Madrid
This paper contends that the problem with democracy promotion is not the over-zealous imposition of liberal norms, as much current criticism suggests. Instead, the paper argues, the problem is governments' failure to defend core liberal norms in a way that would allow local variations and choices of democratic reform, along with genuine civic empowerment and emancipation. Current criticisms of the democracy agenda therefore risk pushing policy deliberations in the opposite direction to their required improvement.
http://fride.org/download/WP106_Misunderstanding_maladies_of_liberal_democracy_promotion.pdf

Further resources

The Political participation section of this guide – for further consideration of the relationship between democracy and participation.

See Voice and participation in the GSDRC's Voice, Empowerment and Accountability guide.

Hybrid regimes

The quality of democratic politics is highly variable between countries and also between institutions within them. Even where the formal institutions of democracy are seemingly in place, in reality, the state can continue to operate on non-democratic principles. There isn't always a clear distinction between political systems that are 'democratic' or 'undemocratic'.

In recent years, semi-democracies, or hybrid regimes – which occupy a middle ground between outright authoritarianism and full liberal democracy – have become a focus of attention.

Rocha Menocal, A., Fritz, V., and Rakner, L., 2007, 'Hybrid Regimes and the Challenges of Deepening and Sustaining Democracy in Developing Countries', Background note (2) prepared for the Wilton Park Conference on Democracy and Development, 10-12 October 2007
Despite the momentous transformation that the 'Third Wave' of democratisation has brought to formal political structures in Africa, Asia and Latin America, only a limited number of countries have succeeded in establishing consolidated and functioning democratic regimes. Instead, many of these new regimes have ended up 'getting stuck' in transition, combining a rhetorical acceptance of liberal democracy with essentially illiberal and/or authoritarian traits. This article analyses the emergence and key characteristics of these 'hybrid regimes' and the challenges of democratic deepening. Because a broad consensus to uphold democracy as 'the only game in town' is lacking, hybrid regimes tend to be unstable, unpredictable, or both. A deeper understanding of the problems besetting these regimes helps provide a more realistic assessment of what these incipient and fragile democracies can be expected to achieve.
http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/1983.pdf

Boege, V., Brown, A., Clements, K., and Nolan, A., 2008, 'On Hybrid Political Orders and Emerging States: State Formation in the Context of "Fragility"', Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management, Berlin
Newly imposed states lacked roots in the recipient societies, undermining their legitimacy, and subsequent economic and political reforms only served to further erode the state's capabilities and institutions. What emerges instead in the developing world is a hybrid political order in which 'the state' is only one actor among others. As such, it does not have a privileged position; it has to share authority, legitimacy, and capacity with other structures.
http://edoc.vifapol.de/opus/volltexte/2011/2595/pdf/boege_etal_handbook.pdf

Further resources

The Patronage politics section of this guide.

Democracy and development

Is democracy necessary or good for development? Can it work in under-developed contexts? How can democracy be pro-poor?

The relationship between democracy and development is highly contested. Some argue that democratic institutions play a crucial role in promoting development, but others contend that democratic politics can actually hinder prospects for economic growth. Overall, the evidence of any causality between democracy and development is inconclusive.

Halperin, M., Siegle, J., and Weinstein, M., 2010 (rev. ed.), 'The Democracy Advantage: How Democracies Promote Prosperity and Peace', Routledge
Should international actors support the emergence of democracy? This book provides an empirically-grounded analysis of the development track record of poor countries with both democratic and oppressive political systems. It argues that democracy supports development and reduces the likelihood of violent conflict, recommending that democracy be made central to international engagement with the developing world.
https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=ah6MAgAAQBAJ

Rocha Menocal, A., 2007, 'Analysing the relationship between democracy and development: Defining Basic Concepts and Assessing Key Linkages', Background note (1) prepared for the Wilton Park Conference on Democracy and Development, 23-25 October 2007
This paper analyses the complex relationship between democracy and development, highlighting the importance of democracy as a process and development as an outcome. The evidence on whether democratic or authoritarian regimes promote development more effectively remains mixed. Given that different political regimes may be capable of implementing similar policies, it may be useful for donors to consider the kinds of institutional arrangements that are in place instead of focusing solely on regime-type.
http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/1981.pdf

Diamond, L., 2004, 'Moving On Up Out of Poverty: What Does Democracy Have to Do With It?', CDDRL Working Paper no. 4, Centre on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law, Stanford University
What is the relationship between governance and poverty? Do democracies eliminate poverty more effectively than authoritarian regimes? This paper suggests that the obstacles to the elimination of poverty are largely political. Poverty is generated and reproduced by power disparity and abuse. The enduring reduction of poverty requires a broad context of good governance, beyond the narrow arena of free and fair elections.
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTMOVOUTPOV/Resources/2104215-1148063363276/071503_Diamond.pdf

Gerring, J., Thacker, S. C. and Alfaro, R. (2012). Democracy and human development. *The Journal of Politics*, 74(1), pp. 1-17.
Does democracy improve citizens' quality of life? This quantitative study finds that there is limited evidence to support the theory that a country's level of democracy in a given year affects its level of human development. However, it finds that a country's stock of democracy over the past century has a significant impact on its human development.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0022381611001113

Kalyvitis, S. and Vlachaki, I. (2012). When does more aid imply less democracy? An empirical examination. *European Journal of Political Economy*, 28(1), pp. 132-146.
Has foreign aid affected the political regime of recipient countries? This quantitative study finds that aid flows decrease the likelihood of observing a democratic regime in a recipient country. This effect is dependent on economic and social conditions. The negative relationship between aid and democracy is moderated when aid flows are preceded by economic liberalisation.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2011.06.010

A key issue is whether the institutions required for stable and consolidated democracy and those required for rapid, effective and sustained growth and development are compatible.

Leftwich, A., 2005, 'Democracy and Development: Is There Institutional Incompatibility?' Democratization Vol. 12, No. 5, pp. 686–703.
Are the institutions of development and the institutions of democracy structurally compatible? This article examines development and democracy from an institutional perspective. It argues that while development requires rapid and far-reaching change, democracy is essentially a conservative system of power producing consensual and incremental change. The institutional characteristics and requirements for development and those for stable and consolidated democracy, therefore, pull in opposite directions.
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/13510340500322173

Democracy and conflict

It is often stated that democracies do not go to war with each other. But does research support this claim? What effect does democracy have on conflict and what does this mean for development?

Mansfield, E.D. and Snyder, J., 2007 'Turbulent Transitions: Why Emerging Democracies Go to War in the Twenty-first Century', in Crocker, C., Hampson, F. O. and Aall, P. (eds.), Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World, United States Institute of Peace, pp. 161-176., Washington, DC
Is democratisation to best way to promote peace? This research argues that the world would probably be safer if there were more mature democracies but, in the transition to democracy, countries become more aggressive and war prone. The international community should be realistic about the dangers of encouraging democratisation where the conditions are unripe. The risk of violence increases if democratic institutions are not in place when mass electoral politics are introduced.
https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=ehR5GCp10-0C&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false

Stewart, F. and O'Sullivan, M., 1999, 'Democracy, Conflict and Development - Three Cases,' in The Political Economy of Comparative Development into the 21st Century, eds. G. Ranis, G. et al, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham
Western governments view the promotion of democracy as desirable both as an end in itself and because of the widespread belief that democracies do not wage war on one another, that they are less likely to repress their own citizens, and that democracy promotes development and growth. This chapter asks whether democracies are invariably less likely to suffer internal strife, and whether such strife really hampers development. It examines the relationship between democracy, conflict and development, through three case studies: Kenya and Uganda (which have much in common) and Sri Lanka.
http://www3.qeh.ox.ac.uk/RePEc/qeh/qehwps/qehwps15.pdf

Useful websites

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace is a non-partisan, non-profit organisation which aims to advance cooperation between nations and promote active international engagement by the US.
http://www.carnegieendowment.org/

The **International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance** (International IDEA) is an intergovernmental organisation that aims to provide knowledge and policy analysis to support democratic reform.
http://www.idea.int/

The **National Democratic Institute** (NDI) is a non-profit organisation working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide by promoting citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.
http://www.ndi.org/

The **Centre for Democratic Institutions** at the Australian National University support democratic processes and institutions in Southeast Asia and the Pacific through knowledge sharing.
http://cdi.ips.cap.anu.edu.au/

Read more on democratisation from **Eldis:**
http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/governance/democratic-governance/democratisation

Related sections in this topic guide:

- Political participation

- Elections

- Political parties

Informal and customary political systems

Donors have tended to focus on formal political institutions and structures. Although these are important, it is essential to recognise that much political activity takes place according to informal norms and systems in developing countries. Whilst formal political systems are generally publicly announced, for example in laws, regulations and codes, informal systems are embedded in socio-cultural institutions, norms and standards. For this reason, informal political systems that can be negative for development (e.g. clientelism and patrimonialism) are extremely difficult to eradicate.

The relative influence of formal and informal political systems in local and national politics is a critical debate. The literature has tended to presume a clear dichotomy between formal and informal, traditional and modern, and democratic and non-democratic political systems. But in reality, these distinctions are not so clear, and formal and informal systems overlap and interrelate.

This section considers why non-democratic political traditions continue to flourish in certain areas and how informal institutions impact political governance. The GSDRC's related guide on political economy analysis provides further information.

Customary institutions and democratic governance

'Customary' or 'traditional' political institutions (e.g. chiefdoms, religious organisations and local village councils) are often criticised for being undemocratic and non-participatory. In particular, they have been accused of perpetuating discrimination according to gender, caste or race. Are these political institutions changing? How do they interact with formal political structures, and do they drive or block pro-poor development?

The following papers discuss the relationship between informal political systems and formal democracy.

Sackey, M. (2012). 'The role of customary governance systems for local democracy, good governance and service delivery: The case of Ghana'. Stockholm: International IDEA.
Local governance, decentralization and democracy are key components of the traditional Ghanaian institution of chieftaincy. This paper finds that while chieftaincy does not currently form part of the formal local government administration structure, it maintains an informal and sacrosanct niche in local governance. The roles of the institution need to be redefined and clarified within the nexus of traditions, demands of good governance and modern local democracy to enable it to provide a complementary conduit for effective and efficient local governance for development.
http://www.idea.int/resources/analysis/the-role-of-customary-governance-systems-for-local-democracy-the-case-of-ghana.cfm

AnanthPur, K., 2004, 'Rivalry or Synergy? Formal and Informal Local Governance in Rural India', Working paper no. 226, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton
Informal local governance institutions (ILGIs) were not expected to withstand the advent of democracy and the forces of modernisation in rural India. How have ILGIs adapted to interact with their newer formal counterparts – the elected government institutions? This paper presents a holistic view of ILGIs that considers their progressive role in village governance and service delivery. It presents a framework to explain why ILGIs are more likely to survive in India than in other countries in the South.
http://www2.ids.ac.uk/futurestate/pdfs/Rivalry.pdf

Traditional and religious leadership

There is considerable debate about how and whether formal political institutions can work alongside traditional leadership systems and whether or not traditional leadership supports or undermines democratic governance.

Logan, C., 2008, 'Traditional Leaders In Modern Africa: Can Democracy And The Chief Co-Exist?', Afrobarometer Working Paper No. 93, Cape Town
Can democracy and the African chief co-exist? This study analyses Afrobarometer survey data to explore popular perceptions of elected and traditional leaders. Positive attitudes toward chiefs are not incompatible with democracy – and vice versa. Furthermore, positive perceptions of chiefs and of elected leaders are strongly linked. African societies are adept at integrating seemingly incompatible institutional structures, such as traditional institutions.
http://www.afrobarometer.org/files/documents/working_papers/AfropaperNo93.pdf

Beall, J., 2005, 'Exit, Voice and Tradition: Loyalty to Chieftainship and Democracy in Metropolitan Durban, South Africa', Crisis States Programme Working Paper no. 59, Development Studies Institute, London
Strains on democratic governance in many parts of Africa have led to a resurgence of the salience of traditional authority. This paper examines the challenges posed for democratic consolidation arising from the accommodation of traditional authorities in city government in Durban, South Africa. Is chieftaincy a retrograde step or does institutional pluralism offer greater political flexibility and stability? These questions are explored with reference to Albert Hirschman's seminal thesis on exit, voice and loyalty.
http://www.lse.ac.uk/internationalDevelopment/research/crisisStates/Home.aspx

Logan, C., 2011, 'The Roots of Resilience: Exploring Popular Support for African Traditional Authorities', Working Paper no. 128, Afrobarometer, South Africa
This examination of 2008-9 Afrobarometer survey data finds intense support for traditional authority across 19 African countries and all socio-demographic groups: large majorities believe that the institution should still play a significant role in local governance. Africans place considerable value on chiefs' role in managing and resolving conflict, their leadership qualities and their accessibility. Traditional leaders also seem to play an essential symbolic role as representatives of community identity, unity, continuity and stability: they seem to derive their support at least as much from who they are as from what they do. As long as chiefs continue to produce (especially intrinsic) benefits for their communities, they will continue to be perceived as important players who must remain active in local governance if it is to function effectively.
http://www.afrobarometer.org/files/documents/working_papers/AfropaperNo128.pdf

Khan, S., 2007, 'Governance in Tribal Environments', Helpdesk Research Report, GSDRC, Birmingham
The broader literature on traditional structures of authority and leadership tends to agree that the legitimacy of such structures has endured amongst many communities. In some cases, they have provided superior governance and conflict resolution than the state. Nevertheless, there is a need for greater scholarly attention to various important issues relating to traditional governance, such as people's perceptions of traditional leadership and their motivations for these views, and the relations between local political systems.
http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/HD495.pdf

Kleist, N., 2011, 'Modern Chiefs: Tradition, Development and Return among Traditional Authorities in Ghana', African Affairs, vol. 110, no. 441, pp.629-647
There is a growing trend in Ghana of appointing traditional authorities with an international migrant background. This study shows that Ghanaian chiefs who have lived abroad are expected to draw on transnational networks and experiences to bring development and innovation to their areas. Some collaborate with international development agencies, NGOs, and migrants, and tour European and North American countries. 'Return chiefs' must balance 'the modern' and 'the traditional', and their practices in negotiating this tension are both local and global.
http://afraf.oxfordjournals.org/content/110/441/629.abstract

Elites and institutions

What is the role of elites in the development of formal and informal political institutions? How do they influence the exercise of power and representation at local level? Elites are often the people who make or shape the main political and economic decisions in a country, but there is considerable disagreement about the extent to which they support or subvert pro-poor development.

Leftwich, A. (2010) 'Beyond Institutions: Rethinking the Role of Leader, Elites and Coalitions in the Institutional Formation of Developmental States and Strategies', *Forum for Development Studies*, 37(1), pp. 93-111
Development practitioners and policymakers have tended to rely heavily on structuralist approaches with an emphasis on institutions and institution building. They have failed to take account of agential factors in the design, formation and maintenance of institutions, and for important success stories that run against general patterns of institutional failure or corruption. Policymakers need to have a better understanding of the role of human agency in developmental processes and the role of leaders, elites and coalitions.
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/08039410903558327#.VKqjUCusWUY

Laws, E. (2012) 'Political Settlements, Elite Pacts, and Governments of National Unity: A Conceptual Study', Developmental Leadership Program
How should political settlements be defined and understood? How should elite pacts and governments of national unity (GNUs) be defined and understood? The concept of the 'political settlement' has been used in a variety of subtly, but significantly, different ways. Sometimes it has been used interchangeably with 'elite pacts', 'elite bargains' or 'peace agreements'. This paper surveys and clarifies the conceptual field.
http://www.dlprog.org/publications/political-settlements-elite-pacts-and-governments-of-national-unity-a-conceptual-study.php

Lindemann S., 2008, 'Do Inclusive Elite Bargains Matter? A Research Framework for Understanding the Causes of Civil War in Sub-Saharan Africa', Discussion Paper 15, Crisis States Research Centre, London School of Economics and Political Science.
Sub-Saharan Africa is the world's most conflict-intensive region. But why have some African states experienced civil war, while others have managed to maintain political stability? This discussion paper from the Crisis States Research Centre argues that the ability of post-colonial states in Sub-Saharan Africa to maintain political stability depends on the ability of the ruling political parties to overcome the historical legacy of social fragmentation. Creating inclusive elite bargains can bring stability while exclusionary elite bargains give rise to trajectories of civil war.
http://www.lse.ac.uk/internationaldevelopment/research/crisisstates/download/dp/dp15.pdf

Patronage politics

'Clientelism' and 'patron-client' politics occur in contexts where strong personal relationships between politicians and their followers shape political decisions on the basis of mutual gain. Political patrons may bestow jobs, money and opportunities on their clients in return for political support. Often, in clientelistic states, the distinction between private resources of political leaders and state resources breaks down, regardless of the presence of formal modern political institutions. Although neo-patrimonial regimes are often bad for economic development, this is not always the case. Where leaders are able to centralise economic rents and develop a long-term strategy, neo-patrimonialism can support development.

Acemoglu, D., Robinson, J. and Verdier, T., 2003, 'Kleptocracy and Divide-and-Rule: A Model of Personal Rule', Paper presented at the European Economic Association Annual Meeting, 24 August, Stockholm
How and why do kleptocracies (regimes based on personal rule) last so long in some developing countries, despite the lack of a significant support base? How can the study of policymaking in weakly-institutionalised societies help to understand the emergence of these regimes? This paper proposes a model to describe the strategies of many kleptocratic regimes, and includes historical case studies from the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Dominican Republic.
http://www.nber.org/papers/w10136.pdf

Arriola, L., 2009, 'Patronage and Political Stability in Africa', in Comparative Political Studies, vol 42, no 10, pp.1339-1362
Ministerial appointments to the cabinet are used in this study as a proxy for changes in a leader's patronage coalition size. Using time-series cross-section data on 40 African countries, this study shows that African leaders extend their tenure in office by expanding their patronage coalition through cabinet appointments. The appointment of one additional minister to the cabinet lowers a leader's coup risk by a greater extent than does a 1-percentage-point increase in economic growth.
http://cps.sagepub.com/content/42/10/1339

van Wyk, J-A., 2007, 'Political Leaders in Africa: Presidents, Patrons or Profiteers?' ACCORD Occasional Paper Series: Vol. 2, No. 1, South Africa
What impact has leadership had on the development of African states? This paper reviews and analyses the multiple layers of formal and informal political leadership in post-colonial Africa. Political leaders are the primary holders, controllers and distributors of power and resources in a particular institution and/or territory. Contemporary African leaders operate in an environment constrained by colonial legacies and instability. Leadership is characteristically neo-patrimonial, featuring presidentialism, clientelism, the use of state resources and the centralisation of power.
http://www.accord.org.za/publications/occasional-papers/491-political-leaders-in-africa

Lindberg, S.I., (2010). What accountability pressures do MPs in Africa face and how do they respond? Evidence from Ghana. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*. 48(1): 117-142
How African politicians, especially legislators, behave on a daily basis is still largely unknown. This article gives an empirical account of the daily accountability pressures and the strategies that Members of Parliament (MPs) in Ghana employ in responding to the demands that they face. While literature on political clientelism focuses on explanatory factors like lack of political credibility, political machines capable of effective monitoring, autonomy of brokers, high levels of poverty, and political competitiveness, the role of institutions has been overlooked. While the existing literature suggests that political clientelism is an optimal strategy in the context of weak institutions, the present analysis finds that the institution of the office of Member of Parliament in Ghana is strong, but shaped by informal norms in ways that favour the provision of private goods in clientelistic networks.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X09990243

Vicente, P., and Wantcheckon, L. (2009) Clientelism and vote buying: lessons from field experiments in African elections. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*. 25 (2): 292-305
Electoral clientelism and vote buying are widely perceived as major obstacles to economic development. This paper reviews the literature on clientelism and vote buying and proposes the use of field experiments to evaluate empirically the consequences of these phenomena. Clientelism and vote buying seem to be effective and to enjoy widespread electoral support. The results suggest that increased access to information and political participation by women may limit clientelism. In addition, voter education campaigns may undermine the effects of vote buying on voting behaviour. We

argue that our findings may inform the design of development aid interventions, as a way effectively to increase public-good political accountability.
http://www.iig.ox.ac.uk/output/articles/OxREP/iiG-OxREP-Vicente-Wantchekon.pdf

Kelsall, T., 2011, 'Rethinking the Relationship between Neo-patrimonialism and Economic Development in Africa', IDS Bulletin, Vol.42, No. 2, pp. 76-87
Is it possible to boost poverty-reducing economic investment and growth in Africa by working with, rather than against, neo-patrimonial politics? This study of seven 'middle African' countries shows that neo-patrimonialism can be harnessed for developmental ends – if pro-market, pro-rural policies and an institutional system for centralising and distributing economic rents with a long-term view are in place. However, problems associated with developmental patrimonial systems include: a potential loss of civil liberties; lack of sustainability; and inapplicability in some country contexts.
http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1759-5436.2011.00213.x/abstract

Implications for donors

Informal and customary political systems have important implications for how development is approached. For example, how can donors support pro-poor development in the context of deeply-rooted anti-democratic behaviour? Recent research from the Africa Power and Politics Programme suggests that donors should focus on 'working with the grain' by building on existing institutional arrangements that have clear benefits.

Cammack, D., 2007, 'The Logic of African Neopatrimonialism: What Role for Donors?', Development Policy Review, vol. 25, no. 5, pp.599-614
When sub-Saharan African government institutions do not function as expected by international aid agencies, they are often labelled dysfunctional, but their action is quite logical when viewed through a 'neopatrimonial lens'. This article explains the 'logic' behind neopatrimonial practices. For example, although politicians understand that professionalising their bureaucracy will stimulate development, they prevent this from occurring to avoid exposing their corrupt, clientelist networks. Donors must begin to act politically – to confront directly the political logic that undermines economic development and democratic consolidation.
http://www.ibrarian.net/navon/page.jsp?paperid=22716171&searchTerm=role+of+logic

Hyden, G., 2008, 'Institutions, Power and Policy Outcomes in Africa', Africa Power and Politics Programme (APPP), Discussion Paper No. 2, Overseas Development Institute, London
In Africa, as elsewhere, the paths to development are dependent on historical institutional context, and cannot be imposed from outside. This paper argues that in African states informal institutions dominate power relations but are not understood, and so development policies lack any real traction. A model of how formal and informal institutions interact is proposed and linked to an analysis of power itself – its basis, reach, exercise, nature and consequences. This shows that conventional models of development planning cannot work in Africa, where the production and distribution of 'public goods' are highly politicised and personalised. http://www.institutions-africa.org/filestream/20080623-discussion-paper-2-institutions-power-and-policy-outcomes-in-africa-goran-hyden-june-2008

Booth, D., 2011, 'Governance for Development in Africa: Building on What Works', Policy Brief 1, Africa Power and Politics Programme, Overseas Development Institute, London
How can a 'best fit' approach to governance improve development effectiveness? In its present form, 'good governance' is not evidence based. This brief highlights the need to build on the strengths of existing institutional arrangements when supporting governance reform in developing countries. It argues that governance assistance should be refocused on nurturing developmental leadership. http://www.institutions-africa.org/filestream/20110406-appp-policy-brief-01-governance-for-development-in-africa-building-on-what-works-by-david-booth-april-2011

Further resources

The Africa Power and Politics Research Programme looked at identifying ways of exercising power, doing politics and building states that might work better for development and poverty reduction in sub-Saharan Africa.
http://www.institutions-africa.org/

Useful websites

Eldis: http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/governance/institutional-development/informal-institutions#.VKhDuyusXmU

Religions and Development Research Programme: Documents available at http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/Project/3896/

Related GSDRC topic guides: Fragile states; Institutional development

Participation

Donors support political participation as a means of improving state accountability and responsiveness, and empowering the poor. But have democratisation processes really increased political participation, particularly pro-poor participation? If not, what are the barriers to such participation?

Political participation can involve activities ranging from voting in elections or joining a union, to discussing politics with friends or engaging in community self-help initiatives. This section takes a deliberately broad view; defining participation as all voluntary activities that aim to influence political decisions at all levels of the political system. This includes conformist participatory activities like party membership or electoral campaigning and non-conformist activities, such as strikes and demonstrations.

Political participation

To what extent has democratisation increased the participation of citizens, particularly the poor, in political decision-making? Are certain forms of political participation likely to generate greater responsiveness than others?

Mechanisms that ensure meaningful participation can enhance the capacity of a government to design appropriate policies and deliver effective and appropriate services. But the nature and outcomes of participation are deeply affected by the political economy and socio-cultural conditions in which participation occurs.

Manor, J., 2004, 'Democratization with Inclusion: Political Reforms and People's Empowerment at the Grassroots', Journal of Human Development, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 5 -29
In recent years, many governments in developing countries have undertaken political reforms to promote the empowerment and inclusion of ordinary people, especially the poor. However, this process has not automatically benefited poor people. This article reviews these reforms and looks at how they can be measured and facilitated.
http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr2003_manor.pdf

Coelho, V.S.P. & von Lieres, B. (2010). Mobilizing for democracy: citizen engagement and the politics of public participation. In: *Mobilising for Democracy: Citizen Action and the Politics of Public Participation*. **V.S.P. Coelho and B. von Lieres (Eds.) Zed Books, London**
This introductory chapter provides an overview of a book which introduces eleven original empirical case studies of how different forms of citizen mobilization have generated democratic outcomes in seven countries of the global South. It highlights the limitations of one-size-fits-all approaches to addressing the challenges of building democracy, and it demonstrates how the prospects for achieving democratic outcomes depend on a combination of forms of mobilization and distinctive political and institutional contexts.
http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/PDF/Outputs/CentreOnCitizenship/1052734695-coelho_etal.2010-introduction.pdf

Michels, A., 2011, 'Innovations in Democratic Governance: How Does Citizen Participation Contribute to a Better Democracy?', International Review of Administrative Sciences, vol. 77, no. 2 pp. 275-293
This study examines citizen participation in various Western countries. It shows that citizen involvement produces a number of benefits, which vary according to the type of democratic innovation. However, since these positive effects are perceptible only to those taking part, and the number of participants is often small, the benefits to individual democratic citizenship are far more conclusive than the benefits to democracy as a whole.
http://ras.sagepub.com/content/77/2/275.abstract

Taylor, M., 2011, 'Strengthening the Voice of the Poor: Faith-Based Organizations' Engagement in Policy Consultation Processes in Nigeria and Tanzania', Working Paper 61, Religions and Development Research Programme, University of Birmingham
This paper reports on pilot projects in Nigeria and Tanzania that tested the potential for religious organisations to engage collaboratively in policy consultation processes. The cases showed that Faith-Based Organisations can cooperate across religious and denominational divides to assemble grassroots data on issues central to Poverty Reduction Strategy Processes (and their successors), analyse findings and present them to government. They demonstrate that similar projects could be implemented more widely. Positive influences on policy depend, among other things, on the power relations within religious organisations and between faith communities and the state.
http://epapers.bham.ac.uk/1598/1/Taylor_Voiceofpoor.pdf

Toolkit

OECD, 2001, 'Citizens as Partners; OECD Handbook on Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy Making', Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Paris
This Handbook explores the background, pressure and objectives for governments seeking to become engaged in informing, consulting and engaging citizens in policy-making. It presents an overview of current state-of-the-art practices in this area, focussing particularly on the potential of information and communication technology (ICT) as a tool to achieve this. http://internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/Citizens-as-Partners-OECD-Handbook.pdf

Further resources

Strengthening voice and participation in the GSDRC's Voice, Empowerment and Accountability Topic Guide.

IDS/Ford Foundation Research on 'Participation and National Policy': These case studies asked under what conditions citizen engagement with the state contributes to the formation and implementation of national level policies, which have a positive impact on the lives of poor and excluded people.
http://www.ids.ac.uk/go/idsproject/participation-and-national-policy

Voting

The following resources specifically consider the issue of voting, and the socio-economic and political factors associated with electoral participation and the ability of citizens to hold governments to account.

Resnick, D. & Casale, D. (2014) Young populations in young democracies: generational voting behaviour in sub-Saharan Africa. *Democratization*. **21(6): 1172-1194**
Why do young Africans participate less in elections than their older counterparts? Given Africa's growing youth bulge, this constituency represents a numerically important voting bloc, and their lower participation in elections could undermine the legitimacy of the region's democratic trajectory. This paper finds that key determinants of the youth's voting behaviour include their access to political knowledge and information as well as their perceptions of the electoral context and party system. In the latter regard, the efficacy and fairness of elections and the degree of partisanship increase the youth's decision to vote, while the length of party incumbency is a deterrent to turnout.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2013.793673

Bratton, M.Bhavnani, R. & Tse-Hsin, C. (2012) Voting intentions in Africa: ethnic, economic or partisan? *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*. **50(1): 27-52**
This paper offers a comprehensive account of popular voting intentions in Africa's new electoral democracies. With reference to aggregate and survey data from 16 countries, it shows that competitive elections in Africa are more than mere ethnic censuses or simple economic referenda. Instead, Africans engage in both ethnic and economic voting. Not surprisingly, people who belong to the ethnic group in power intend to support the ruling party, in contrast to those who feel a sense of discrimination against their cultural group. But, to an even greater extent, would-be voters in Africa consider policy performance, especially the government's perceived handling of unemployment, inflation, and income distribution. Moreover, a full account of the intended vote choice in Africa also requires recognition that citizens are motivated – sincerely or strategically – by partisan considerations; they vote for established ruling parties because they expect that incumbents will win.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14662043.2012.642121

Bratton, M., and Logan, C., 2006, 'Voters but not yet Citizens: The Weak Demand for Vertical Accountability in Africa's Unclaimed Democracies', Afrobarometer Working Paper no. 63, Cape Town
Why has democracy failed to secure better governance and accountability in Africa? This paper finds that how Africans understand their own roles and responsibilities for securing vertical democratic accountability – between leaders and the public – is important. Democracy in Africa remains unclaimed by 'voters' who have embraced multiparty elections but failed to grasp their rights as 'citizens' - notably to regularly demand accountability from leaders.
http://www.afrobarometer.org/publications/working-papers/item/109-voters-but-not-yet-citizens-the-weak-demand-for-vertical-acountability-in-africa-s-unclaimed-democracies

Young, D., 2009, 'Is Clientelism at Work in African Elections? A Study of Voting Behaviour in Kenya and Zambia', Working Paper no. 106, Afrobarometer
Does clientelism play a major role in the voting decisions of African elections? Which factors are most important to African voters when choosing a candidate to vote for? This paper argues that clientelism is not a major factor in voting decisions. Instead, voters focus on issues relating to the provision of local public goods and the frequency of an MP's visits to the constituency.
http://www.afrobarometer.org/files/documents/working_papers/AfropaperNo106.pdf

Barriers to participation

There are many barriers to political participation for the poor, including illiteracy, institutionalised sexism and lack of time. It is essential that development practitioners are realistic about the level of participation that is practically possible for poor communities and that participation projects are designed taking potential barriers into account.

Golooba-Mutebi, F., 2004, 'Reassessing Popular Participation in Uganda', Public Administration and Development, vol. 24, no. 4, pp. 289-304
Is participation a sustainable tool for promoting good governance in developing countries? To what extent should the political history and the socio-cultural context be taken into account in efforts to promote participation? This article is an account of the evolution of village councils and popular participation in Uganda. It questions the feasibility and utility of popular participation as an administrative and policymaking device.
http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/pad.309/abstract

Putzel, J., 2004, 'The Politics of 'Participation: Civil Society, the State and Development Assistance', Crisis States Discussion Paper no. 1, Development Studies Institute, London
What kind of participation may promote poverty reduction? What should donor attitudes be concerning the promotion of 'participation' and 'participatory processes' of decision-making? This paper suggests that discussions about promoting participation must start from, and engage with, the realities of how and where ordinary and poor people actually are organised.
http://www.lse.ac.uk/internationalDevelopment/research/crisisStates/Home.aspx

Denhardt, J., et al., 2009, 'Barriers to Citizen Engagement in Developing Countries', International Journal of Public Administration, vol. 32, no. 14, pp. 1268-1288
This paper consider the impact on developing nations of external incentives; the absence of democratic culture and civil society; profound poverty; time pressures and demands for immediate results; and the lack of an institutional infrastructure. Existing international aid programs may, in some instances, actually work to thwart citizen engagement efforts. The paper suggests how a realistic recognition of the barriers to citizen engagement in developing countries can inform international efforts to foster democratic governance.
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01900690903344726

Gender and participation

How well are women's interests represented through political institutions? What can be done to increase women's participation? The following resources examine barriers to the participation of women in formal and informal political systems. They also look at mechanisms for and outcomes of increasing such participation.

Tadros, M., 2011, 'Women Engaging Politically: Beyond Magic Bullets and Motorways', Pathways Policy Paper, Pathways of Women's Empowerment RPC, Brighton: IDS
This paper draws on over eight country case studies to analyse the possibilities and limitations of mainstream approaches, such as quotas, to strengthening women's access to political power. It finds that any quota law needs to be complemented by other interventions to ensure that it has a positive social transformative impact. Further, concepts of and support for women's political empowerment need to be based more on women's ongoing networks of support and influence and less on pre-election moments or international 'blueprints'.
http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/Output/188689/

Cornwall, A. and Goetz, A. M., 2005, 'Democratising Democracy: Feminist Perspectives', Democratization, Vol. 12, No. 5, pp. 783-800
Increasing numbers of women have gained entry to formal political spaces. To what extent has this translated into their political influence, or into gains in policies that redress gendered inequities and inequalities? This article explores the factors that affect and enable women's political effectiveness in different democratic arenas. It argues that women's political interests are not necessarily influenced by sex, but by their "political apprenticeship", or pathway into politics. To enhance the potential of women's political participation, democracy itself must be democratized; including building new pathways into politics.
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13510340500322181#.VKqrOCusWUZ

Hicks, J., 2011, 'Strengthening Women's Participation in Local Governance: Lessons and Strategies', Community Development Journal, vol. 46, no. S1, pp.36-50
To what extent do South Africa's municipal participation mechanisms enable meaningful engagement in development planning and local governance by poor or marginalised women? What interventions or alternative approaches are required? This article finds a disconnect between women's experience and knowledge and state policy and programmatic responses. It proposes two, formally linked, strategies to address this problem: 1) the creation of women-only forums,

supported by training, to enable women to develop recommendations; and 2) the input of those recommendations into formal participation structures and processes.
http://cdj.oxfordjournals.org/content/46/suppl_1/i36.abstract

Amer, M., 2009, 'Political Awareness and its Implications on Participatory Behaviour: A Study of Naga Women Voters in Nagaland', Indian Journal of Gender Studies, 16, pp.359-374
http://ijg.sagepub.com/content/16/3/359.abstract?etoc

Fleschenberg, A., 2009, 'Afghanistan's Parliament in the Making: Gendered Understandings and Practices of Politics in a Transitional Country', Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, Berlin and UNIFEM
http://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/Afghanistan_s_Parliament_in_the_Making-Endf.pdf

Tadros, M., 2011, 'Working Politically Behind Red Lines: Structure and agency in a comparative study of women's coalitions in Egypt and Jordan', Developmental Leadership Program
How can the international community advance gender equality in socially conservative contexts through effective support to women's coalitions? This report looks at how six collective initiatives in Egypt and Jordan have formed and worked politically to advance gender equality. It argues that engaging in informal 'backstage' politics is as important as formal channels of engagement in these 'closed' political spaces. The international community plays a critical role in supporting women's coalitions. Donors have provided some positive support, but there is room for improvement.
http://www.dlprog.org/publications/executive-summary-working-politically-behind-red-lines-egypt-and-jordan.php

Civic education

Donor enthusiasm to promote political participation has often resulted in 'civic education' programmes that aim to enhance citizenship and participation in the recipient country. However, after decades of donor investment in civic education programmes, recent research is showing mixed results.

Kahne, J., Lee N-J. and Feezell, J. T. (2012). Digital media literacy education and online civic and political participation. *International Journal of Communication*, 6, pp. 1-24
Can media literacy education promote and improve youth engagement in civic and political life? This quantitative study finds that exposure to media literacy education is not strongly related to demographic variables. However, it finds that digital media literacy education is associated with increased online political engagement and increased exposure to different perspectives.
http://dmlhub.net/sites/default/files/International_Journal_Communication.pdf

Manning, N. and Edwards, K. (2014). Does civic education for young people increase political participation? A systematic review. *Educational Review*, 66(1), pp. 22-45
This systematic review finds that there is little evidence of civic education having a discernible or direct effect on voting or voter registration/enrolment. It finds some evidence of civic education increasing activities of political expression (e.g. signing a petition).
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2013.763767

Useful websites

CIVICUS is a world alliance for citizen participation that aims to strengthen citizen action and civil society throughout the world. http://www.civicus.org/

BRIDGE the gender and development research and information service, has a web guide and several resources on gender and participation.
http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/

Pathways of Women's Empowerment is an international research and communications programme that aims to understand and influence efforts to bring about positive change in women's lives.
http://www.pathwaysofempowerment.org/

International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics (iKNOW Politics) is an online workspace designed to serve the needs of elected officials, candidates, political party leaders and members, researchers, students and other practitioners interested in advancing women in politics.
http://www.iknowpolitics.org/

Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) is an international centre for learning and promotion of citizen participation and democratic governance. They conduct participatory research and training on civil society, capacity building, voluntary and non-profit sector, governance, rural and urban local bodies, citizenship, gender and related issues.
http://www.pria.org/

Policy processes

Policymaking has traditionally been viewed as a linear, top-down approach with two distinct phases: formulation and implementation. Academics have been criticising this approach for many years, arguing that policy development is a dynamic, open and highly political process, which involves multiple actors and negotiations. This section explores why policy-making is important for development, how policy processes can be pro-poor and provides toolkits to assist with policy analysis and reform.

Pro-poor policy

Pro-poor policy reform does not just mean including the poor in policy development. It also means ensuring that political elites and political systems are structured so that the 'voices' of the poor are heard at all levels.

Kosack, S. (2013). The logic of pro-poor policy making: Political entrepreneurship and mass education. *British Journal of Political Science,* **44(2), pp. 409-444**
Do democratic governments make pro-poor policies? This article finds that countries that have expanded education for the poor tend to be autocratic rather than democratic. Moreover, it finds that these governments were always clearly associated with political entrepreneurs. Political entrepreneurs can help poor citizens organise and attain power with their support. Political entrepreneurs are incentivised to maintain poor citizens' support with pro-poor policies in order to stay in power. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0007123412000695

Bird, K., Pratt, N. et al., 2004, 'Fracture Points in Social Policies for Chronic Poverty Reduction', Chronic Poverty Research Centre Working Paper no. 47 / ODI Working Paper no. 242, Overseas Development Institute, London
Why are the needs of the chronically poor not being fully addressed? Why are they left off the policy agenda? This document examines the fracture points in social policy formation and suggests why it is that policy responses are weak. It shows that the issues relevant to the chronically poor rarely get onto policy agendas and even when they do failure to legitimise new policy commonly hampers implementation. Drawing on five cases in India and Uganda, the paper illustrates the political barriers undermining pro-poor policy innovation and implementation.
http://www.chronicpoverty.org/uploads/publication_files/WP47_Bird_et_al.pdf

Participation in policymaking

The stimulus for policy change often comes from outside the government. Allowing wide participation in policy development is regarded as good practice, but why and how should it work in reality? For example, how many and which groups should be included in policy development and how can broad participation work in a resource constrained environment?

Khan, M. A., 2008, 'Civic Engagement in Policy Development' in The World Public Sector Report 2008, People Matter: Civic Engagement in Public Governance, 2008, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), New York, pp 50-74
How have states attempted to bring civil society organisations into policy discussions and policy development? What lessons can be learned from these attempts? This chapter examines initiatives to promote civic engagement in policy development. It argues that political leadership, institutional changes and capacity-building are of crucial importance for the success of participatory initiatives.
http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan028608.pdf

United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 2004, 'Technocratic Policy Making and Democratic Accountability', Research and Policy Brief no. 3, UNRISD, Geneva
Aid donors have promoted the view that democratisation improves the quality of public policies and services. But what are the effects of technocratic styles of policymaking on democratic institutions, especially in developing and transition societies? This study suggests that pressure to adopt neo-liberal macro-economic policies, as countries attract international development finance, may encourage governments to insulate key institutions from public scrutiny and grant policy-making powers exclusively to experts.
http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/httpNetITFramePDF?ReadForm&parentunid=AE49CC52BEFC658EC1256EFA002D44FB&parentdoctype=brief&netitpath=80256B3C005BCCF9/(httpAuxPages)/AE49CC52BEFC658EC1256EFA002D44FB/$file/RPB3e.pdf

Chattopadhyay, R. and Duflo, E., n.d., 'Women as Policy Makers: Evidence from a Randomized Policy Experiment in India', Econometrica, Vol 72, No5
Relative to their share in the population, women are under-represented in all political positions. Political reservations are often proposed as a way to rapidly enhance women's ability to participate in policymaking. This paper compares the type

of public goods provided in reserved and unreserved Village Councils. The analysis is based on a data set collected from 265 Village Councils in West Bengal and Rajasthan.
http://pages.ucsd.edu/~tkousser/WomenasPolicyMakers.pdf

Toolkit

Keeley, J., 2001, 'Influencing Policy Processes for Sustainable Livelihoods: Strategies for Change', Institute of Development Studies, Brighton
This paper explores new approaches to understanding policy processes, drawing on case studies from sub-Saharan Africa and Bangladesh. When policy processes are seen as non-linear, political and haphazard, new factors need to be taken into account. In identifying these factors, policy processes can be influenced more effectively.
http://www.ids.ac.uk/files/influencing_policy.pdf

Useful websites

Research and Policy in Development (RAPID) explores the concept of evidence-based policy.
http://www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/

Elections

How can electoral systems be designed to adequately represent minorities? What lessons have been learned from a decade of international electoral assistance? What are the particular challenges of operating elections in post-conflict or fragile settings? Elections are the main political mechanism for allowing citizens to choose their government, and as such form a central pillar of any democratic political system. But across the developing world, particularly in emerging or young democracies, elections have often been marred by tension, disputed outcomes and, most worryingly, electoral violence.

This section includes analyses of appropriate electoral system design and practical guidance for donors on providing electoral assistance, including case study material and lessons learned.

Electoral systems

How electoral systems are designed determines the political representation of certain groups, including minorities and excluded groups, and ultimately citizen satisfaction with the electoral process. Much of the literature emphasises that the particular country circumstances must be closely analysed in designing a 'best-fit' solution.

Reynolds, A., Reilly B. and Ellis, A. et al., 2005, 'Electoral System Design: The New International IDEA Handbook', International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Stockholm
How should elec toral systems be chosen, designed and implemented? What discussion process is necessary? This handbook aims to help designers of constitutions and those involved in debate on political institutions in new and transitional democracies. It suggests criteria for deciding the best electoral system for any given context and describes the advantages and disadvantages of different systems and their possible consequences.
http://www.idea.int/publications/esd/upload/Idea_ESD_full.pdf

Rocha Menocal, A., 2011, 'Why Electoral Systems Matter: An Analysis of their Incentives and Effects on Key Areas of Governance', Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London
Electoral systems matter because – in interaction with other structural and institutional factors – they influence incentives regarding government effectiveness, violence and conflict, accountability, public policy, and electoral malpractice. There are trade-offs involved in all electoral systems. For example, proportional representation systems may be more likely than majority systems to produce desirable public goods – but they also foster greater corruption.
http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/7367.pdf

Larserud, S. and Taphorn, R., 2007, 'Designing for Equality: Best-fit, Medium-fit and Non-favourable Combinations of Electoral Systems and Gender Quotas', International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), Stockholm
What combinations of electoral systems and quotas best promote women's representation in elections? This paper shows how the interaction of electoral systems and quotas impacts upon the nomination and election of women. These two factors must be considered in concert. While certain systems are often associated with better representation, the particular country circumstances must be closely analysed in designing a 'best-fit' solution.
http://www.idea.int/publications/designing_for_equality/upload/Idea_Design_low.pdf

Thames, F. C. and Williams, M. S., 2010, 'Incentives for Personal Votes and Women's Representation in Legislatures', Comparative Political Studies,vol. 43, no. 12, pp. 1575-1600
The electoral system can contribute to greater (or fewer) political opportunities for women. This article finds that party-centred systems that have weak incentives for personal votes increase women's representation in legislatures. This is in contrast to candidate-centred systems that have strong incentives for personal votes. While existing literature often focuses on the positive effect that high district magnitude proportional representation systems can have on women's legislative representation, it is also important to understand the different incentives that electoral systems can create.
http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1469718

Reynolds, A., 2006, 'Electoral Systems and the Protection and Participation of Minorities', Report, Minority Rights Group International, London
In every successful case of peaceful and democratic conflict avoidance in the world, minority communities have been included and protected by the legislative process. This report focuses on the electoral system and makes a number of recommendations for best practice in minority representation and electoral system design. The participation of minorities in the legislative process at the stage of electoral reform is a key tool, both in peace building and in future conflict prevention.
http://www.minorityrights.org/1075/reports/electoral-systems-and-the-protection-and-participation-of-minorities.html

Reilly, B., 2002, 'Electoral Systems for Divided Societies', Journal of Democracy, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 156-70
This article looks at the impact that 'preferential' electoral systems (that is those that enable voters to rank- order their preferences) have on divided societies, drawing on case studies from Northern Ireland, Estonia, Australia, Fiji and Papua New Guinea. Traditionally, political science literature has favoured a 'consociational' approach which encourages the formation of ethnic parties, replicating ethnic divisions in the legislature. However, this approach does not necessarily reduce conflict, and its application in developing countries is questionable. Preferential systems — Single Transferable Vote (STV) and Alternative Vote (AV) — encourage cooperation and accommodation of rival groups through reciprocal vote-pooling.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/jod.2002.0029

Cho, W., 2010, 'Citizens' Perceptions of Government Responsiveness in Africa: Do Electoral Systems and Ethnic Diversity Matter?', Comparative Political Studies, vol. 43, no. 12, pp. 1650-1674
This paper finds that the type of electoral system used does affect people's perceptions of government responsiveness, but that this relationship depends on the country's degree of ethnic diversity. At lower levels of ethnic diversity, majoritarian electoral systems are better at boosting positive perceptions of government responsiveness. At higher levels of ethnic diversity, proportional representation (PR) systems are more likely to have this effect. These findings have implications for constitutional design and democratic consolidation.
http://cps.sagepub.com/content/43/12/1650.abstract

Kambudzi, A., 2008, 'Turning Elections into a Development Asset in Africa', Institute for Security Studies, South Africa
How can elections be turned into a development asset in Africa? This paper argues that in order for elections to become a real asset, African countries need to implement effective decentralisation, including the empowerment of local communities within a rationalised national plan. If they can do this they will also prevent conflicts and achieve increased national self-confidence and self-empowerment in relation to the global politico-economic and strategic environment.
http://www.issafrica.org/uploads/PAPER163.pdf

The following article argues that post-election pacts that allow incumbents or electoral losers to negotiate their way to power can undermine vertical relationships of accountability established through voting, increase budgetary spending, and create conditions for policy gridlock.

LeVan, A.C., 2011, 'Power Sharing and Inclusive Politics in Africa's Uncertain Democracies', Governance, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 31–53
How should international policymakers respond to evidence of a 'stolen' election? This article argues that support for inclusive political institutions needs to take account of the distinction between strengthening states and strengthening democracy. When used in response to flawed elections, pacts guaranteeing political inclusion can promote short-term peace, but they undermine democratisation, accountability and effective government performance. Potential adverse effects of political inclusion can be assessed by: 1) contrasting extra-constitutional pacts with stable political frameworks; 2) differentiating between post-war contexts and low-level conflicts; and 3) weighing short-term benefits against long-term costs. The drawbacks of inclusive political institutions can be moderated by options such as sunset clauses, the even-handed prosecution of human rights violations, and by strengthening checks on executive authority.
http://carllevan.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/Governance-LeVan-power-sharing-2011.pdf

Electoral operations

Elections should be organised and administered transparently in order to be free and fair. The following resources consider the international principles underpinning free and fair elections, and introduce practical approaches to strengthening electoral institutions and legal frameworks to entrench the electoral process.

Daxecker, U. E. (2014). All quiet on election day? International election observation and incentives for pre-election violence in African elections. *Electoral Studies,* **34, pp. 232-243**
What is the impact of international election missions on African elections? This article, based on an empirical analysis of election-related violence for African elections in the 1990–2009 period, shows that the presence of election observers increases the incidence of pre-election violence, but has no effect on election-day violence. It argues that the presence of international electoral missions lowers the potential for election-day violence relative to the pre-election period because domestic actors are likely refrain from intimidating opposition candidates or voters in the presence of international observer. However it also argues that international election missions create incentives for political actors to engage in violent manipulation in those parts of the electoral process that receive less international attention, such as the pre-election period.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2013.11.006

Trebilcock, M. and Chitalkar, P., 2009, 'From Nominal to Substantive Democracy: The Role and Design of Election Management Bodies', The Law and Development Review, vol. 2, issue 1
Can effective election administration though Election Management Bodies (EMBs) contribute to the development of

substantive democracy? This article examines evidence from elections in Asia, Latin America, Africa, Central and Eastern Europe, and the Middle East. Independent and impartial EMBs vested with broad mandates have succeeded not only in conducting free and fair elections but also in enhancing respect for the electoral process.
http://www.degruyter.com/view/j/ldr#

Merloe, P., 2008, 'Human Rights – The Basis for Inclusiveness, Transparency, Accountability and Public Confidence in Elections', in Promoting Legal Frameworks for Democratic Elections: An NDI Guide for Developing Election Laws and Law Commentaries, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, New York
What are the fundamental principles for genuinely democratic elections? How can states realise these principles in practice? This chapter examines electoral-related human rights law and principles. It shows that honouring citizens' collective right to genuine elections and establishing and maintaining public confidence in elections requires inclusiveness, transparency and accountability.
https://www.ndi.org/files/2404_ww_elect_legalframeworks_093008.pdf

Toolkits

Orozco-Henríquez, J. et al., 2010, 'Electoral Justice: The International IDEA Handbook', International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Stockholm
Electoral justice involves the means and mechanisms for ensuring that electoral processes adhere to the law and for protecting, restoring and defending electoral rights. Electoral justice mechanisms comprise formal and informal means of preventing and resolving electoral disputes. This handbook provides a comparative guide to best practice in electoral justice, drawing on examples from around the world. It aims to provide guidance on how electoral justice mechanisms can be designed and reformed.
http://www.idea.int/publications/electoral_justice/

Electoral assistance

Donors have traditionally supported the technical aspects of elections: drafting electoral legislation and regulations; providing logistical support (ballots, ballot boxes etc.); educating voters; and setting up administrative and management institutions (such as electoral commissions and electoral management bodies) and election observer groups. But elections are increasingly being viewed as part of an ongoing democratic cycle rather than as one-off events which require periodic technical support. Many advocate electoral assistance that is sensitive to local socio-cultural settings, builds local ownership, and supports sustainable processes and institutions that function effectively without external assistance.

Bargiacchi, F. et al., 2008, 'Making Electoral Assistance Effective: From Formal Commitment to Actual Implementation – ACE "Focus on …" Series', ACE Electoral Knowledge Network and Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Stockholm
How can development agencies' commitment to move from event-driven to process- and demand-driven electoral assistance be more fully implemented? This report assesses how electoral assistance is delivered on the ground, and examines how the conceptual shift towards process is shaping agencies' priorities. While the importance of long-term institutional strengthening for effective electoral assistance is now widely recognised, greater emphasis on capacity development is needed, both at the development agency and partner country level.
http://www.idea.int/publications/making_electoral_assistance_effective/index.cfm

Reilly, B., 2003, 'International Electoral Assistance: A Review of Donor Activities and Lessons Learned', Working Paper 17, Democratic Transition in Post-Conflict Societies Project, Netherlands Institute of International Relations, The Hague
What are the issues facing international actors when they engage in post-conflict electoral assistance? What is the impact of international assistance on democratic politics in post-conflict situations? This paper addresses the main aspects of elections and presents some of the recent lessons learned. The need for a sustainable approach is highlighted.
http://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/20030600_cru_working_paper_17.pdf

Haider, H., 2008, 'Electoral Assistance Lessons', Helpdesk Research Report, GSDRC, Birmingham
In the 1990s, there was a great deal of optimism about the impact that elections and electoral assistance could have on stability and democratisation. This optimism was tempered in subsequent years as the expected benefits, in many cases, did not seem to materialise. Much analysis has been conducted in recent years to draw out lessons learned from past electoral assistance programmes and to formulate best practices. In the process, new electoral approaches have been advocated and developed. The key change has been the movement away from viewing elections and electoral assistance as one-off events which require periodic support, to viewing them as an integral component of democratic transition and governance, which needs ongoing support.
http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/HD546.pdf

Haider, H., 2011, 'Electoral Support Interventions', Helpdesk Research Report, GSDRC, Birmingham
This helpdesk report provides a brief overview of discussion in the literature on impacts of electoral support and lessons learned. It discusses electoral support generally, and then focuses specifically on: electoral observation, electoral management bodies, civic and voter education, and media. International electoral support has generally played an important role in improving the quality of electoral processes. Much of the literature finds that electoral and democracy assistance has been successful in creating institutions (e.g. electoral commissions) and in transferring technical skills. This same body of literature highlights, however, that such assistance has been less successful in achieving the longer term objective of strengthening democratisation. Lessons learned include: treating elections as a process rather than an event; linking electoral support with other democratic development policies and activities; promoting synergies between election observation and electoral assistance; taking into account the political context of electoral processes; preventing election-related conflicts and violence; building local capacity; and improve monitoring and evaluation.
http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/HDQ770.pdf

Guidance and toolkits

DFID, 2011, 'Electoral Assistance and Politics: Lessons for International Support', DFID, London
The international community has an important role to play in supporting the successful planning, delivery and embedding of elections within a wider context of support to political systems and deepening democracy. Development partners can provide financial, political, technical and diplomatic assistance as part of these efforts, directing support strategically to a wide range of stakeholders and over a long period of time – the 'electoral cycle approach'. However, a range of evidence suggests that international support to elections often falls short of the desired standard. Various obstacles continue to impede more effective international support to elections. This paper draws on reviews and case studies of elections in the last four years to highlight key lessons – 'principles for election support'.
http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/elect-asst-pol-less-int-supp.pdf

DFID, 2010, 'How to Note on Electoral Assistance', Department for International Development, London
Full version: http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/elections/how-to-on-elect-asst.pdf
Summary version: http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/elections/how-to-on-elect-asst-summ.pdf

DFID, 2010, 'Electoral Assistance and Politics: Lessons for International Support', Department for International Development, London
http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/elect-asst-pol-less-int-supp.pdf

UNDP, 2007, Electoral Assistance Implementation Guide', United Nations Development Programme
http://web.undp.org/governance/docs/UNDP-Electoral-Assistance-Implementation-Guide.pdf

Electoral costs

The International Foundation for Electoral Support (IFES)'s Cost of Registration and Elections (CORE) project analysed and compared election related costs across 10 countries of varying size and democratic stability:

Lopez-Pintor, R. and Fischer, J., 2005, 'Cost of Registration and Elections (CORE) Project', International Foundation for Electoral Support, Washington DC
How are election budgets established, tracked and funded? What cost management practices can Election Management Bodies (EMBs) adopt? This study is based on survey research from 34 countries and in-depth case studies from ten countries. It identifies cost variables and sources of revenue, and evaluates the election budgets and cost management practices of EMBs.
http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/PO50.pdf

Mcloughlin, C., 2008, 'Multi-donor Funding for Elections in Fragile States', Helpdesk Research Report, GSDRC, Birmingham
Donor funding for elections is increasingly delivered through pooled funding mechanisms commonly known as 'basket' funds, whereby a number of donors jointly fund an agreed set of activities. Basket funds broadly aim to enhance the quality of electoral assistance by increasing donor co-ordination, simplifying management arrangements, and reducing duplication of effort. They are also seen as an important demonstration of consensus among the international community.
http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/HD538.pdf

Elections in post-conflict or fragile environments

Post-conflict elections have become a core element of peace agreements, but they can also contribute to more tension and violence. How can electoral conflict and violence be avoided in post-conflict and fragile settings? When is an appropriate time to hold elections in these settings? Timing, electoral system choice, administration, the disarmament of armed groups, and election monitoring are critical political choices in

these settings. One question attracting increasing attention is the extent to which power sharing arrangements, often advocated in these contexts, are actually effective in bringing about enduring peace.

Reilly, B., 2006, 'Post-Conflict Elections: Uncertain Turning Points of Transition', Centre for Democratic Institutions, Australian National University, Canberra
Are elections beneficial in fragile states emerging from conflict? Is there a way of enhancing democracy while ensuring stability? This paper examines the tensions between the short and long-term goals of post-conflict elections - ending war and consolidating democracy. It calls for a more realistic and less ideological appraisal of elections which recognises that they can be either beneficial or harmful to post-conflict democratisation. Success depends on careful consideration of timing, sequencing, mechanics and administration.
http://unused231-13.anu.edu.au/cdi_anu_edu_au/.GGO/2005-06/D/2006_03_Post_Conf_Elections_paper_BR.pdf

Sisk, T., 2008, 'Elections in Fragile States: Between Voice and Violence', Paper prepared for the International Studies Association Annual Meeting San Francisco, California, March 24-28
What factors generate election-related violence in fragile states? How can the international community address these? This study suggests that social structure, political competition, the competence of the electoral administration and the degree of professionalism in the security sector contribute to election-related violence. International influence at mid-rank levels among the perpetrators of violence is limited. Donors therefore need to take a pragmatic approach by working with parties to develop pre-election peace pledges and by tracking violent incidents.
http://citation.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/2/5/3/3/4/pages253347/p253347-1.php

An, M. et al., 2008, 'Idealism Without Illusions: Lessons from Post-Conflict Elections in Cambodia, Rwanda and Sudan', Woodrow Wilson School of International and Public Affairs, Princeton University, New Jersey
How should the international community engage in election processes in post-conflict countries such as Rwanda, Cambodia and Sudan? This study argues that the international community should move towards a broader concern with fair political environments. Policymakers should not overstate the importance of electoral assistance in the short-term, nor lose sight of its ability to contribute to the conditions for genuine democracy in the long-term. Greater political will for longer-term electoral support is required.
http://aceproject.org/ero-en/misc/to-be-filed/Idealism_Without_Illusions-Lessons_from_post_Conflict_Elections(2008).pdf

Haider, H., 2008, 'Election-related Conflict', Helpdesk Research Report, GSDRC, Birmingham
Election-related conflict or violence can occur at any stage of the electoral process – from pre-election registration, candidate nomination and campaigning to election day balloting to post-election results. Although election-related conflict is an under-researched area, there is a small body of literature that addresses its potential causes and methods of prevention and mitigation. This response considers electoral system choice, electoral administration, consultation, political parties and the disarmament of armed groups and the question of whether to include them in the political process, civic education, media and election monitoring.
http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/HD548.pdf

Dunning, T., 2011, 'Fighting and Voting: Violent Conflict and Electoral Politics', Journal of Conflict Resolution, vol. 55, no. 3, pp. 327-339
Warfare can reflect the underlying distribution of power revealed by pre-war elections, and the logic of violence can be shaped by pre-war electoral configurations. Moreover, the choice is not always between fighting and violence: sometimes, elections and violence act as complements, with elected politicians or their militias using violent actions to shape electoral outcomes. Understanding the interaction between electoral politics and violent conflict thus constitutes an important research agenda, one this special issue seeks to advance.
http://jcr.sagepub.com/content/55/3/327.abstract

Brancati, D. and Snyder, J. L. (2013). Time to kill: The impact of election timing on postconflict stability. *Journal of Conflict Resolution,* **57(5), pp. 822-853.**
What is the impact of election timing on post-conflict stability? While some argue that early elections facilitate peace agreements, hasten democratisation, and ensure post-conflict stability, others suggest that they undermine genuine democracy and cause a renewal in fighting. This quantitative study finds that holding elections soon after a civil war ends generally increases the likelihood of renewed fighting. However, favourable conditions, including decisive victories, demobilisation, peacekeeping, power sharing, and strong political, administrative and judicial institutions, can reduce this risk. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0022002712449328

Useful websites

International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance has collected data on voter turnout by gender in a variety of different countries. They also have a wealth of material on electoral processes.
http://www.idea.int/vt/survey/by_gender.cfm

The **International Foundation for Electoral Systems** (IFES) is a democracy and governance non-profit organisation that has provided technical assistance to over 100 countries.
http://www.ifes.org/

The **ACE Electoral Knowledge Network** provides information on electoral systems, promotes networking among election-related professionals and offers capacity development services.
http://aceproject.org/

Democracy Reporting International is a non-profit group that produces election framework assessments and inter-election democracy assessments.
http://www.democracy-reporting.org/

Effective legislatures

How can legislatures ensure the state is really accountable to citizens, and that service delivery is efficient? Why and how should they be strengthened? Within a political system, the 'legislature' is the elected or selected body that makes laws for a state. Legislatures (sometimes called parliament, senate or congress) perform three key roles: representation of the people, passing effective legislation, and oversight of government. To fulfil these roles effectively, they must have appropriate powers, committed members and adequate resources. But many parliaments in developing countries are weak and become vehicles for 'rubber stamping' legislation. This leads to unaccountable executive powers and can leave a state more susceptible to autocracy and corruption.

The resources below focus on how to create a functioning legislature which provides an effective bridge between the executive and the people.

Legislative functions

To act as an effective check on the executive and the judiciary, parliaments must be actively involved in all areas of state activity and ensure that the opinions of the electorate are represented.

Case, W., 2011, 'Executive Accountability in Southeast Asia: The Role of Legislatures in New Democracies and Under Electoral Authoritarianism', Policy Studies no. 57, East-West Center, Honolulu
Does a new democracy or electoral authoritarianism better allow legislatures to check the executive? This study examines accountability and legislative power in Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Cambodia and Singapore. While legislatures are weaker under electoral authoritarian regimes than in new democracies, they define the opposition better. Opposition members try to use their limited powers to check executive abuses. However, this tends to strengthen authoritarian rule by giving it greater legitimacy.
http://www.eastwestcenter.org/fileadmin/stored/pdfs/ps057.pdf

The following materials consider the role of parliaments in specific sectors or areas.

Born, H., Fluri, P. and Johnson, A., 2003, 'Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector: Principles, Mechanisms and Practices', Inter-Parliamentary Union and Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces
Why is parliamentary oversight of the security sector necessary? What is the role of parliament and how is it best performed? This handbook provides a comprehensive picture of current security issues and deals exhaustively with all aspects of parliamentary oversight of the security sector.
http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/Parliamentary-Oversight-of-the-Security-Sector

Mataure, M., 2003, 'Parliamentary Functions and Reforms and their Application in Promoting Health Equity in Southern Africa', Discussion Paper no. 16, The Network on Equity in Health in Southern Africa, Harare
Increasing public awareness of rights in Southern African countries has placed responsibility on parliaments to be more effective. How have they gone about reforming? This paper highlights the effectiveness of the Committee system in strengthening the parliamentary role in the health sector. In particular the committee system has provided a vehicle for involving stakeholders in parliamentary oversight, legislative and representational roles and in drawing technical and financial resources to support more work by parliament.
http://www.equinetafrica.org/bibl/docs/DISSPAPER16MATAURE.pdf

Budgetary oversight

A key role of legislatures is oversight of the budget process. Parliaments should ensure that budgets are fiscally sound, appropriate and are well implemented.

Wehner, J., 2007, 'Strengthening Legislative Financial Scrutiny in Developing Countries', Report prepared for the UK Department for International Development by the London School of Economics, London
How can the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) improve its work in strengthening legislative financial oversight? This study suggests that robust oversight at the country level is crucial for effective direct budget support. DFID's projects involving legislative financial scrutiny are vulnerable to political risks and achievements are fragile. Nonetheless, where the approach is comprehensive, long-term and builds on local, broad-based support, this work can deliver substantial and cost-effective governance improvements.
http://www.agora-parl.org/sites/default/files/DFID%20-%20Financial%20scrutiny%20report%20-%2016.05.2007%20-%20EN%20-%20PI.pdf

Santiso, C. and Belgrano, G., 2004, 'Politics of Budgeting in Peru: Legislative Budget Oversight and Public Financial Accountability in Presidential Systems', SAIS working paper 01/04, John Hopkins University, Baltimore
What can be done to improve accountability and curb corruption in emerging economies? What should be the role of parliaments in the budgetary process? This study reviews the dynamics of executive-legislative relations in budget policymaking and oversight in Peru. The experiences after implementing first-generation economic reforms illustrate the limits of expeditious decision-making and the consequent need to strengthen the mechanisms of accountability.
http://www.cepal.org/ilpes/noticias/paginas/6/13526/CarlosSantiso.pdf

Parliamentary strengthening

Because of the important roles played by effective legislatures, donors have been keen to support legislative/parliamentary strengthening programs in developing countries. But political context can determine the shape and effectiveness of these programmes, and reform can be difficult in countries where the executive does not want a strong legislature, where civil society is weak or where resources are constrained.

Rocha Menocal, A., and O' Neil, T. (2012) Mind the Gap: Lessons Learnt and Remaining Challenges in Parliamentary Development Assistance – A Sida Pre-Study, London: ODI
Parliaments have never been more important. Most countries are now a democracy of some sort and the demands placed on parliamentarians have never been greater. Yet parliaments remain one of the least trusted institutions in the eyes of the population. And, while support to parliaments has steadily grown since the late 1980s, parliamentary development assistance is widely seen as one of the least effective areas of democracy assistance – a reputation that has become ever more problematic in the current results-based climate.
http://www.odi.org/publications/6971-parliamentary-development-assistance-sida-donor-approaches

Arne, T. and Amundsen, I., 2010, 'Support to Legislatures: Synthesis Study', Evaluation Report no. 2, Norad, Oslo
http://www.norad.no/en/tools-and-publications/publications/evaluations/publication?key=160869

Hudson, A. and Wren, C., 2007, 'Parliamentary Strengthening in Developing Countries', Report prepared for the Department for International Development (DFID), Overseas Development Institute, London
How can parliaments perform more effectively? Whilst governance programmes focus primarily on the executive and civil society, the potential of parliaments to foster capable, accountable and responsive governance is increasingly recognised. This report aims to help DFID make informed decisions about contributing to parliamentary strengthening in developing countries. Parliamentary strengthening work should be more long-term and demand-driven. It should address the causes of poor performance, be context-aware, involve recipients and include systematic evaluation.
http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/128.pdf

Mcloughlin, C., 2008, 'Lessons Learned on Parliamentary Strengthening', Helpdesk Research Report, GSDRC, Birmingham
Several agencies have recently conducted stocktakes, retrospectives or reviews of their parliamentary strengthening programmes at agency-level. By far the most common lesson/recommendation relates to the necessity of understanding and adapting to the political context within which parliament is situated and undertaking good political analysis in the planning phase.
http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/HD583.pdf

O'Brien, M., Stapenhurst, R. and Prater, B. (2012). World Bank Institute's approach to parliamentary capacity strengthening. Parliamentary Affairs, 65(3), pp. 593-607.
What is the World Bank Institute's approach to parliamentary strengthening? This article outlines WBI's model for strengthening parliamentary capacity globally and regionally by looking at: capacity development and adult learning; challenges in implementing parliamentary capacity support projects; WBI's parliamentary strengthening model; and a case-study on WBI's parliamentary staff training. It concludes that a multi-faceted, medium-to-long term process is the best approach to parliamentary capacity building.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/pa/gss022

Toolkits

Europe Aid, 2010, 'Engaging and Supporting Parliaments Worldwide: Strategies and Methodologies for EC Action in Support to Parliaments', Reference document no. 8, Tools and Methods Series, European Commission, Brussels
http://www.agora-parl.org/sites/default/files/EC%20action%20in%20support%20to%20parliaments.original.pdf

IPU, 2008. Evaluating Parliament: A self-assessment toolkit for parliamentarians, Inter-parliamentary Union
IPU introduced this 'self-assessment toolkit for parliamentarians' to help parliaments conduct their own legislative needs assessment. IPU states clearly that its purpose is not to rank parliaments; rather, it is to help them identify their strengths and weaknesses against international criteria so they can determine priorities for strengthening the parliamentary institution. It asserts that, because the conclusions are nationally developed and owned, self-assessment has the potential to be an immensely powerful tool for change. http://www.agora-parl.org/node/75

McDevitt, A., 2008, 'Monitoring and Evaluation of Parliamentary Strengthening and Electoral Support Programmes', Helpdesk Research Report, GSDRC, Birmingham
Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) appears to be one of the most neglected components of both parliamentary strengthening and electoral support programmes. The politcal nature of such programmes presents particular challenges in formulating indicators and attributing impacts. In the case of legislative strengthening, much of the literature emphasises the importance of a baseline assessment and participation of national stakeholders to ensure programme sustainability.
http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/HD556.pdf

For a mapping of organisations working on parliamentary strengthening see:

Lucas, B., 2008, 'Donor Activity on Parliamentary Strengthening and Electoral Support', Helpdesk Research Report, GSDRC, Birmingham
According to a recent study from ODI, the World Bank Institute, the Parliamentary Centre (Canada), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) are the major actors in the field of parliamentary strengthening. Parliamentary strengthening programmes typically emphasise training for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff through courses, seminars, workshops, or conferences. Empowering parliaments to exercise legislative oversight of government is a major objective.
http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/HD562.pdf

Parliaments and PRSPs

The involvement of developing country parliaments in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) process has generally been weak. The following resources explore how to improve their contribution to the development of effective PRSPs and to poverty reduction.

Draman, R., 2007, '"Legislating Poverty" in Africa: What role have Parliamentarians been playing in PRSP Implementation and Policy?', Parliamentary Center and World Bank Institute
To ensure effective implementation of PRSPs, greater recognition has been given in recent years to parliamentarians' role in oversight and monitoring. This paper assesses how effective parliamentary involvement in the PRSP process has been, and what impacts interventions have had on PRS implementation and policy, with a focus on the budget process. The document focuses on seven countries - Ghana, Niger, Tanzania, Malawi, Kenya, Senegal and Zambia. Across parliaments there is still a general lack of knowledge relating to PRSPS, and participation in the process has been problematic.
http://www.agora-parl.org/sites/default/files/legisl2_0.pdf

Women in Parliament

Barriers to women's participation in parliament include male dominated structures, lack of quotas and lack of training. Several countries have set quota targets which has allowed for advances in women's representation.

Karam, A., 1998, 'Beyond Token Representation', in Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers, ed. A. Karam, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Stockholm, pp. 191 – 198
This chapter gives an overview of the socio-economic and socio-cultural obstacles to women's participation in politics and offers recommendations on how to overcome them, drawing on case studies from Russia, Egypt, Scandinavia, India, Costa Rica and South Africa.
http://www.idea.int/publications/wip2/

Haider, H., 2008, 'Quotas for Women's Representation in Africa', Helpdesk Research Report, GSDRC, Birmingham
The success of quota systems in many African countries is largely attributed to: strong and active women's movements; regional bodies such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) that have adopted gender balanced representation and set quota targets for member countries; and opportunities in post-conflict and transition societies, which allowed for advances in women's representation. It is important to note that women's movements have also been important in pushing for more balanced representation in regional bodies as well as in peace negotiations and new constitutions.
http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/HD515.pdf

Khan, S., 2008, 'Gender Equality in Parliamentary Strengthening and Electoral Support:', Helpdesk Research Report, GSDRC, Birmingham
Whilst many countries around the world have started to adopt measures to help women enter politics and national legislatures, there has been insufficient attention paid to how they can make a difference once they enter parliament. Quotas, for example, can contribute to an increase in the number of women in parliament, but it is the interaction of quota systems with other factors in a particular country, such as the type of electoral system, the legal environment, and the nature of women's movements, that is key.
http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/HD563.pdf

Markham, S. (2012). Strengthening women's roles in parliaments. *Parliamentary Affairs,* 65(3), pp. 688-698.
This article provides an overview of strategies used by the National Democratic Institute for improving democratic governance by increasing women's representation and men's awareness of the value of women's participation in parliaments. Best practices include providing support to women legislators, strengthening the institution, promoting cross-party caucuses and working with gender affairs committees.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/pa/gss024

Parliaments in post-conflict and fragile environments

The resources below discuss how to enhance parliaments' roles in peacebuilding and democratic governance and consider effective ways to support parliaments in post-conflict and fragile states.

Dutta, N., et.al., 2007, 'Strengthening Legislatures for Conflict Management in Fragile States', Woodrow Wilson School of International and Public Affairs, Princeton University, Princeton
What role does the legislature play in conflict management in fragile states? How can its role be strengthened? This study assesses the situation in Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Uganda. It argues that the legislature can use its representative and deliberative capacities to become an effective institution for conflict management. Legislative strengthening should focus on three areas: building compromises within the legislature; overcoming executive-legislature imbalance; and strengthening linkages between constituents and the legislature through effective communication and representation.
http://www.agora-parl.org/sites/default/files/Strengthening%20Legislatures%20for%20Conflict%20Management.pdf

UNDP, 2007, 'Parliaments, Crisis Prevention and Recovery, Guidelines for the International Community', UNDP, New York
What is the role of parliaments in peacebuilding and crisis management? How can the international community best support them? These guidelines suggest that assistance by external actors underestimates the productive role that parliamentary institutions can play. The formulation of peacebuilding strategies and power-sharing arrangements should consider impacts on democratic governance development. Electoral assistance must be backed by investments in long-term parliamentary strengthening in order to achieve human development and to avoid public disillusionment with the democratic process. http://www.agora-parl.org/sites/default/files/guidelines_on_the_role_of_parliaments_in_conflict_and_post-conflict_situations_0.pdf

Useful websites

AGORA is a one-stop reference center and hub for knowledge sharing on parliamentary development.
http://www.agora-parl.org/

The **World Bank Institute** has a Parliamentary Strengthening Programme.
http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/governance/parliament/

UNDP has developed a wide range of resources on parliamentary development.
http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/parliamentary_development.html

The **National Democratic Institute** (NDI) has a broad range of programmes to strengthen emerging democratic legislatures around the world. Information and resources are available from their website.
http://www.ndi.org/

The **Parliamentary Centre** is a Canadian non-profit organisation that aims to improve the effectiveness of representative assemblies around the world.
http://www.parlcent.ca

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
http://www.cpahq.org/

European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA)
http://www.awepa.org/

SADC Parliamentary Forum is chartered to bring about convergence of economic, political, and social values in the SADC and help create the appropriate environment for deeper regional cooperation through popular participation.
http://www.sadcpf.org/

The **Inter-Parliamentary Union** aims to be a focal point for world-wide parliamentary dialogue and works for peace and co-operation among peoples and for the firm establishment of representative democracy.
http://www.ipu.org/english/home.htm

Political parties

Political parties are the main vehicles for organising political representation, political competition, and democratic accountability. They link the state and civil society, can influence the executive, formulate public policy, engage in political recruitment, structure electoral choices and facilitate coalitions. But political parties in developing countries are often weak, which decreases democratic competition and representation.

Why do countries struggle to fully operationalise multi-party political systems? How can donors assist the institutionalisation of political parties? These and other questions are addressed in this section.

Institutionalising party systems

How do stable, institutionalised party systems evolve and what factors contribute to their survival? What political, social and economic factors prevent the establishment of strong party systems?

Lindberg, S. I., 2007, 'Institutionalization of Party Systems? Stability and Fluidity among Legislative Parties in Africa's Democracies', Government and Opposition, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 215-241
What can the interaction between political parties tell us about achieving stability in African countries? How do stable, institutionalised party systems evolve? This article uses a range of indicators to examine party stability in Africa. Contrary to the existing literature, it finds that institutionalisation of party systems does not occur over an extended period and is largely unrelated to the electoral system.
http://users.clas.ufl.edu/sil/downloads/Lindberg_GovOpp2007.pdf

Hicken, A. and Kuhonta, E. M., 2011, Shadows From the Past: Party System Institutionalization in Asia, Comparative Political Studies, vol. 44, no. 5, pp. 572-597
This article explains variation in levels of party system institutionalisation in Asia by testing available data against several major hypotheses in the literature. The authors make three contributions to the literature on party system institutionalisation: 1) Historical legacies are a crucial variable affecting current levels of party system institutionalisation. 2) For a significant number of institutionalised party systems, historical legacies are rooted in some element of authoritarianism, either as former authoritarian parties or as semi-democratic regimes. 3) Precisely because authoritarianism has played an important role in the origins of institutionalised party systems, the authors argue that the concept of institutionalisation needs to be strictly separated from the concept of democracy.
http://cps.sagepub.com/content/44/5/572.abstract

Resnick, D. (2013). Do electoral coalitions facilitate democratic consolidation in Africa? *Party Politics,* 19(5), pp. 735-757
Do pre-electoral coalitions in Africa facilitate democratic consolidation by contributing to incumbent turnovers as well as creating competitive, institutionalised party systems? This quantitative study finds that coalitions rarely result in incumbent defeat. It also finds that a significant share of a country's total electoral volatility is often due to fluctuations in voting for opposition parties that enter and exit coalitions. This shows that coalition members are unable to build loyal constituencies and become institutionalised over time. This paper argues that this is because many of these coalitions are primarily office-seeking and consist of parties that are distinguished mainly by the personality of their leaders rather than by a distinct political programme that is relevant to citizens' concerns.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1354068811410369

Wright, J. and Escriba-Folch, A. (2012). Authoritarian institutions and regime survival: Transitions to democracy and subsequent autocracy. *British Journal of Political Science,* 42(2), pp. 283-309.
How do authoritarian parties and legislatures ensure   regime survival? This quantitative study finds that while authoritarian legislatures increase the stability of dictators, authoritarian political parties can destabilise dictators. This is because authoritarian parties influence the distribution of power in a new democracy by helping to protect the interests of authoritarian elites. They therefore increase the likelihood of democratisation.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0007123411000317

Political parties and the quality of democracy

Political parties and party systems are seen by many as central to the effective functioning and eventual consolidation of democracy, but this is contingent on the nature of political parties as institutions and the support they command. Some argue that parties do not add to the overall popular legitimacy of the political system, but are in fact one of its 'weakest links'.

Randall, V., 2007, 'Political Parties and Democratic Developmental States', Development Policy Review, Vol 25, No. 5, pp. 633-652

What contribution do, or could, political parties make to the emergence of a democratic developmental state? This article finds that their contribution is very limited, in terms of either democracy-building or policy-making, recruitment, ensuring accountability or policy implementation. Reasons include weak institutionalisation and the prevalence of clientelism. External assistance is likely to be limited in impact and should ideally be indirect, as autonomous party development is important.
http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-7679.2007.00389.x/pdf

Carothers, 2006, 'The Standard Lament', Chapter 1 in Confronting the Weakest Link: Aiding Political Parties in New Democracies, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, New York
What are the problems faced by political parties in transitional democracies? How can international aid to political parties be improved? This book draws on extensive research to analyse political party aid. A low regard for political parties is common in developing and post-communist states but little is known about the impact of this and the effectiveness of party aid. Party aid should work at a deeper level by focusing attention on power and politics.
http://carnegieendowment.org/files/weakestlink_ch12.pdf

Political parties based on ethnic or religious lines can be divisive, particularly in divided societies or societies emerging from conflict.

Dowd, R. and Driessen, M., 2008, 'Ethnically Dominated Party Systems and the Quality of Democracy: Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa', Afrobarometer Working Paper no. 92, South Africa
Do ethnically dominated party systems affect the quality of democracy? This paper measures levels of ethnic voting and tests its relationship to the quality of democracy. The evidence suggests that the extent to which party systems in sub-Saharan Africa are ethnically dominated negatively affects certain measures of the quality of democracy. Quality of democracy can be enhanced by implementing integrative electoral systems, and by promoting economic and social conditions that discourage ethnically based parties.
http://www.afrobarometer.org/files/documents/working_papers/AfropaperNo92.pdf

Reilly, B., 2006, 'Political Engineering and Party Politics in Conflict-Prone Societies', Democratization, Vol.13, No.5, pp. 811–827
It is widely accepted that broad-based, multi-ethnic parties are good for democracy in ethnically diverse societies. There has been surprisingly little attention to how such parties can be sustained and fragmentation avoided. This paper draws on examples from new democracies in the developing world to identify four strategies of party engineering used to promote multi-ethnic political parties.
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13510340601010719#.VKq1IiusWUY

LeBas, A., 2011, 'From Protest to Parties: Party-Building and Democratization in Africa' Oxford University Press, Oxford
Why do strong opposition party organisations emerge in some democratising countries, while parties in others remain weak or fragmented? Does polarisation undermine democratisation, or might it play an important role in party-building? This book examines differences in opposition party strength in hybrid regimes in Africa. In order to understand why some parties are able to transcend ethnic cleavages, the author points to differences in past patterns of authoritarian rule. The book also suggests that conflict can help build the institutions necessary for democracy just as surely as it can endanger them.
http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=n1YRhRFNtb0C&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false

Hamid, S., 2011, 'Arab Islamist Parties: Losing on Purpose?', Journal of Democracy, vol.22, no.1, pp. 68-80
Examination of the electoral behaviour of Islamist parties suggests that they deliberately lose elections, contesting on average only about one-third of total available parliamentary seats. This article considers the factors that lead Islamist parties to privilege self-preservation over political contestation. Islamists' deference to regimes suggests they may be obstacles to democratic reform.
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/summary/v022/22.1.hamid.html

Political party assistance

Critics have argued it's difficult to distinguish between political party assistance and political manipulation in some contexts. A central dilemma for donors is providing party assistance in a non-partisan way.

Amundsen, I., 2007, 'Donor Support to Political Parties: Status and Principles', Christian Michelsen Institute, Bergen
How should donor support be provided to political parties in developing countries? This paper outlines the current status, modalities and practices of donor support to political parties and recommends core principles by which such assistance should be provided. Current donor assistance hampers political party capacity building by failing to integrate and harmonise party support with democracy support.
http://www.cmi.no/publications/file/2705-donor-support-to-political-parties.pdf

International IDEA, 2007, 'Effective Party Assistance: Stronger Parties for Better Democracy', International IDEA, Stockholm
http://www.idea.int/publications/effective_party_assistance/index.cfm

Carothers, T., 2004, 'Political Party Aid', Report to the Swedish International Development Agency, Stockholm
The weak state of parties in many developing and post-communist countries is a serious problem for democratisation. This report analyses the role of political party aid in deepening democracy. One lesson is not to assume that the problems or attempted solutions in any one society are transferable to another. Party aid has to look beyond training and devote more attention to the systemic causes of the challenges to representative democracy.
http://www.idea.int/parties/upload/Political_Party_Aid_by_Carothers_Oct04.pdf

Toolkits

The Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, 2004, 'A Framework for Democratic Party Building', NIMD, The Hague
How can political parties improve their performance? How can improvements be monitored? This handbook is the summary of an international workshop on criteria for improving the performance of political parties. It suggests that political parties are part of the problem of dissatisfaction with democracy but also part of the solution in terms of making the political system more responsive to the needs of the people.
http://aceproject.org/ero-en/misc/a-framework-for-democratic-party-building-handbook/view

Political parties in post-conflict and fragile environments

How should the international community support the development of political parties in post-conflict or fragile environments? A key consideration is the relationship between party development and the potential for conflict mitigation or prevention.

Kumar, K., and de Zeeuw, J., 2008, 'International support for political party development in war-torn societies', Chapter 12 in 'Political Parties in Conflict-Prone Societies: Regulation, Engineering and Democratic Development', B Reilly and P Nordlund (Eds), United Nations University Press, Tokyo
How can the international community improve its support for political party development in countries recovering from civil war? This chapter examines the challenges of political party assistance in post-conflict environments and the support strategies used by the international community. International actors can strengthen assistance by focusing on party laws from a conflict prevention perspective, working early on rebel-to-party transformation and addressing unequal power distribution in party systems.
http://www.idea.int/publications/ppcps/upload/Political-Parties-in-Conflict-Prone-Situations.pdf

Women in political parties

Women are often under-represented in political parties. Socio-economic and political factors affect the extent to which parties seek to recruit women as members, or represent their interests.

NDI, 2008, 'Assessing Women's Political Party Programs: Best Practices and Recommendations', National Democratic Institute, Washington
How can policymakers increase women's political participation in developing countries? This paper analyses the progress of NDI's women's political participation programmes in Morocco, Indonesia, Serbia, and Nepal. While there is a definite increase in women's participation, there has not been a corresponding increase in the number of female political leaders. Future programming must focus on preparing women to take on these leadership roles.
https://www.ndi.org/files/Assessing-Womens-Political-Party-Programs-ENG.pdf

Holmsten, S. S., Moser, R. G., and Slosar, M. C., 2010, 'Do Ethnic Parties Exclude Women?', Comparative Political Studies, vol. 43, no. 10, pp.1179-1201
Do political parties that represent ethnic minorities tend to exclude women? This article examines patterns of female representation across 260 parties from 21 countries. It finds that ethnic parties – particularly those appealing to a religious minority – do tend to elect fewer women, but only under proportional representation (PR) systems that do not involve gender quotas. In single-member district elections ethnic parties actually elect more women than non-ethnic parties. Thus, a key conclusion is that PR elections facilitate the under-representation of women in ethnic parties. This could be because they centralise nomination decisions in the party elite: in ethnic and religious parties, the elite might be particularly patriarchal.
http://cps.sagepub.com/content/43/10/1179.abstract

Basu, A., 2005, 'Women, Political Parties and Social Movements in South Asia', Occasional Paper no. 5, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), Geneva
In South Asia, women have been heads of state, and vital grassroots members of social movements, yet are under-represented in political parties. What determines the success of political parties in recruiting and promoting women? At what stage do parties supported by women feel compelled to represent their interests? What impact have female heads of state had on women's participation in party politics? Focusing on Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and India, this paper examines the relationships between women and political parties, and between political parties and social movements that organise women.
http://www.sacw.net/Wmov/BasuOP5.pdf

Useful websites

The **Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy** is a non-partisan institute which aims to support political parties in young democracies.
http://www.nimd.org/

The **International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance** has several resources on its website relating to political parties.
http://www.idea.int/

The **National Democratic Institute** has a global programme on political party development.
https://www.ndi.org/political-parties

Political finance

The funding of political activities is a key issue for ensuring good governance and combating corruption. It is also a complex moral and legal issue. The resources below consider how politicians and their parties can best be funded and what the most effective financial safeguards are for ensuring 'free and fair' elections in a given country.

Party finance: disclosure and controls

Many controls have been suggested to curb corruption in political finance. These include public financing of political parties and the introduction of limits on contributions, spending and campaign time. Full public disclosure of party accounts is increasingly demanded, but there is little legislation to enforce such transparency. Inevitably, the success of all these controls depends on the establishment of effective monitoring bodies.

International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2003, 'Handbook on the Funding of Parties and Election Campaigns', International IDEA, Stockholm
Achieving sustainable democracy requires attention to the financing of politics. How can funding best be managed to ensure that different parts of society have an equal opportunity to participate in political processes and decisions? This handbook examines examples of political financing from around the world and proposes some 'best practice' guidelines.
http://www.idea.int/publications/funding_parties/index.cfm

Kupferschmidt, D., 2009, 'Illicit Political Finance and State Capture', Discussion Paper, International IDEA, Stockholm
What are the effects of illegal and improper financing on politics? This paper suggests that illicit political finance is a key contributor to democratic governments' underperformance and loss of credibility. International actors should help transitional democracies to: (a) understand why the problem is arising; (b) raise awareness of it; (c) develop knowledge and tools to defend key institutions; and (d) where appropriate, create new laws, policies and institutions.
http://www.idea.int/resources/analysis/upload/IDEA_Inlaga_low.pdf

Office of Democracy and Governance, 2003, 'Money in Politics Handbook: A Guide to Increasing Transparency in Emerging Democracies', Technical Publication Series, US Agency for International Development, Washington DC
How does money impact on politics? How can transparency in emerging democracies be extended? This handbook aims to increase awareness of the issues and benefits of open finances. It suggests practical technical options that encourage disclosure as a methodology for strengthening democratic political processes.
http://aceproject.org/ero-en/topics/election-integrity/pnacr223.pdf

Fischer, J., Walecki, M. and Carlson, J., eds., 2006, 'Contemplating Political Finance Reform in Post-Conflict Environments', Conclusion in Political Finance in Post-Conflict Societies, IFES, Washington, DC
What are the fundamental steps necessary for creating a viable political finance system in post-conflict societies? This chapter presents lessons for post-conflict political finance reform. To become legitimate and effective, a post-conflict political finance system must be integrated and weighty. International donors should therefore include political finance within the legal framework of a post-conflict political process as a key administrative and funding priority.
http://www.ifes.org/Content/Publications/Books/2006/Political-Finance-in-Post-Conflict-Societies.aspx

Haider, H., 2008, 'Political Party Financing', Helpdesk Research Report, GSDRC, Brmingham
The methods of party financing used in Africa are primarily individual donations, private sector donations, public funding, and foreign donations. There are advantages and disadvantages to each. In general, it is considered that a combination of both private and public funding is beneficial. It is recommended that private funding be regulated, with requirements for disclosure and potentially a cap on the amount. For public funding, some form of equitable allocation is desirable.
http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/HD532.pdf

Campaign finance

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), with DFID funding, established the African Political Party Finance Initiative (APPFI). During 2003 and 2004, the APPFI researched political finance practices in 22 emerging democracies around the world. Their findings were published in the book below:

Bryan, S. and Baer, D. (eds.), 2005, 'Money in Politics: a Study of Party Financing Practices in 22 Countries', National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, Washington DC
Corruption relating to political party financing represents a serious threat to democracy and economic development. This study analyses the current practice of political party financing in 22 countries worldwide. Legal reform aimed at tackling

corruption – if supported by donors - will only be effective if accompanied by adequate enforcement mechanisms and parallel efforts to promote accountability and internal democracy within political parties.
http://aceproject.org/ero-en/topics/election-integrity/pnacr223.pdf

Vote buying

Most literature assumes that the major risk in political finance is that individuals can exert inappropriate control over politicians' decisions by supporting them financially. However, the reverse can also be true as vote buying in various forms is a widespread phenomenon in many developing countries.

Schaffer, F., 2002, 'What is Vote Buying?', paper presented at conference on Trading Political Rights: The Comparative Politics of Vote-Buying, Centre for International Studies, Massachusetts Institute for Technology, Cambridge
Vote buying is a widespread phenomenon. It is usually viewed as a purely economic exchange in which the voter sells his or her vote to the highest bidder. Yet, does this view correspond to reality? What does 'vote buying' mean? What different forms does it take in different locales around the world? This paper, presented at an MIT conference, examines vote buying from the perspective of both candidates and voters.
http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/PO14.pdf

Jensen, P. S. and Justesen, M. K. (2014). Poverty and vote buying: Survey-based evidence from Africa. *Electoral Studies, 33, pp. 220-232.*
What are the causes of vote buying in young democracies? This quantitative study looks at the impact of poverty on vote buying at the individual- and country-level. Results from multilevel regressions show that poor voters are more likely to be targets of vote buying than wealthier voters. This effect increases when elections are highly competitive. Thus, micro-level poverty appears to be an important source of vote buying in Africa and has major implications for the way electoral democracy operates.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2013.07.020

Hanusch, M. and Keefer, P. (2013). *Promises, promises: Vote-buying and the electoral mobilization strategies of non-credible politicians* **(Policy Research Working Paper 6653). Washington D.C.: World Bank**
What explains variations across countries in the greater use of pre-electoral transfers to mobilize voters relative to the use of pre-electoral promises of post-electoral transfers? This paper models the trade-offs that politicians incur when they decide between mobilizing support with vote-buying or with promises of post-electoral benefits. It argues that politicians rely more on vote-buying when they are less credible, that they use vote-buying to gain support from those who do not believe their political promises, and that they only buy votes from those who would have received post-electoral transfers in a situation of full political credibility. Banning vote-buying reduces the welfare of those targeted with vote-buying, but improves the welfare of all other groups in society.
http://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/pdf/10.1596/1813-9450-6653

Guidance for donor governments

Financing parties in developing countries has many risks for international development donors, for example, appearing partisan or losing money to corruption. However, in many countries, effective multi-party democracy depends on all parties accessing enough money to be able to operate. The resources below give guidance to donor governments.

Department for International Development, 2001, 'Political Party Financing: Problem, Solutions and Action', DFID, London
Political party financing can distort the electoral process and is a major motive for corruption in both developed and developing countries. What are the links between corruption and political finance? This paper by DFID tackles this question, discussing solution options and action strategies. The pressures for corrupt financing in developing countries are related to the lack of legitimate sources of finance and to various anti-democratic party activities, such as vote buying. Corruption can occur in both multi-party and single party election systems. Under both systems the electorate can develop the expectation that their vote will be bought.
http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/PO3.pdf

Mathisen, H. and Svåsand, L., 2002, 'Funding Political Parties in Emerging African Democracies: What Role for Norway?', Chr. Michelsen Institute Report R 2002:6, Bergen
This paper identifies some problems in the development of political parties in Africa and indicates how funding may contribute to resolving these problems. The paper presents some models of foreign political funding and discusses the pros and cons of such funding: the German, the American, the British, the Dutch, and the Swedish models are assessed. It also reviews the status of the Norwegian parties' involvement in party supporting activities in new democracies, and addresses

some problems which should be avoided if Norwegian funding for parties is introduced. Political funding is understood as the way that political parties and individuals running for political office raise funds for election campaigns and for maintaining themselves as organisations.
http://www.cmi.no/publications/2002/rep/r2002-6.pdf

Useful websites

Each year, Transparency International publishes their Global Corruption Report. In 2004, the report focused on **political corruption**. The full report, including multiple country data is available online.
http://www.transparency.org/research/gcr/gcr_political_corruption/0/

International IDEA's **Political Finance Database** provides information on 179 countries' political finance regulations. It answers 43 questions on funding for political parties and candidates regarding: 1) donation sources and limits; 2) public funding; 3) spending; and 4) reporting, oversight and sanctions.
http://www.idea.int/political-finance/

The International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) has a programme on **Political Finance**.
http://www.ifes.org/Content/Topics/Electoral-Integrity-and-Transparency/Political-Finance.aspx