



Applied Knowledge Services
Governance · Social Development · Humanitarian · Conflict

Political Systems

Topic Guide

Political Systems: Topic Guide

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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.

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Effective legislatures	23
Legislative functions	23
Parliamentary strengthening	24
Parliaments and PRSPs.....	25
Women in Parliament	25
Parliaments in post-conflict and fragile environments	26
Useful websites.....	26
Political parties	27
Institutionalising party systems	27
Political parties and the quality of democracy.....	27
Political party assistance.....	28
Political parties in post-conflict and fragile environments	29
Women in political parties.....	29
Useful websites.....	30
Political finance	31
Party finance: disclosure and controls.....	31
Campaign finance	31
Vote buying.....	32
Guidance for donor governments.....	32
Useful websites.....	33

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](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>

Policy processes

Polymaking 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](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 electoral 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 to 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 through 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](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.equinet africa.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-%202016.05.2007%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 political 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.gsdr.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.gsdr.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.gsdr.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.gsdr.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#.VKq1liusWUY>

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=n1YRhRFNt0C&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, Birmingham

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 (APFFI). During 2003 and 2004, the APFFI 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.gsdr.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.gsdr.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>