

TOPIC GUIDE ON

Political Systems

Zoë Scott and Claire Mcloughlin

Topic Guide on Political Systems

Zoë Scott and Claire Mcloughlin

About this 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. 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 (Politics and the State Team, DFID).

About the GSDRC

The Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC) provides cutting-edge knowledge services on demand and online. It aims to help reduce poverty by informing policy and practice in relation to governance, conflict and social development. The GSDRC receives core funding from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and from the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID).
www.gsdr.org

Suggested citation: Scott, Z. and Mcloughlin, C., 2012, *Topic Guide on Political Systems, Governance and Social Development Resource Centre*, University of Birmingham, UK

Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC)
International Development Department, College of Social Sciences
University of Birmingham, UK

This updated edition published January 2012
© University of Birmingham

Contents

Democracy.....	5
Processes of democratisation.....	5
Democratic consolidation and democracy promotion.....	6
Further resources.....	7
Hybrid regimes.....	8
Further resources.....	8
Democracy and development.....	8
Democracy and conflict	9
Useful websites.....	9
 Informal and customary political systems	11
Customary institutions and democratic governance	11
Traditional and religious leadership.....	11
Elites and institutions.....	12
Patronage politics	13
Implications for donors.....	14
Further resources.....	14
Useful websites.....	14
 Participation	15
Political participation	15
Toolkit	16
Further resources.....	16
Voting.....	16
Barriers to participation.....	17
Gender and participation.....	17
Civic education.....	18
Useful websites.....	19
 Policy processes.....	20
The policy process.....	20
Pro-poor policy	20
Participation in policymaking.....	20
Toolkit	21
Useful websites.....	21
 Elections	22
Electoral systems	22
Electoral operations.....	23
Toolkits.....	24
Electoral assistance.....	24

Guidance and toolkits	25
Electoral costs.....	25
Elections in post-conflict or fragile environments	25
Useful websites.....	26
Effective legislatures	28
Legislative functions	28
Budgetary oversight.....	28
Parliamentary strengthening	29
Toolkits.....	30
Parliaments and PRSPs.....	30
Women in Parliament.....	31
Parliaments in post-conflict and fragile environments.....	31
Useful websites.....	32
Political parties	33
Institutionalising party systems	33
Political parties and the quality of democracy.....	33
Political party assistance.....	34
Toolkits.....	35
Political parties in post-conflict and fragile environments	35
Women in political parties.....	35
Useful websites.....	36
Political finance	37
Party finance: disclosure and controls.....	37
Campaign finance	38
Vote buying.....	38
Guidance for donor governments.....	38
Useful websites.....	39

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2659>

Smith, B., 2003, ‘Democratization in the Third World’ in *Understanding Third World Politics: Theories of Political Change and Development (Second Edition)*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke

What are the prerequisites of a stable democracy? This chapter shows that the process of democratisation is not smooth and cannot be separated from the development of the economy.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=971>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1426>

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, Youngs find that this critique is too sweeping. He argues 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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3156>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2860>

Grugel, J., 2002, 'Democratization and the State', chapter 4 in *Democratization: a Critical Introduction*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke

This chapter examines the type of institutional reform that democratization should involve. Reforms so far have stopped at the introduction of minimal democracy, and therefore failed to produce fully democratic states. The reasons for this failure include weak state capacity, authoritarian legacies and the imperative of economic reform.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1574>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/30>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4212>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4038>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2011>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4219>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3854>

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

One chapter of the book can be ordered via document delivery from the British Library for Development Studies: <http://blds.ids.ac.uk/document-delivery>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4179>

Further resources

The [Political participation](#) section of this guide – for further consideration of the relationship between democracy and participation.

'Deepening democracy' in the GSDRC's 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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3144>

Carothers, T., 2002, 'The End of the Transition Paradigm', Journal of Democracy, vol. 13, no. 1

Are 'transitional countries' necessarily moving towards democracy? This paper questions the transitional paradigm. The 'transitional democracy' model emerged in the US democracy-promotion community during the 1980s. In most cases, its core assumptions have not been confirmed by actual patterns of political change. The transitional paradigm is outdated and no longer useful in the analysis of democratisation.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1566>

Olcott, M. and Ottaway, M., 1999, 'Challenge of Semi-Authoritarianism', Carnegie paper no. 7, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington DC

Since the end of the Cold War, there has been a rise in the number of semi-authoritarian regimes: regimes that contain elements of both democratic and authoritarian systems. This paper argues that although these regimes allow for a certain degree of political freedom and openness, they cannot be regarded as democratic. This is because they lack the essential characteristic of a democratic system, namely, the ability to transfer power to a new leadership.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1499>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3785>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3085>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3152>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3104>

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 the 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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2975>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/299>

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 **Institute for Democracy in South Africa** (Idasa) is an independent public interest organisation committed to promoting sustainable democracy based on active citizenship, democratic institutions, and social justice.

<http://www.idasa.org.za>

The **National Democratic Institute for International Affairs** (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 **Center for Democratic Institutions** at the Australian National University responds to the needs of developing countries in the field of good governance and democratic institutions.

<http://www.cdi.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 [drivers of change](#) presents methodologies for analysing the interactions between formal and informal political systems.

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 articles discuss the relationship between informal political systems and formal democracy.

Brinkerhoff, D. and Goldsmith, A., 2002, 'Clientelism, Patrimonialism and Democratic Governance: An Overview and Framework for Assessment and Planning', Report to United States Agency of International Development, Washington
Do informal systems of power, such as patrimonialism and clientelism, necessarily hinder democratisation? Are they bad for poor people? This paper explores the negative aspects and hidden positive effects of clientelism and patrimonialism. It then looks at evidence on liberalisation, democratisation, decentralisation and civil service reform as ways to good governance.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1719>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1419>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3153>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1428>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4197>

Haynes, J., 2004, 'Religion and Democratization in Africa', Democratization, vol. 11, no. 4, pp. 66-89

How have religious leaders contributed to democratisation in Africa? What is the political importance of popular religions on the African continent? This article argues that the overall pace of democratisation has been disappointing and that senior religious figures have failed to encourage a move from mere cosmetic changes to more substantial democratic reforms in Africa.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1460>

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.gsdr.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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4214>

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.

Orrnert, A., and Hewitt, T., 2007, 'Elites and Institutions: A Literature Review', Report prepared for the UK Department for International Development (DFID), Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC), Birmingham

Exploring elites and their relationship to institutions can enhance the understanding of politics in Africa. This literature review summarises current knowledge of how elites work with and through political institutions. It focuses on the large volume of literature published in the last five to ten years on Anglophone Africa, highlighting a number of research gaps.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2585>

Jeffrey, C., 2000, 'Democratisation without Representation? The Power and Political Strategies of a Rural Elite in North India', Political Geography, Vol. 19, Issue 8, November, pp. 1013-1036

In the 1960s, the Indian government refocused its development policies towards improving agricultural production. This paper examines how one of the groups that benefited from this policy, rich farmers from the intermediate *Jat* caste, have since sought to place relatives in the police force and nurture political networks in rural Uttar Pradesh. They have been

quite successful in perpetuating their economic and social advantage through these activities. A 'thick description' of local state/society relations provides a basis for re-evaluating popular accounts of the relationship between rural people and the local state in India.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3151>

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.

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>

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.
One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1258>

van de Walle, N., 2003, "'Meet the New Boss, Same as the Old Boss?" The Evolution of Political Clientelism in Africa' in *Patrons, clients and policies: patterns of democratic accountability and political competition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge
Pervasive clientelism has been a feature of Africa's non-democratic states for decades. As they move to multi-party politics, will greater accountability lessen clientelism? Will clientelism evolve into new forms? This paper examines the persistence and evolution of clientelism in Africa since independence. It argues that the patterns emerging in the wake of the Third Wave of democratisation are often similar to those which emerged in post-independence Africa.
One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1975>

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.
One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2704>

Muasher, M., 2011, 'A Decade of Struggling Reform Efforts in Jordan: The Resilience of the Rentier System' *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, Washington, DC
Successive Jordanian governments have failed to dismantle the laws and institutions that thwart the development of an effective system of checks and balances. This paper charts efforts at political reform in Jordan, and finds that an entrenched elite has successfully fought off reform attempts in order to preserve a rentier system based on rewards for loyalty rather than merit.
One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4150>

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.
One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4180>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3157>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3150>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4151>

Further resources

The Africa Power and Politics Research Programme is looking at identifying ways of exercising power, doing politics and building states that might work better for development and poverty reduction in sub-Saharan Africa than the arrangements now in place.

<http://www.institutions-africa.org/>

Useful websites

Eldis Key Issues Guide to Informal Institutions

<http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/governance/key-issues/informal-institutions>

The **Religions and Development Research Programme** website provides access to research on religion, politics and governance.

<http://www.religionsanddevelopment.org>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1109>

Blomkvist, H., 2003, 'Participation, Social Interaction, and the Quality of Democracy in India', Paper presented at the annual meeting of The American Political Science Association, 28 - 31 August, Philadelphia

Is government responsiveness to citizen's demands affected by different types of political participation? Is responsiveness affected by social interaction and does it depend on historically evolved political structures? This paper draws on evidence gathered from 3,200 personal interviews with citizens in five Indian states; Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Kerala and West Bengal in exploring these questions.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/707>

Blom, A., 2002, 'Ambiguous Political Space: Chiefs, Land and the Poor in Rural Mozambique', chapter 5 in *In the Name of the Poor: Contesting Political Space for Poverty Reduction*, eds. N. Webster and L. Engberg-Pedersen, Zed Books, New York

Institutional channels through which poor people can influence policies and decision-making are often limited or absent in Africa. To what extent are chiefs being used to access political space for the interests of poor people? This chapter examines this question in relation to Angonia, in rural Mozambique. It is necessary to look beyond formal institutions to determine access to decision-making for and by the poor. Chiefs can protect the interests of the poor, but remain a weak channel for influencing political decisions at the national level.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1573>

Alatas, V., Pritchett, L. and Wetterberg, A., 2002, 'Voice Lessons: Local Government Organizations, Social Organizations, and the Quality of Local Governance', Working Paper 2981, World Bank, Washington DC

Is all citizen participation a good thing? Or, do certain types of citizen participation improve local governance more than others? This paper, from the World Bank's Local Level Institutions study of local life in villages in rural Indonesia, examines the relationship between the involvement of villagers in social activities and the quality of local governance.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/505>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4152>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4213>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/242>

Further resources

'Creating Participatory Spaces' in the GSDRC's Voice 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.

Kersting, N. and Sperberg, J., 2003, 'Political Participation', chapter 7 in *Poverty and Democracy: Self-help and Political Participation in Third World Cities*, eds. D. Berg-Schlosser and N. Kersting, Zed Books, London

Has the wave of democratisation that occurred between the 1980s and 1990s enhanced the participation of the rural poor in political life? Has the right to vote made a real difference to their lives? This study defines different 'types' of political participation by looking at four countries in Latin America and Africa. Ultimately, the role of democratisation and free elections in the lives of the urban poor is conditioned by specific institutional, socio-economic, political and cultural factors.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1564>

Kuenzi, M. and Lambright, G., 2005, 'Who Votes in Africa? An Examination of Electoral Turnout in 10 African Countries', *Afrobarometer Working Paper no. 51*, Cape Town

The question of who votes in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is yet to receive attention in the political science literature. This paper seeks to identify the factors associated with electoral participation in SSA using survey data from 10 countries. Several variables including age, education, gender, attitudes and beliefs are found to have a different effect on voting patterns than they do in Western countries.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1693>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2587>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3629>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1286>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1010>

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.

Goetz, A. M., 2002, 'Women's Political Effectiveness – A Conceptual Framework', Chapter 2 in *No Shortcuts to Power: African Women in Politics and Policymaking*, Zed Books

How can women's interests and gender equality be advanced through political institutions? How do political institutions affect the nature of women's leadership, influence on decision-making, and the chances that they will promote a gender-equality agenda? This chapter reveals that the political effectiveness of women depends upon the nature of women's engagement in a range of institutions in civil society, political society (parties and trade unions), and the state itself. It is key that women move beyond simple access to these institutions, and seek instead to transform accountability systems within them so that power-holders (including women political representatives) answer to women, and answer for gender equality.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1501>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2017>

Lindberg, S. I., 2004, 'Women's Empowerment and Democratization: The Effects of Electoral Systems, Participation, and Experience in Africa', *Studies in Comparative International Development*, vol. 39, no. 1, pp. 28-53.

What effect do different electoral systems have on women's legislative representation? How do increased political participation and the accumulation of experience facilitate the political empowerment of women? This article demonstrates the value of studying gender relations under democratisation and suggests that electoral institutions can travel across cultures with constant effects.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2630>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4041>

Johnson, D., Kabuchu, H. and Vusiya, S., 2003, 'Women in Ugandan Local Government: The Impact of Affirmative Action', *Gender and Development*, vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 8-18

Since the mid-1990s, the Ugandan government has introduced legislation to ensure that women are represented on local councils. What has changed as a result of this affirmative action? This article looks at both the positive and negative impact of women's presence in local government. It finds that although there is now greater acceptance of women community leaders, their influence over public decision making remains limited.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/946>

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.unifem.org/attachments/products/Afghanistans_Parliament_in_the_Making.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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4149>

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.

Sabatini, C. and Finkel, S., 2002, 'Adult Civic Education in Developing Democracies: Policy Implications from a Three-Country Study', paper presented at the 98th Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, 28th August – 1st September, Boston

This paper reports the results of an on-going study on the effectiveness of adult civic education programmes in the Dominican Republic, Poland and South Africa. The impact of civic education was ascertained by comparing the responses of individuals who had undergone civic education training ('treatment group') to the responses of similar individuals who had not been trained ('control group'). A total of ten civic education programmes in all three countries were evaluated in terms of their ability to affect the participation, knowledge, and democratic orientation of participants. The paper presents the implications of the study's findings and its conclusions for the role and implementation of civic education programmes.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/357>

Hansen, G., 2002, 'Approaches to Civic Education: Lessons Learned', Office of Democracy and Governance, United States Agency for International Development, Washington, DC

Beginning in 1996, the United States Agency for International Development's Centre for Democracy and Governance initiated this major multi-part study designed to measure the impact of both adult and school-based civic education

programmes on participants' democratic behaviour and attitudes in the Dominican Republic, Poland, and South Africa. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods, this study represents a pioneering effort, both as a research initiative and as a practical application in managing for results in the democracy sector. The results of the study show that civic education programmes appear to contribute to significantly greater rates of political participation among programme participants, especially at the local level.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display/document/legacyid/331>

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 a DFID funded research programme exploring women's empowerment.

<http://www.pathways-of-empowerment.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/>

The **Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA)** is an International Centre for Learning and Promotion of 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/>

Read more on participation from **Eldis**.

<http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/participation>

Related GSDRC topic guides:

[Empowerment and Accountability](#)

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.

The policy process

The process of determining policy - the actors involved and the external structural influences - is much more complicated than a linear model.

McGee, R., 2004, 'Unpacking Policy: Actors, Knowledge and Spaces' in Unpacking Policy: Knowledge, Actors and Spaces in Poverty Reduction in Uganda and Nigeria, eds. K. Brock, R. McGee and J. Gaventa, Fountain Publishers, Kampala
What is policy? This research suggests that in pursuing reform, enhancing democratic governance and seeking more evidence-based forms of policy, there is a need to explore and analyse the nature of policy itself. The study argues that, in reality, the policy process is one in which a wide diversity of actors, knowledge and policy spaces interact on different terms and conditions in the making and doing of policy. Policy therefore needs to be understood in a way that is radically different from the traditional linear model.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1455>

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.

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1245>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3123>

Brinkerhoff, D. and Crosby, B., 2002, 'Citizen Participation in the Policy Process', chapter 3 in Managing Policy Reform: Concepts and Tools for Decision-Makers in Developing and Transitioning Countries, Kumarian Press, Connecticut

When is increased participation appropriate? Under what circumstances does participation support or undermine democratic processes and how can these be identified? This chapter examines these questions from the perspective of public sector policymakers. After offering advice on balancing expanded input with achieving objectives, it introduces caveats to the assumed links between participation and democracy.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1543>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1154>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1079>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/187>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1520>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4211>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2740>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2726>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display/document/legacyid/325>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4022>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3154>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4045>

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.

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3616>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3124>

SADC Parliamentary Forum, 2001, 'Norms and Standards for Elections in the SADC Region', Adopted by the SADC Parliamentary Forum Plenary Assembly, Windhoek, Namibia, 25 March 2001

This report exposes some of the problems that pervade the political environment in that region. Based on the lessons learned and experiences gained in election observation in Namibia, Mozambique, Mauritius and Zimbabwe, recommendations are made to face such problems. Strengthening electoral institutions, reforming outdated legal frameworks and electoral practices, and entrenching the democratic process in the conduct of elections are all basic ingredients to foster transparency, to level the playing field and to ensure free and fair elections.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display/document/legacyid/431>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3803>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1373>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1604>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3089>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3087>

Norris, P., 2005, 'Do Power-sharing Institutions Work?: Stable Democracy and Good Governance in Divided Societies,' Paper presented at the Quality of Government conference, Goteborg University, 17-19 November

Consociational theory has dominated scholarly debates about the most appropriate institutions for peace-building and democratic transitions in deeply divided societies. What can power-sharing arrangements contribute beyond the scope of post-conflict settlements? What other factors are important over the longer term? This paper compares a broad cross-section of countries worldwide to investigate the impact of formal power-sharing institutions and suggests that investing in basic human development is a more consistently successful strategy for democracy-building and good governance.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1744>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3099>

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.gsdr.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>

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 Election 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 who produce 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.

Johnson, J. K. and Nakamura, R. T, 1999, 'A Concept Paper on Legislatures and Good Governance', UNDP paper, New York

This paper addresses the broad conceptual issues of the role of legislatures in good governance. It begins with a description of legislatures and legislative behaviour, and then provides specific information regarding legislative development. Sections two and three explain what legislatures do, how they do it, some ways in which they vary, and how structure and party systems may influence legislative behaviour. Section four briefly describes problems commonly faced by legislatures around the world. Sections five and six explain what legislative development is, show the kinds of organisations involved, and provide examples of legislative development activities.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/461>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4148>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1041>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1136>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3082>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1504>

Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2000, 'Key Issues and Guidelines,' paper from seminar on Parliament and the Budgetary Process, Including From a Gender Perspective, 22nd -24th May, Nairobi

An integral part of a democracy is transparency in a country's spending. As such the budget is regarded as the most important policy statement made by the Executive, reflecting the core values underlying national policy. Should Parliament therefore be more involved in the process of formulating the budget? Should MPs be more proactive in influencing budget procedures and ensuring they are gender-balanced? These key issues emerged at a seminar organised by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in May 2000 and are discussed in this paper.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/273>

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.

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2809>

Department for International Development, United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank Institute, 2007, 'Donor Consultation on Parliamentary Development and Financial Accountability' Final report from a joint donor meeting on Parliamentary Development, 21st and 22nd May, Brussels

What lessons can be learned from existing parliamentary development programmes? How can the role of parliaments in financial governance be strengthened in developing countries? This paper reports on a two day consultation on donor evaluations, normative frameworks and measures of progress for parliamentary development.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2819>

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.gsdr.org/docs/open/HD583.pdf>

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>

National Democratic Institute and UNDP, 2001, 'Guidebook on Strengthening the Representative Capacity of Legislatures', background paper for a UNDP seminar on Strengthening the Legislature - Challenges and Techniques, 22nd – 24th October, Brussels

How can legislatures work for the people? This paper is a practical guide to strengthening the representative capacity of legislatures in emerging democracies. It takes a process-oriented approach to representation and assesses the capacity of representatives to engage constituents, the capacity of constituents to engage their representatives and the legal and political framework within which this engagement takes place. It argues that interaction and balance among these three components is all-important.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1524>

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 Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3155>

Hubli, S., and Mandaville, A. P., 2004, 'Parliaments and the PRSP Process', WBI Working Paper, Series on Contemporary Issues in Parliamentary Development, World Bank, Washington DC

How can parliaments in poor countries strengthen the PRSP process? How can donors help integrate parliaments into poverty reduction? This paper provides a range of options to address these issues, identifying activities that will strengthen the impact and sustainability of recipient countries' PRSPs and ensure political legitimacy and national ownership of the process.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1037>

Eberlei, W. and Henn, H., 2003, 'Parliaments in Sub-Saharan Africa: Actors in Poverty Reduction?', GTZ, Eschborn

How have Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) processes affected the status of parliaments in national policymaking? This report investigates the role played by parliaments during PRS implementation in 28 African states. Donors are recommended to address the legal and political conditions of the legislatures, the functional capacity of parliaments, their

interaction with other actors, and the international donor policy environment.
One-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1537>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display/document/legacyid/236>

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>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3106>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3103>

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 for International Affairs** (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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2758>

Smith, B., 2003, 'Political Parties and Party Systems', chapter 6 in *Understanding Third World Politics: Theories of Political Change and Development*, Macmillan Press Ltd, pp. 198-220

Political parties are the most important institutions of political mobilisation in mass politics. Political parties in the developing world exhibit wide variation. How can these parties be defined? What are the important factors in the survival and development of party politics in developing countries? This chapter conceptualises developing world parties according to function and ideology and analyses their survival in terms of party systems and parties as institutions.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1000>

Carey, S. C., 2002, 'A Comparative Analysis of Political Parties in Kenya, Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo', *Democratization*, vol. 9 no. 3, pp. 53-71

This article compares the characteristics and development of the main political parties in Kenya, Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, considering the period from their independence in the 1960s up to the late 1990s. It offers an exploratory analysis of the differences and similarities that might have led to the, more or less, successful establishment of political parties and democratic regimes in these countries. The main question this article addresses is why these three countries, with a shared number of characteristics at the outset, have ended up with such different political regimes. The parties are compared along four dimensions: colonial heritage, the saliency of ethnicity, political communication between the party elite and the periphery, and their link to civil society.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/339>

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>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3086>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3084>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2997>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2604>

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://ukcatalogue.oup.com/product/academic/politics/parties/9780199546862.do?sortBy=bookTitleAscend>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2872>

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.
One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1538>

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.
One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1534>

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.
One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3105>

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.
One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3612>

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.
One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4037>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1621>

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 for International Affairs** has a global programme on political party development.

<http://www.ndi.org/>

Read more on political parties from **Eldis**.

<http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/governance/institutional-development/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 are the most effective financial safeguards 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. *One-page summary:* <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/938>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3867>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1029>

Pottie, D., 2003, 'Party Finance and the Politics of Money in Southern Africa', Journal of Contemporary African Studies, vol. 21, no. 1

How are political parties financed in southern Africa? What implications does political funding in the region have on the democratic process? This paper offers a comparative survey of the legal and institutional framework within which party funding takes place in southern Africa, with more detailed assessment of Zimbabwe and South Africa. Its analysis of the structure of party resources in the region reveals a potentially volatile combination of regulated public support and a laissez faire approach to private donations.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/953>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3083>

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.gsdr.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 (APFPI). During 2003 and 2004, the APFPI 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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/1553>

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 of 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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/334>

Callahan, W., 2000, 'Political Corruption in Southeast Asia', in Party Finance and Political Corruption, R. Williams (ed.), Palgrave, London

Corruption works differently in different political economies and political cultures. Reforms to combat corruption must address local specificities to ensure they are not counter-productive. Following the Southeast Asian economic crisis, this chapter explores political corruption in Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/997>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/276>

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.

One-page summary: <http://www.gsdr.org/go/display/document/legacyid/354>

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/publications/gcr/gcr_2004

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/Projects/Applied-Research-Center/Cross-Cutting/Money-Politics.aspx>