

From Drivers of Change to the Politics of Development:
**Refining the Analytical Framework to understand the
politics of the places where we work**

NOTES OF GUIDANCE FOR DFID OFFICES

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NOTES OF GUIDANCE FOR USING THE NEW ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION, OBJECTIVES AND BACKGROUND

- 1 The central objective of this refinement of the drivers of change (DoC) initiative has been to emphasize the primacy of politics in developmental processes and outcomes. The original DoC approach sought explore the relations between structures, institutions and agents, as the deep and historical processes which shaped the context of development. This new analytical framework, discussed here, seeks to build on that by offering a more robust and focused conceptual approach for the analysis of the politics of decision-making which affects developmental outcomes. In order to do this, the framework has been designed to identify the forces and processes which shape the making and implementation of public policy and practice in diverse institutional contexts. As set out below, it consists of an elaboration and substantial modification of David Easton's theory of 'the political system' (Easton, 1953, 1957, 1965a and 1965b, 1992). But where Easton focuses on 'system', this approach is concerned with *process*.
- 2 This framework has many flexible and possible uses. It may, for instance, be applied to the broad understanding of the macro-political processes which define the way a particular polity in a country works at national level, or it might be applied to a local level institution of governance, at village, regional or state level (in a federation, for instance). But it can equally be applied to help understand the political processes which shape decision-making in a particular sector, such as irrigation, education, labour, fiscal or trade policies, or in a major public institution (such as a marketing board, welfare agency or planning authority).

- 3 In other words, it is a framework for the analysis of the politics of decision-making and hence may be used to help understand the political processes which shape decisions in almost any unit of analysis. Even more simply, each decision-making arena or domain, or linked group of domains, needs to be thought of politically, as a political process, and the framework outlined here can be used to interpret and explain how it works.
- 4 Moreover, though the central focus of this work is on decision-making in the public sector, the framework can also be used to trace the political processes which determine decision-making outcomes and effects in private institutions and organizations, whether these be schools, churches, companies, universities or voluntary organizations. It may also help us to understand various social practices or outcomes, whether these be inequality or exclusion, for these, too, are the result of political processes, as will their reversal be.
- 5 Three significant advantages of the approach need to be noted. (i) It is regime neutral in that it neither presupposes nor favours a particular type of polity (e.g democratic or authoritarian, federal or unitary) or decision-making mode, but seeks to provide a basis for analyzing and interpreting all. (ii) Nor does it presuppose or favour a particular developmental strategy or policy package: a particular programme of policy reforms or practices may be implemented and workable in one set of political processes and institutional arrangements but not in others. (iii) It is also ideologically, or theoretically, neutral in that it does not rest on the assumption that, say, incentive structures (as neoclassical political economy would argue) shape (or can be rigged to shape) outcomes; or that class forces (as radical political economy would insist) determine the distribution of power and hence the direction of policy. (iv) It is also scale neutral in that it is in principle applicable to small micro-level processes, such as those in families, as well as larger organizations, up to the state level.

- 6 In helping to explain outcomes and practices, the approach also helps to identify possible sources of constraint, change or reform. To that extent, the framework may be regarded as an essential diagnostic tool for understanding both why things are as they are and what the potential sources, agencies and institutions of change may be.

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES AND ASSUMPTIONS

- 1 For anyone seeking to undertake such a study it is important that the underlying assumptions are both understood and clear. Without grasping these, the framework may appear wooden and rigid, when it needs to be applied flexibly and sensitively.
- 2 The central assumption here – borne out by abundant comparative evidence from across the world – is that developmental policies and outcomes are shaped fundamentally by political *processes*. Politics, or political processes, are defined here as:

consisting of *all the activities of cooperation, conflict and negotiation involved in decisions about the use, production and distribution of resources*, whether these activities are formal or informal, public or private, or a mixture of all. Such a basic conception facilitates ways of integrating both conventional ideas about *politics* (power, authority and collective decision-making) and *economics* (allocation of scarce resources) into a broader understanding of the relations between them.

- 3 But in order to make sense of the complex interactions which characterise these political processes we need a way of identifying the various agents, forces and processes involved, and where and how they interact in often very different institutional *milieu*. That is what an analytical framework seeks to do. It identifies the way in which different groups and individuals, working both formally and informally, using whatever sources and forms of power, authority or influence they possess, act to shape outcomes in terms of both

policy decisions and their implementation. In short, the approach adopted here provides a conceptual framework for thinking about politics in a systematic way and it offers a method for tracing the *dynamics* of power relations (internal and external) which shape policy decisions and outcomes as well as particular practices.

- 4 It is also important to recognise that the framework as represented in the diagram below is not a static one: that is, it is not meant to provide a once-and-for-all snapshot of the distribution of power and the practices of politics. The various ‘boxes’ are *not* hermetically sealed and exclusive categories: in practice they overlap and are often populated by some of the same agents. That is to say, the visual representation of the political process is not meant to represent reality. It is a stylised abstraction which helps to provide a conceptual structure for thinking about where and how key players operate and with what effect. For instance, in the diagram below, key agents or agencies who may be placed in the demand or support categories may *also* be lobbyists in the lobbying box; and they may also seek to influence how policies, once decided, are implemented.

- 5 It is very important that the framework set out below is not thought of as an autonomous and insulated field of interactions. It is fundamental to the approach that any political process (whether formally defined and constituted or informally implicated in wider social and cultural practices) is framed by a wider national and international environment of economic, political, social and cultural processes and institutions. The political process must thus be thought of as being in constant interaction with the national and international ‘environments’ referred to in the diagram, just as the ‘economic processes’ (if we were to focus on them) have as their environment the political, cultural and other processes and practices that constitute the whole socio-economic and political unit we understand simply as the ‘society’. Indeed, demands for this or that policy or decision are constantly fed into the political process from

these wider environments. Of course in some polities, demands or counter-demands may flow more freely into the political process; argument and debate may be more open and lobbying may be more public and rule-governed. In other polities – perhaps less democratic ones – these processes are more limited, obscured, restrained or illicit. But the point to emphasize here is that each political process is embedded in a wider set of socio-economic relations with which it constantly interacts and from which demands, counter-demands, support, opposition and degrees of legitimacy all flow. Likewise, the decision-making processes for a sector – agriculture or education – are also embedded in a wider network of institutional and other environmental factors which bear upon it with more or less power and effectiveness.

- 6 Finally, political processes are not generally random and unpredictable. They usually occur within known and discoverable institutional contexts (understood here as rules governing behaviour), whether formal or informal. A problem in many (but not all or only) developing and transitional countries is that both formal (constitutional and law-based) rules *and* informal rules interact and merge to shape the often conflicting institutional contexts for political and other behaviours. The framework deployed here should help to identify and understand how both operate to produce given decisions and outcomes.

BACKGROUND PREPARATION

Where a country office or sectoral group is preparing to initiate an analysis using this framework, it will be important that the following preparatory steps are undertaken.

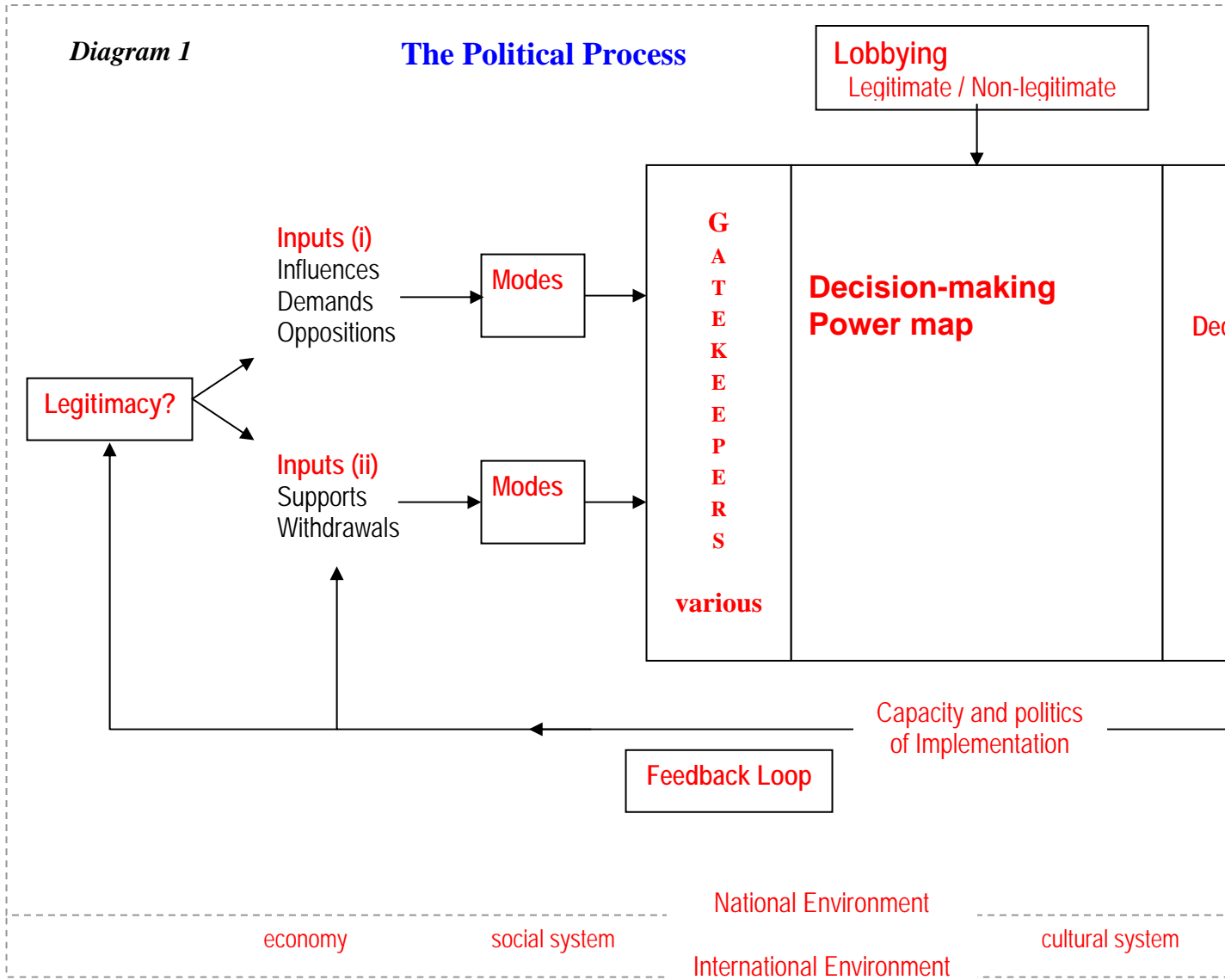
- 1 It is desirable that consultants who may be contracted to undertake the work should include at least one political scientist who can bring to the team an

expertise that will be needed if the framework is to be usefully and flexibly applied to the problem identified, whether it be an understanding of the macro-political context or some specific area of policy or practice.

- 2 It will also be important for all those involved to read the background material which has led up to these Notes of Guidance (see, in particular, Background Papers listed at the end of this Note). For although these Notes provide an immediate guide for preparing a study and for understanding the framework, the detailed explanatory information is important to grasp and can be found in those papers, in particular Leftwich (2006a, 2006b and 2006c).
- 3 Crucially, too, it is important that in commissioning a study, Country Offices or sectoral groups devote careful attention to identifying as clearly as possible the precise *question*, or set of questions, or the *problem for* analysis, which they want addressed. The terms of reference should also be constructed to reflect that. Studies might be commissioned to explore the broad political processes driving or restraining change in a country, as was the case with the first *tranche* of DoC studies. Or interest in the politics of irrigation policy and practice might be of concern. There is now interest within the Social Development group to explore how the framework can help to provide a better understanding of social exclusion and inequality. The Nigeria office is hoping to look at ways coalitions for change might emerge and be encouraged. And a group is currently trying to deploy the framework to unpack the politics of the replenishment process in the African Development Fund. These are all examples of issues for which the framework will be useful, but the sharper and clearer the manner in which the question is framed or the problem specified, the better will be the application of the framework.

Set out below (Diagram 1) is the overarching framework. More detailed commentary on, and examples and illustrations of, the elements which go into each of the boxes

will be discussed below. Further diagrams dealing with each of the main phases in the political process can be found, graphically, in the earlier papers, but are attached at the end of this Note for ease of reference, at pp 22-27.



OPERATIONALISING THE FRAMEWORK

1 **Structural context**

Precisely because a political process is *not* a set of autonomous and isolated activities (whatever the unit or focus of analysis may be: national level, local government, sector or social practice), any piece of work needs to start with a clear analysis of the structural context for that process. Broadly, this will involve:

- A precise statement of the problem for analysis or the question
- A clear analysis of the history of the country, sector, organization or issue
- An anatomy of the formal political institutional structure
- An indication of the informal institutions at play, associated with
- An analysis of the distribution of power within the economic, social and cultural systems that constitute the environment of the political process.

There will be overlap but this is inevitable. For instance, in an already rapidly industrializing economy, one would expect to find a larger working class community (perhaps divided by ethnic or religious cleavages) and possibly or potentially great trade union power. So economic, cultural and political factors overlap and enforce each other. As the diagram suggests, there are both international and national environments and both need to be addressed.

This will require attention to some basic data.

- Depending on the specified focus and problem for analysis, studies will need to provide basic data on the society, ranging from population (and its growth) to life expectancy, poverty profiles and distribution, educational information and formal institutional structure (federal or unitary, presidential or parliamentary, political parties etc). The same would be needed for a sector, social development issue or a particular organization.

The history and characteristics of the problem for analysis will need to be substantiated with effective data.

- The broad historical background is also important, not simply as an add-on to flesh out the contextual part of a study, but more to identify the lineage of social, political and economic forces and groups who interact in the contemporary political process, and the political practices which prevail. For instance, how far did indirect and direct forms of colonial rule influence subsequent patterns of politics and relations between society and the state (Lange, 2005)? If the focus is a sector, or a large public organization or bureaucracy, the basic data will also be needed and the historical processes which have shaped the contemporary situation need explaining. So, for example, in relation to the politics of irrigation (and access to it), it would be important to know who controls it, why, what the origins of this structure of rural power may be, and who benefits and who does not. It may also be appropriate to investigate what ideological or cultural practices sustain it. So historical analysis is needed here not simply as ‘one damned fact after another’, but to provide the necessary contextual understanding of the origins and continuity (or otherwise, if the history reflects change) of the contemporary situation, and how the current patterns have become embedded.

International environment

- This will have more or less salience, depending on the issue, question or problem and will also vary widely from country to country, but needs to be specified for each. Membership of, and relations with, relevant international or regional organizations – whether economic or political – might be a starting point, as well as relations with neighbouring countries, former colonial and metropolitan powers. What has been the history of these relations? Cooperative or conflictual, or both? What impact has that had on domestic politics? For instance, there is abundant evidence to suggest that at least one of the factors that has helped fashion effective developmental states on the East Asian model has been external threat. So

the character of the immediate regional or international political environment is important in understanding domestic political processes – such as nationalism. Are prevailing international ideas about economic policy, political processes, gender, rights and poverty-reduction at odds with those which predominate within the country? Are official relations with foreign embassies good or tense? What expectations or requirements have been made in recent years by donors or international agencies on the government? What has happened?

- The role, interest and involvement of foreign companies – especially in relation to natural resource extraction or investment interests – will need to be assessed, as will their relations with both the state and with other domestic private sector interests.

Internal environment

- *Economic structure and processes*

Describing this will include standard reference to the development and structure of the economy over time; size of sectors, employment patterns, trading patterns, distribution of wealth and income and the organization of businesses and unions (where they exist). There are usually good sources for this data but the important thing to recognise is that the purpose of these accounts of the structural context is not simply, or at all, to give a descriptive blow-by-blow account of ‘the economy’. Rather it is to identify the sources and forms of economic power and interests, how they are organized, their ideologies (whether coherent or not), relations with each other and their structural anchorage in the particular rules governing economic activity. *Economic power* needs to be explicitly addressed, whether this be based on land-ownership or control of capital or rents. The interests identified here will later be shown, perhaps, to be powerful (or ineffectual) players in some or all areas of policy-formation and decision-making. The demands they may make on the political process, and the sources, forms and deployment of the economic (or other) power they deploy, will therefore be crucial in understanding their position in the economy.

In addressing the economic structure and processes it is also important not to see it as isolated but, like political processes, embedded in a wider network of social and political relations. For instance, what are the typical relations of government and business? Are they formally connected or are the relations primarily informal? Are there chambers of commerce or

organizations of industrialists? How are they organized? Are there ethnic cleavages or do their organizations span these divisions? In short, while a clear statistical account of the 'economy' is needed, the real purpose of this part of the work is to provide a political analysis of the sources, forms and organization of power arising from the economic structure.

- *Social structure and processes*

This refers primarily to the social structure. By that is meant the constituent parts and their relations. For example, is it primarily homogeneous with respect to culture (as in Botswana and Korea)? Or are there sharp or plural ethnic discontinuities, as in Nigeria? If the latter exist are they characterized by arrangements which maintain harmony and balance (as in Mauritius) or are there tense and competitive relations which get reflected in ethnically divided social organizations (whether business, unions or rural associations, political parties or NGOs)? What is the balance of economic and political power between these communities? For instance, although changing, private economic power has traditionally been in the hands of Chinese in Malaysia and Whites in South Africa, whereas political power has been in the hands of Malays and (at least since 1990) Blacks in South Africa. How significant a factor is religion and how powerful are religious figures, institutions and ideologies? How (if at all) do such communities express their interests and needs – through patrons, parties or pressure groups? And how do these factors affect both class structure and class relationships? Do ethnic and or religious cleavages divide classes? What appear to be the consequences of this? Again, the central point here is to explore how the social structure gives rise to different sets of interests, each disposing of different forms and degrees of power and their connections with decision-making processes through parties or patrons.

- *Cultural and ideological systems*

Clearly, this overlaps with the social structure but there may be sharp discontinuities, too. It is extremely difficult to generalize about culture and ideology, but sources of information – for instance the World Values Surveys and detailed anthropological accounts – often provide usable evidence for particular countries. Public opinion surveys where they exist (eg *Afrobarometer* and *Latinobarómetro*) may provide other sources. In Malawi, for instance, researchers identify strong features of deference, conformity and tolerance of mediocrity, aversion to both uncertainty and aggressive behaviour (and hence not wanting to hold officials publicly

accountable) as powerful factors influencing political life. So the link between culture in general, and the political culture in particular, needs to be explored. Certainly, where 'modern' institutions are weakly developed or differentiated, it is very important to assess the extent to which elements of traditional culture permeate the political culture. For many cultural traditions and historical experiences legitimize pervasive patron-client relationships and hence both generate and sustain patrimonial politics, with significant implications for political processes. Identifying social forces which oppose patronage politics and hence constitute the elements of an emerging political counter-culture, is something that is, in itself, important to establish.

2 The elements of the framework

As the diagram makes clear, there are a number of elements in the framework for political analysis that require elucidation:

- Legitimacy
- Inputs (i): influences, demands and oppositions
- Inputs (ii): supports and withdrawals
- Modes (of inputs)
- Gatekeepers
- Decision making power map
- Lobbying
- Decision making
- Output
- Capacity and politics of implementation
- Feedback effects

Each of these components of a political process has its own political dynamics. And it is the relationship between these processes which shapes the decisions and hence determines the policy, practice or developmental results. It is important to stress that the framework seeks to make sense of the *dynamics* of these relations, whether developmentally positive or pathological. I deal with each in brief.

- *Legitimacy*

This, especially in non-democratic or only cosmetically-democratic polities, is often hard to ascertain or measure. But it is useful to think of it in terms of three broad categories. **Geographical legitimacy** refers to the extent to which the population of a given nation state accept that this is where they want to be (and not be part of a secessionist or irredentist movement making ‘demands’ for autonomy or escape). **Constitutional legitimacy** refers to the extent to which the rules of the political game are thought to be fair and appropriate (that is the constitutional arrangements concerning the use, distribution and control of formal power). Finally, **political legitimacy** refers to the extent to which the population consider that the rules of the game have been fairly applied (for instance that elections have not been rigged and hence the government of the day is held to be legally and morally in office).

Legitimacy is a significant component of any political process, hence it is important to get a handle on its characteristics and extent. It critically underpins, or should, the formal rules of the political game. Where people consider these to be wanting, or where some region or group, perhaps, consider the rules to be rigged against them, it will seriously affect the character and nature of the political processes and its developmental impact.

- *Inputs (i): influences, demands and oppositions*

The inputs to the political process are pretty fundamental and the term is used here to refer to those political activities and ideas which are initiated by a range of demands, influences and oppositions (to the demands) by groups within the wider environment. For instance, internally, the urban poor may organize to demand better services, such as clean water; landless peasants may seek to promote land reform; women’s groups may seek to diminish exclusionary practices; business people may seek more or less help from the state, higher or lower taxes. And there will be bound to be those who oppose any particular demand. In a fundamental way, the inputs are what set the dynamics of the political process in motion. They may be initiated by parties, NGOs, media, patrons, ‘Big Men’, sub-national governmental units, business/unions/peasant associations, class, caste, ethnic or popular movements and it is important for any study to identify what and who they are.

There are also external elements here. They include the major IFIs, donors, powerful corporations, regional organizations or may take the form of more subtle influences, in the form of fashionable ideologies or theories. International agencies make demands on governments with respect to tariff policy, civil liberties, electoral process, accountability

procedures, gender issues, equality, poverty reduction, banking regulations and capital markets, and much else. So external demands are also – perhaps increasingly – of profound importance in the domestic political process generally and with respect to particular policy, sectoral or issue areas, whether it be gender or agriculture or labour.

In undertaking new studies it is very important to identify the sources and forms of such demands and oppositions in relation to the issues of concern, and the relations of power between the groups or organizations involved. They will be different. Given that state-society relations is probably the single most important interaction shaping patterns of governance and developmental outcomes, how they relate to the state, or to different parts of the state, is also very significant.

- *Inputs (ii): supports and withdrawals*

This identifies another kind of input into a political process, again having both internal and external aspects. It refers to the extent to which both a regime (by which I mean the composite rules and practices of the socio-economic and political ‘game’) and a particular government enjoy support and the extent to which opposition leads to withdrawal of such support. In part this may be simply an electoral matter (as far as internal support/withdrawal is concerned) and hence reflects the ebb and flow of popularity of a regime. In stable polities this is both normal and to be expected; indeed democratic politics is virtually defined by it. But it can be more serious and damaging to stability. When an army withdraws its support or, in some cases, moves actively to oppose a regime, is a case in point. Thus it is important to know, for instance, how solid is the support of the military for the constitution? Have they been active in politics before? Capital flight, a form of withdrawal, though formally an economic matter, can have immense political impact. Landlord power in relation to a Land Commission or business interests seeking to shape the rules governing an EPZ are also examples.

Externally, too, continuing support from allies or external donors can ensure the survival of regimes with low legitimacy (as was often the case in the cold war); and withdrawal of support, whether financial or military, or in terms of recognition, can have a significant input to the politics (for instance the withdrawal of support by the Commonwealth for Zimbabwe or Pakistan).

- *Modes*

It is important in any study of a political process, or part of one, to be clear about how interests, demands, oppositions and influences are articulated and expressed. In part this is a matter of political communication. External agents may use threats, conditionality, terms of deals, treaties or – in the final analysis – force. Internal expression and articulation may range from the use of media, consultation procedures, political parties, petitions, specific campaigns, marches, demonstrations, strikes or riots. Other demands may be expressed more informally, and upwards, by clients through a chain of patrons. Moreover, such analysis may yield information about those interests and demands which never get listened to, and which may never even ‘get through’.

- *Gatekeepers*

In this respect, gatekeepers are very important. Every decision-making theatre, indeed every organization, has them. They may be formal and they may be informal ‘fixers’. Gatekeepers (for instance agenda setters) can largely determine which issues, demands or expressions ‘get through’ and which do not. In stable democracies, political parties can often act as gatekeepers, allowing certain ideas or proposals to be expressed, or not as the case may be, as official party policy (consider how gatekeepers work at the conferences of major British political parties with respect to what can be said, by whom and to whom). But where people are frustrated, they may form new parties or single issue movements. Officials (even private or personal secretaries or confidants) close to presidents or key decision-makers, may have very powerful influence, and courtiers, of old, played just this role in relation to kings and emperors. So it is important to be clear in any new analysis of the politics of development or non-development in a given locus of decision-making what informal or formal institutional processes or persons act as gatekeepers, thereby shaping the way in which issues get raised and communicated, and informed decisions get to be made.

- *Decision-making power map*

In any decision-making process, there is always a point – in time or place, and usually both – where decisions are made. Whether it is within a

political party or a bureaucratic organization, at national level or village level, in a university or a commercial company, this point is profoundly political and a varying number of agents and actors are involved in the final process which leads up to the decision. At the national level in any society very powerful forces and interests may be involved. Mapping the distribution of power for any such decision-making process of the state is central to the approach to political analysis outlined here. And it is very difficult. Typically, the interests of a range of internal government departments and personnel will be involved, and may include the legislature and executive, the military and security services (as, for example, in Pakistan), civil service advisors and research evidence. In each case these decisions will also be sensitive to external inputs - that is demands and oppositions which have fed through from the wider environment. The more properly democratic the polity, the more complex will be the links with interests and institutions with wider society. There may be lead or 'pilot' agencies of the government - like the Economic Planning Board in Korea - which dominate decision-making at certain times. Perhaps even the President or Chief Minister is the dominant power. There are bound also to be what Easton calls 'withinputs', that is the interests, ideas, priorities and policies which have originated within the state machinery, because they are viewed as key state goals.

Any political analysis of the developmental processes must therefore give special attention to mapping the structure of power at the heart of the decision-making process, whether this be nationally or at village level, in organizations, sectors or issue areas. Even if the focus of analysis is a local government or a large sectoral bureaucracy, and the problem for explanation is why a certain group is being disadvantaged, it is crucial to try to identify the key players in the decision-making process and to explore how interests and institutions in the immediate and wider environment work to influence outcomes.

- *Lobbying*

Of course such decision-making seldom occurs in isolation of other influences, especially at that late stage in the overall political process. Lobbying - either or both legitimate and illegitimate - is commonplace. Lobbying can be internal or external in origin. Lobbyists may be individuals or groups or governments and may be the same as some of those pushing for or against particular policies. Patrons, clients, 'big men', large companies, sub-national governments, think tanks, *mafia*, churches and unions may all seek to influence and shape the detail of policy and decision at this point. Externally, donors and international agencies (through ambassadors or resident representatives) may be active, as may

large multi-national corporations. This phase in the overall political process whereby policy is made needs careful analysis, using a variety of sources and informants, of the kind often nurtured by diplomatic representatives of HMG. Cooperation in some instances with FCO colleagues would enhance some aspects of some studies.

- *Decision-making*

This is largely self explanatory, and consists of the formal decisions made in terms of a series of ‘outputs’, be they laws, regulations, contracts awarded, deals made, institutions established. Following through a particular case study – from provenance to implementation – of such an ‘output’ (be it a law, contract, new institution, sectoral programme) would make a very good study and would help to illustrate the wider political processes involved.

- *Capacity and the politics of implementation*

It is clear, however, that once decisions are made, there can be many a slip between cup and lip. We should never underestimate the political processes which drive implementation. What is sometimes known as the principal-agent problem is pervasive in the politics of development and has often a very political twist to it. This refers to the problem of how a ‘principal’ (say a legislature or a Minister of State or chief executive of a large company) ensures that those (the agents) charged with implementing the decision do, in fact, implement it as intended. Direct and effective implementation will depend not only on the capacity of the bureaucracy involved, its strength, coherence, numbers and reach, but also its autonomy from influences which may seek to dilute the policy or shift its focus or impact. The bureaucracy, at all levels, may not be insulated from local pressures, local demands, local threats, regional loyalties, and may find it difficult to implement a policy or programme as intended. This was certainly Prime Minister Bhutto’s experience in the 1970s in Pakistan when he sought to implement land reform.

In short, the politics of implementation is itself a compelling focus of analysis and, as these Notes have argued all the way through, involves far more politics (as defined above) than is commonly assumed in the often sterile discussions about ‘institution building’.

- *Feedback effects*

The net effect of the politics of implementation will impact decisively on legitimacy and inputs, and hence on the overall political process. Some people or groups of people, formal or informal, organized or not as the case may be, will approve of what has been done, and thus perhaps give more support to regime and government. Others may dislike what has happened and this may trigger either reduction in support or legitimacy or the creation of new demands or the intensification of old ones, perhaps using new and more destabilizing modes of expression. Thus, for example, when analysts argue that structural adjustment has almost without exception produced winners and losers, what is important to recognize is the political dynamics of this and to be able to assess the political consequences of it – the bread (or staple) riots that occurred in many developing countries when subsidies were withdrawn illustrate the complex politics of change very clearly.

The ‘loop’ from the ‘inputs’ side to the ‘outputs’ side is of course not meant to suggest a constant, neat and circular pattern of political processes. But it is intended to provide a stylized graphical and conceptual representation of how different groups and processes interact at each stage to produce outcomes, and – especially – the dynamics of power which shape the political system and its outputs and applications.

CONCLUSION

- 1 These Notes of Guidance have been concerned to explain and illustrate how the framework of analysis might be productively deployed to understand better the macro and micro politics of decision-making processes which produce developmental outcomes, whether positive or negative, in often very different institutional contexts. It offers a set of conceptual categories for identifying and grouping the forces for and against change, their interactions and their capacities.
- 2 The framework may be used in a variety of ways, depending on the focus or unit of analysis. Some offices might be interested to understand better the ‘demand’ side of political action (where and how parties, groups, associations and organizations form, together or separately, to pursue their interests). Others might want to focus on ‘lobbying’ and how informal interests gain entrance and influence to the final decision-making processes. Or, special interest may be on the politics of implementation and the factors which shape effective and

consistent application of decisions. Others might want to look at the judicial field, to assess its composition, independence and competence.

3 But it also provides an analytical tool for making better sense of the political *dynamics* which shape good or bad *governance* practices. For instance, the CAR framework ('capability', 'accountability' and 'responsiveness') defines a set of governance virtues, but offers no account of the dynamics which establish, maintain or reform them. It is the fundamental contention of the approach adopted here that these dynamics are *political*. To illustrate briefly:

- A '*capable*' (or effective) state is one that is able to get things done because the institutional requirements for this are established and sustained by political processes. No set of institutional arrangements (like the countless independence constitutions) will endure if the legitimacy, support and associated political processes which are required to sustain them are not present. An effective state is best thought of as the product of the way in which the political processes described here operate together, dynamically, to forge fundamental rules and agreements about the use and distribution of power and the political practices which are the necessary basis for the establishment and maintenance of public institutions. In the absence of such agreements, there is every incentive and probability that institutions will flounder and disintegrate because rules will be short-circuited, broken or ignored. Ultimately, therefore, an *effective* or *capable state* consists of a set of public institutions, underpinned by widespread legitimacy, and which is authorised, limited and held in place by agreed institutional rules and maintained by dedicated political and juridical processes. Thinking of the state in terms of the way *political processes* function to produce such outcomes helps to deepen our understanding of effective states, weak states and failed states.
- Likewise *accountability* is not a moral virtue such as honesty or loyalty: it is fundamentally a political process, which works through agreed (and hence legitimate) institutional rules and relationships between state and society, mediated in the 'space' between them by organizations and groups, working to certain known and respected procedures to which both state and civil society organizations – whether parties or NGOs – adhere.
- *Responsiveness*, too, is not an attribute enjoyed by some government personnel and not by others. It is, like accountability, a matter of institutionalised procedures, maintained by political processes and which can be suborned and distorted at almost any point in the political process.

4 For these reasons, the framework will help to make better sense of the nature and

extent of *democratic* practices at national or sub-national levels and so feeds into concerns about democratization and its consolidation. Clearly, where there is limited or uneven legitimacy for the overall rules of the political game (the constitutional structure which distributes power), the democratic prospects will be unstable. The same will be true where the articulation of demands or needs (by the poor, for instance, or some region or group) is patchy, uneven or suppressed – perhaps by gatekeepers; or where some interests can more or less illicitly lobby a decision in their direction; or where decisions, once made, are distorted in the course of implementation. Democratic polities depend crucially for their continuity on legitimacy and adherence to the *rules of the game*, and democratic politics consist of playing the democratic *games within the rules*. The framework offered here can help to show where and how this may be deficient or where and how it may require strengthening.

- 5 In the same vein, the much-used but conceptually somewhat foggy notion of ‘political will’ can be given a more robust political and institutional expression. Instead of being thought of as a set of attributes possessed by leading individuals (Churchill or Mandela or Fidel), political will might be better analysed as a *function of the way in which the political processes work*; that is of how they are orchestrated in a particular direction, with particular goals and outcomes in mind, by a sufficiently inclusive coalition of interests which together command the power and capacity to do so at each stage in the political process.

Overall, then deploying the framework in the ways suggested in these Notes should help to deepen our understanding of the politics which shape developmental outcomes and to identify areas where support can be given.

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Diagram 2

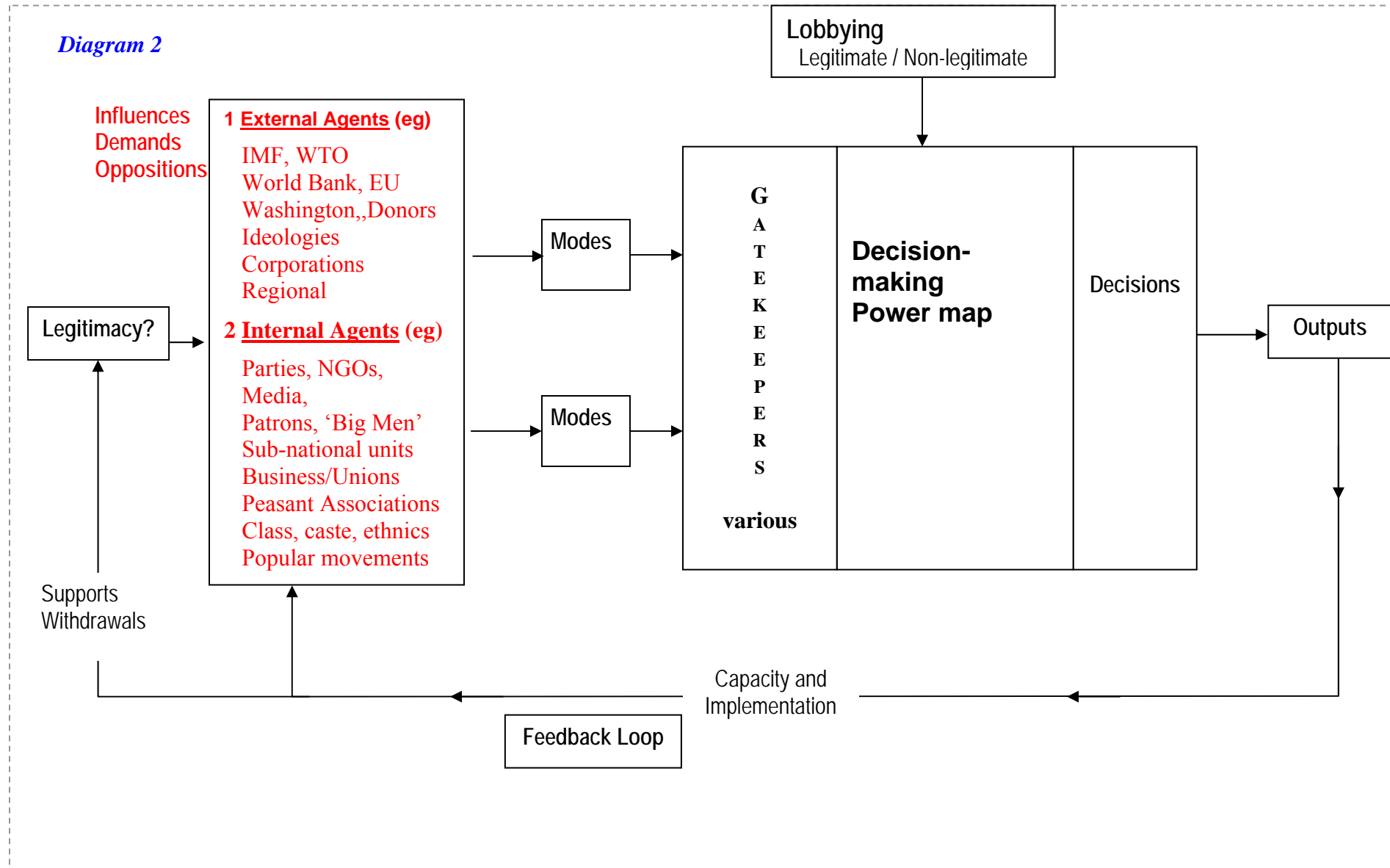


Diagram 3

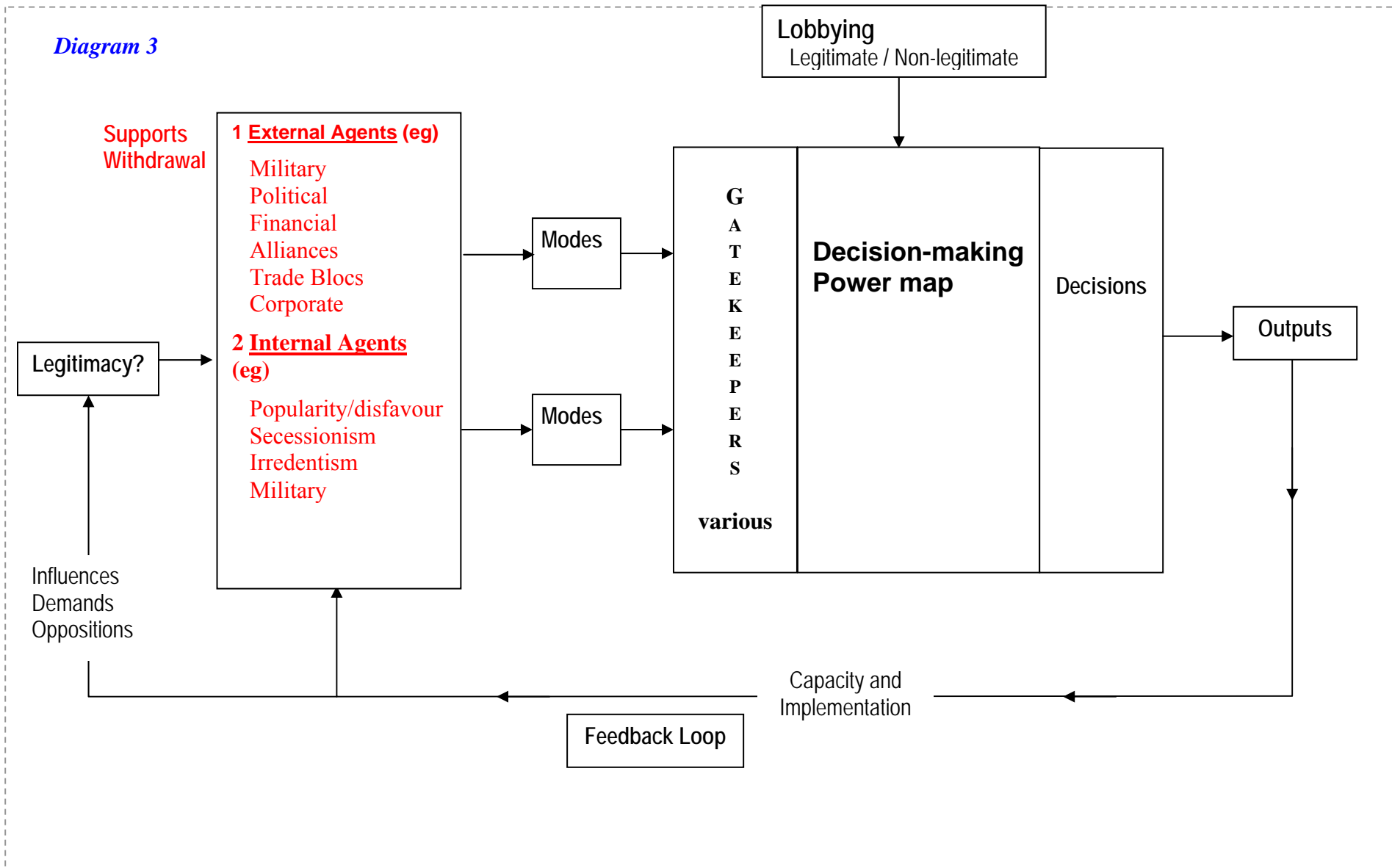


Diagram 4

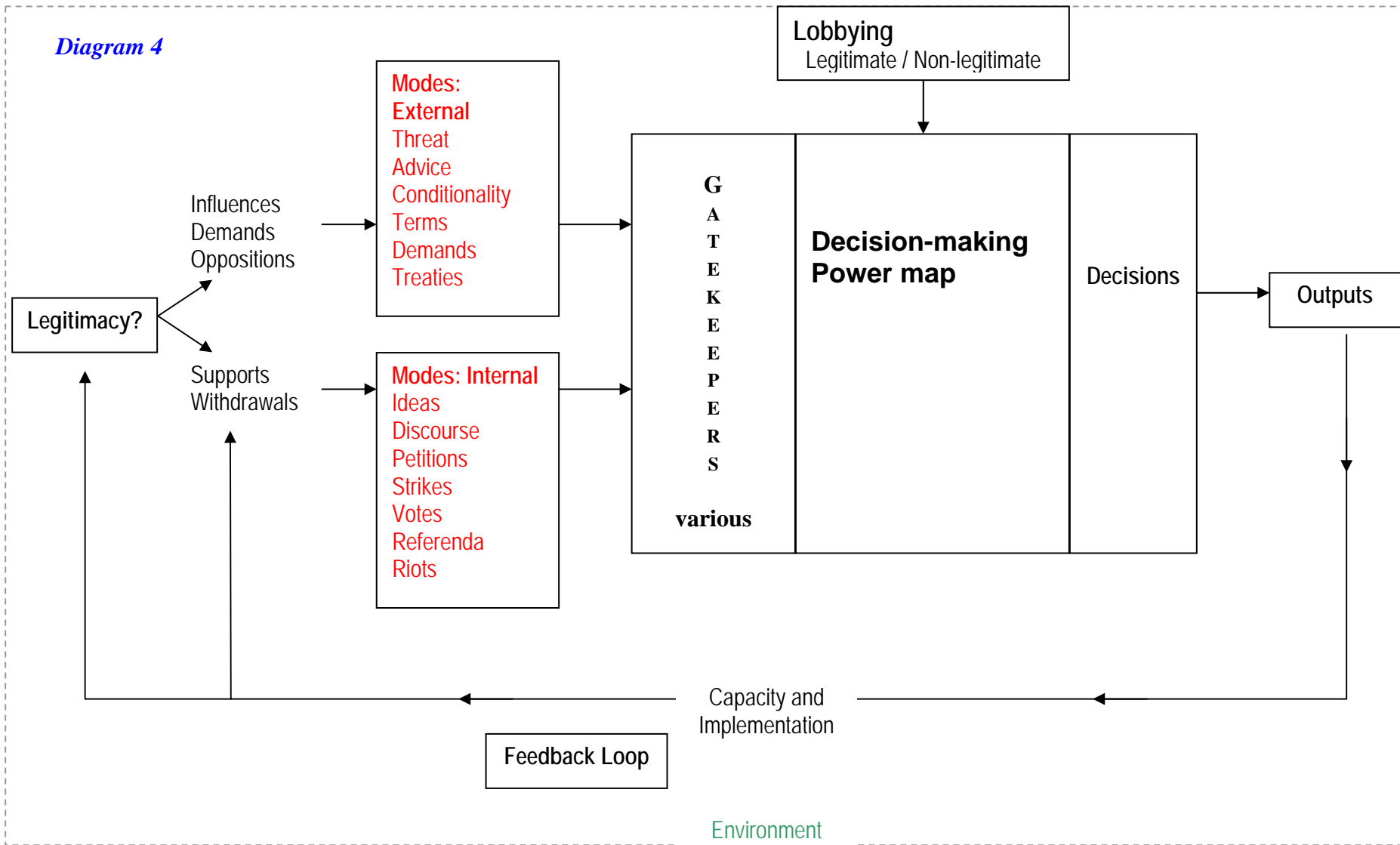


Diagram 5

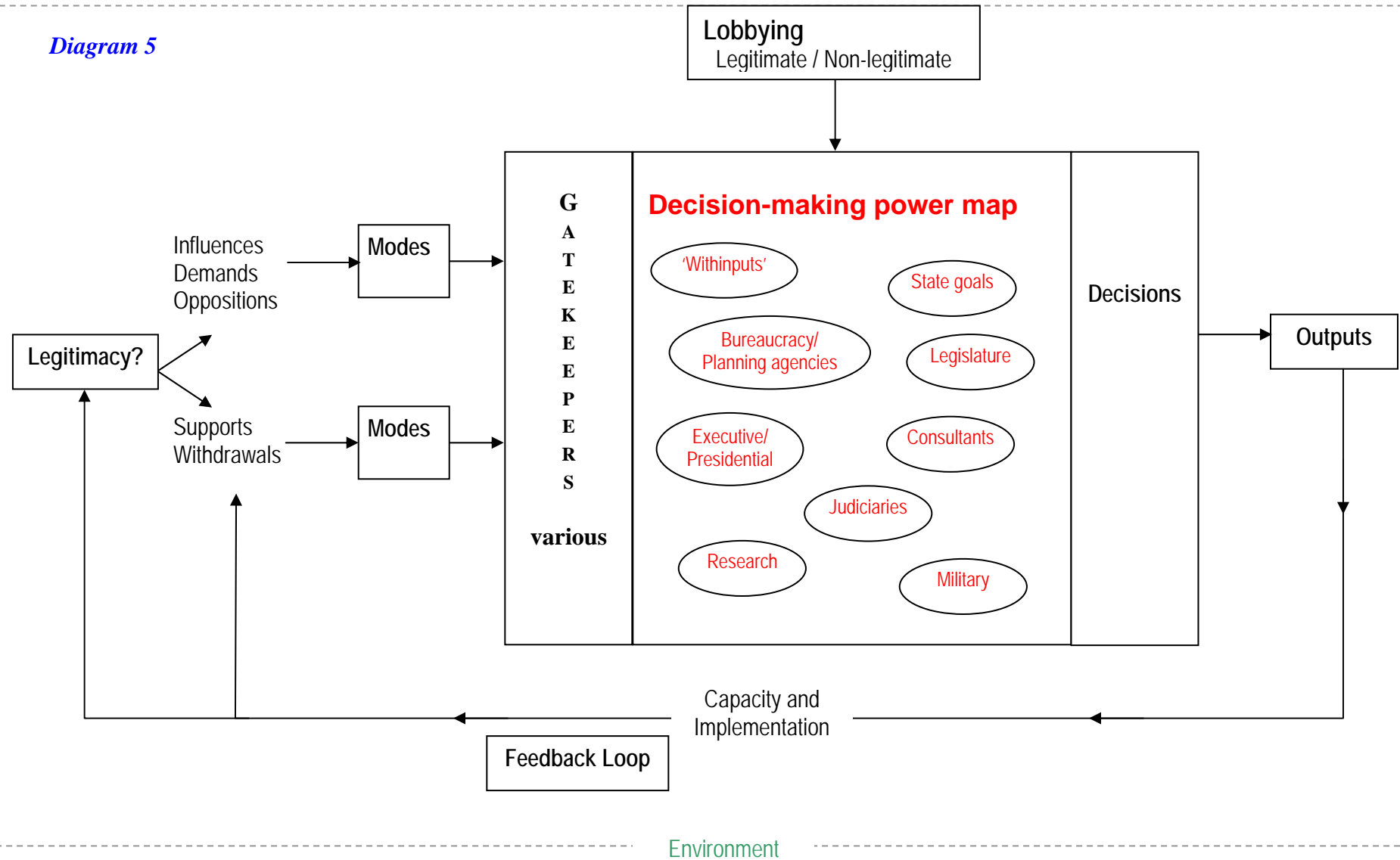


Diagram 6

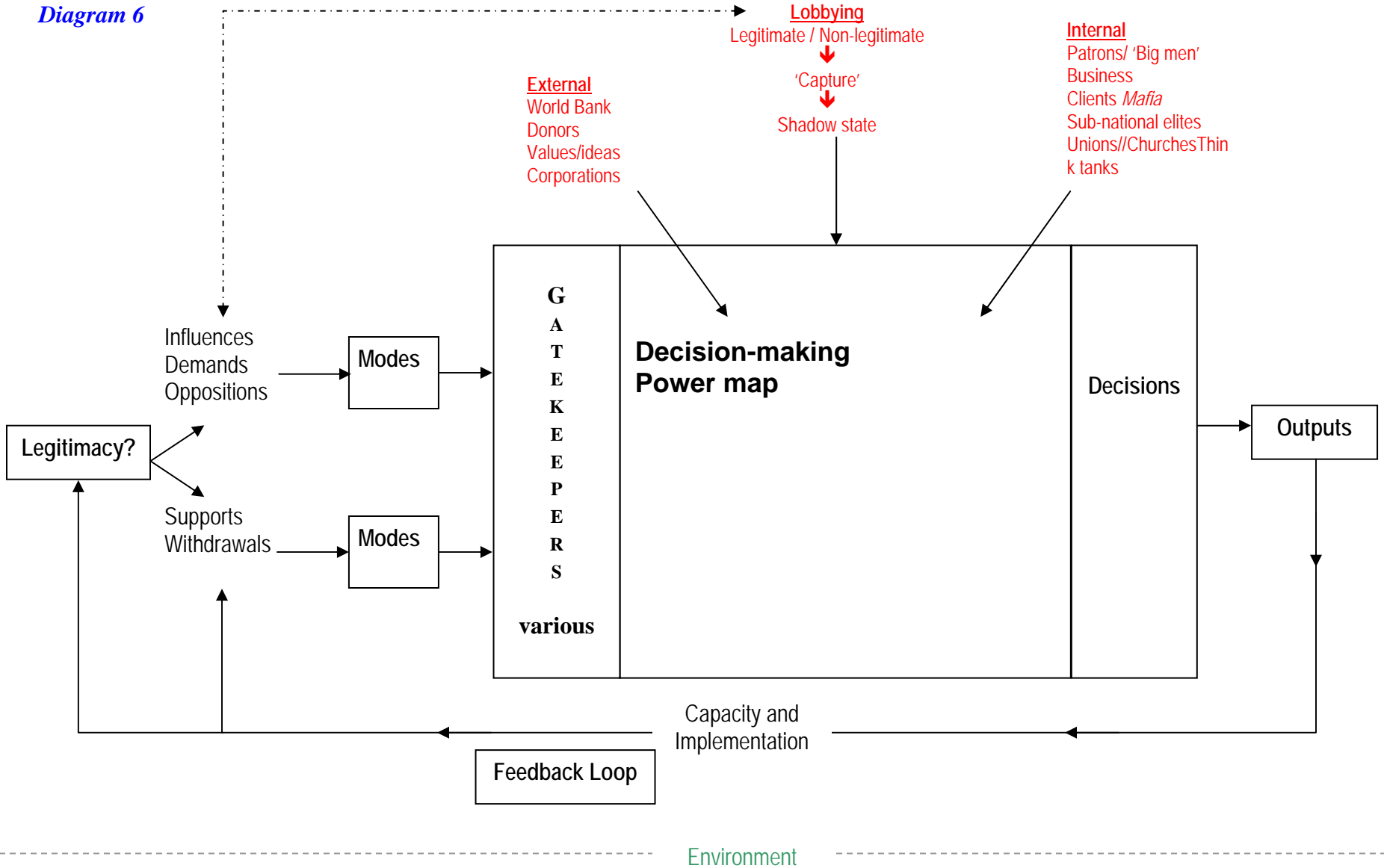


Diagram 7

