

Centres of Government in Fragile and Post-Conflict States A Literature Review¹

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I. Introduction

The importance of strategic policy making and political leadership in fragile and post-conflict states is increasingly recognised. In many countries recovering from conflict, there may be a 'strategic gap' due to the absence of planning and prioritisation frameworks that can help steer policy processes (Chandran et al 2008). There may be a variety of reasons for this, including lack of capacity, but also political considerations and constraints. For example, in Afghanistan, while there has been a proliferation of policy structures in recent years, there is no single, coordinated flow of information to monitor and oversee government performance (Ibid). This may reflect a lack of coordination capacity, but may also be a deliberate strategy by the current government as a means to maintain political control.

In this context, there has been growing interest in the roles and functions of centres of government. However, there are few dedicated studies of these centres in fragile and conflict-affected countries to date. This review therefore sets out some key concepts and practical insights into what shapes the forms and functions of centres of government. To do so, it draws on a relatively narrow body of literature looking at centres of government (and often focusing on offices under the executive, traditionally associated with these centres). As this literature is limited, the review also draws on much broader literature examining policy processes, political settlements and state-society relations.

We find that while there is relative agreement on the forms and functions of centres of government in theory, in practice there is a wide diversity in terms of how these manifest themselves in different country contexts. In part, this reflects wider structural, institutional, and more contingent factors, including, among others, the nature of the political system, the role of informal institutions and political leadership, levels of state capacity and the administrative or bureaucratic culture. These factors all contribute to shaping the particular configuration and roles of the centre of government. Moreover, fragile and post-conflict contexts pose some particular challenges for centres of government, including recurrent risks of conflict, very low state capacity (particularly in terms of human resources), potentially closed or secretive decision making processes, and a plurality of actors and institutions involved in policy making processes (including donor agencies). These factors mean that centres of government themselves are dynamic and changeable, can take a variety of forms and functions, and may be spread across a range of actors and institutions.

This review proceeds as follows: Section II sets out definitions of centres of government, with particular reference to the key functions of these centres. Section III highlights the core contextual factors which shape the development of centres of government. Section IV draws on experiences of centres of government in developed, transition, developing and fragile countries. Section V then reflects on recent experience of support to centres of government in fragile and post-conflict states and draws out some wider lessons for donors. Section VI offers some final reflections on remaining gaps in the literature.

II. Definitions of centres of government

In theory, there are a number of specified forms and functions of centres of government. In practice, as we shall demonstrate, there is wide variety in terms of how these functions operate and where they are situated. In this section, we look at some of the formal definitions of centres of government, including the range of functions they are typically thought to play. These common models are then contrasted with how these centres operate in practice in later sections.

Definitions of centres of government

Centre of government functions formally sit largely within the executive branch of government. Dunleavy and Rhodes define centres of government as "all those organisations and structures which primarily serve to pull together and integrate central government policies, or act as final arbiters within the executive of conflicts between different elements of the government machine" (Dunleavy and Rhodes 1990:4). This emphasises the role of the centre of government in policy coordination as well as a role in final policy decisions. Similarly, Fleischer highlights the extent to which those at the centre of government act as "co-ordination hubs", in terms of both 'intra-organisational coordination (within their own parent institution) and 'inter-organisational coordination' (interacting with core actors across government policy making) (Fleischer 2006: 1).

The offices conventionally associated with centre of government functions include those administrative organs that serve the head of the executive (Prime Minister or President) and/or the Council of Ministers or Cabinet (where it exists). Their names vary but can include: the Office of the President or the Prime Minister; the Chancellery; the Government Office; the Cabinet Office; the General Secretariat; and/or Executive Office.³ In some countries, it can refer to one organ or to a combination of two or more. Moreover, in practice, some functions of the centre of government may be located in a number of sites (particularly where there are multiple centres of leadership and power).

In certain contexts, key government ministries may form part of the centre of government (Ben-Gera 2007: 16). For instance, Ministries of Finance often play a central role in driving or delimiting policy and coordinating other ministries (as was the case in Uganda, Tumusiime-Mutebile 2010). At the same time, centres of government can be shaped by institutional and political dynamics within the centre – for example, in semi-presidential systems such as that in France, power struggles at the centre of government can occur between the President and the Prime Minister when they are from different political parties (under a situation of *cohabitation*), and this will shape the context for the centre of government (James and Ben-Gera 2004). Therefore, any analysis of the centre of government needs to first identify the key functions it plays in a given context and then identify where it is located (and whether there are multiple sites), rather than assuming a given form or function.

Functions of centres of government

In principle, centres of government are intended to perform a number of key functions. Firstly, centres of government may play roles in **managing or coordinating the policy process**, in terms of strategic policy and planning, policy development and the monitoring of some aspects of policy implementation. While policy is often thought to be developed and implemented by line ministries, the centre of government is seen as playing a leading role in coordinating this process, so that policies are in line with overall government priorities, consistent with each other, feasible and sustainable (Ben-Gera 2004: 5; Ben-Gera 2009). This coordination role, Ben-Gera suggests, "is crucial for the government's capacity to define and pursue its collective objectives" (2004: 6). Furthermore, Evans and Manning stress that this function is primarily concerned with policy management and not with formulation: "Policy is managed, not made in the centre of government" (2003: 33).

However, as some of the examples below suggest (see Section IV), there is often a **blurred line between roles in policy coordination and policymaking**. As an epicentre of power within the state apparatus, centres of government can provide policy direction; as "a deliberate action of government (the executive branch), policy is inevitably the creation of

both the centre of government as well as line ministries” (Ben-Gera 2007: 10; 16). Ben-Gera suggests that the bottom-up model in which “the Government Office merely staples together the items that have been received from ministries” exists only on paper in most countries (Ibid: 16-17). Instead, policy is more frequently made through ongoing interaction between ministries and the centre of government. As Ben-Gera summarises, “[i]n this manner, the preparation of the plan becomes an interactive process between ministries, which promote specific sectoral priorities, and the Government Office, which is responsible for considering cross-sectoral and government-wide issues. The final decision on the plan, including the resolution of any conflicts, is the responsibility of the government” (Ibid).

Secondly, the centre of government is involved in **support to the political leadership**, which involves the provision of logistical, policy and political advice as well as support to the political leader(s) of a given country (which might include the President, Prime Minister or chair of the Council of Ministers) (Ben-Gera 2009). This role is given much less attention in much of the literature on centres of government.

Under these two functions, eight core “dimensions of coordination” have been identified (James and Ben-Gera 2004: 13-14):

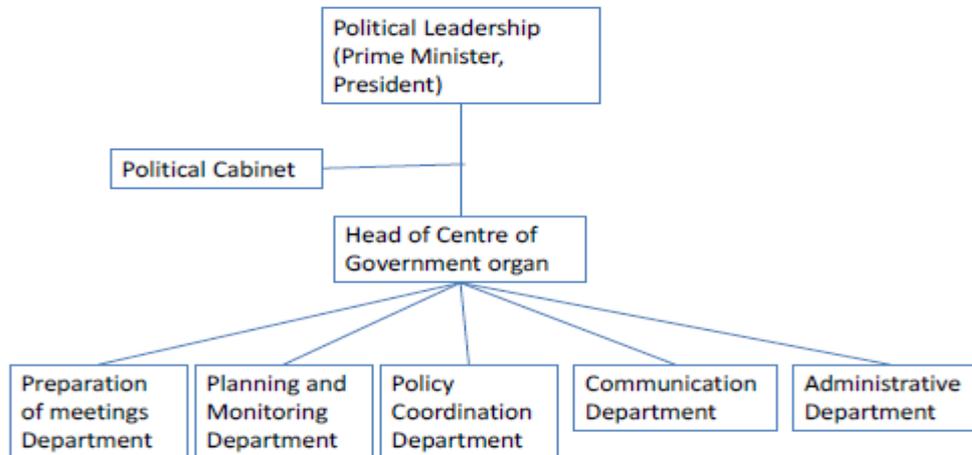
- Co-ordinating organisational arrangements in preparation for government sessions or meetings;
- Co-ordinating the policy content of proposals;
- Co-ordinating the legal conformity of draft bills;
- Co-ordinating the preparation of Government programme and priorities, and their links to the budget;
- Co-ordinating communications messages;
- Co-ordinating the monitoring of Government performance;
- Co-ordinating relations with other branches of the state, such as the Parliament; and
- Co-ordinating specific cross-government strategic priorities.

The list above emphasises how centres of government relate to other state actors, and the roles they can play in both inter-government coordination (for political leaders) and intra-government coordination (across government departments and ministries). However, centres of government often play wider roles in their engagement with civil society and citizens, both as part of policy coordination/formulation and in their political advisory roles. This is discussed further in Section III.

Structures of centres of government

The literature highlights few common (formal) structures or institutional features of centres of government across different contexts, as is apparent in the discussion of country models below. In practice, their composition grows out of specific contexts. In part, this reflects the need to retain flexibility to changing political dynamics. For example, the literature suggests that there is greater variety in centre of government structures than in many line ministries in part because of the extent to which they are shaped by constitutional and legal structures but also because of the need to remain flexible to changing political conditions and to adapt to the personalities of political leaders (James and Ben-Gera 2004: 9). This means it is important not to pre-judge where centres of government are located and how they are constituted. In relation to the offices commonly associated with centres of government, a number of features are thought to be present (see Figure 1). As mentioned, this represents just one possible model, and in practice these vary widely depending on context.

Figure 1: Common structures of offices under the Executive (adapted from Ben-Gera 2009: 6)⁴



Looking at the key functions and structures together, there may be a range of roles played by centres of government, from more logistical roles in terms of the provision of support to government meetings, to more strategic roles in terms of planning or developing documents (such as national development plans and the national budget), and coordinating the policy process. There are also more overtly political roles in terms of the provision of advice to political leaders (including speech writing). Finally, with increasing frequency, press and communications offices are located at the centre of government, due to the highly political nature of communications and the importance of carefully articulating government messages (Ben-Gera 2004: 7; 34). As Ben-Gera explains, “[i]n recent decades, the link between policy and communications has been growing stronger, along with the link between politics and the media. As a result, the process of policy development and government communications is becoming interwoven” (Ibid).

Wherever centres of government sit, and however they are configured, they can often involve a combination of technical and more political staffing. The more permanent (technical) element is intended to ensure continuity of procedure and policy knowledge, while the more temporary element (political) provides political advice and can adapt to political leadership changes (James and Ben-Gera 2004: 12). The World Bank neatly captures these two elements:

Governing involves bringing together two major groups of players: the permanent, career public service or the administration, and the partisan political institutions charged with making policy decisions. Key to linking these two groups are central agencies; organisations which tend to have one foot in the administrative world and the other in the political world. These organisations are the ‘buckles’ that link the political and the administrative, and as such are crucial elements in any process of governance (World Bank 2001).

In practice, as we analyse below, the balance between technical and political elements varies widely, depending on the particular context and a range of historical and structural features (see OECD 2007a). Moreover, as Peters (2010) notes, the separation between political and administrative or technical roles may be considerably blurred in practice. This may be particularly apparent where the civil service as a formal institution is not well developed.

Evans and Manning (2003) have suggested some important competencies for what they term ‘well-performing’ centres of government, drawing largely on a Westminster model of government (see Table 1). They identify four main stages of the policy management process and the competencies required at each stage, again reflecting the wide range of roles that staff are required to play.

Table 1: “Ideal-type” competencies of centre of government (adapted from Evans and Manning 2003: 33, based on Westminster-style systems)

Policy management process	Core competencies of centre of government
Stage 1: The Executive commits to broad policy commitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer “modest assistance” in integrating policy and fiscal planning • Ensure horizontal policy coordination
Stage 2: Departments prepare policy and budget proposals for policy commitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiate feasible policy and legislative programmes with line ministries • Analyse departmental proposals • Ensure consultation on the Council of Ministers agenda
Stage 3: The Executive provides adequate budgets, removes procedural obstacles, and considers likely reactions of external veto players	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipate possible obstacles in Parliament, elsewhere • Ensure quality of legal drafting • Facilitate budget discussions
Stage 4: Departments implement policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote decisions • Selectively monitor implementation

The table above outlines an ‘ideal type’ model of centres of government, based on a particular form of government. In practice, it is unlikely that many centres of government conform to this model. In the case of fragile states, there may be a number of specific features which shape the key functions of the centre of government and where it is situated (these are discussed in more detail in Section III).

III. What shapes centres of government?

While there is agreement in the literature that the formulation and functions of the centre of government depend heavily on wider historical factors and context, there is less agreement on which specific factors shape their formation or development and how. Instead, a wide range of factors and dynamics are put forward. This review focuses on a number of dimensions which seem to be particularly salient in seeking to understand how centres of government have developed in a given context and what their particular functions and forms might be. These include the nature of the institutional framework and historical legacies; the role of informality and political leadership; levels and forms of state capacity, the role of interest groups, and the nature of the bureaucracy. Each is analysed in greater detail below.

Institutional framework and historical legacies

Types of political systems shape the functions and structures at the centre of government, and these systems in turn are shaped by the historical legacies and institutional features of a given context. Centres of government are likely to look different under parliamentary systems (for example, the Westminster system as in the UK, Canada, India, or more consensus models such as Germany), presidential systems (prevalent in much of Sub-

Saharan Africa), and hybrid systems (for example, those which might be labelled semi-presidential, such as France or parts of Eastern Europe) (James and Ben-Gera 2004: 5-6).

These types of political system have implications for the nature of the separation of powers and how different branches of the State relate to each other. These will all shape the power balance, incentives and policymaking processes within which centres of government need to operate (see IDB 2006: 54). The functions of the centre of government can also depend on the nature of the incumbent party. The impact of party politics on government processes, particularly executive government processes, has been largely understudied and the influence of parties needs to be taken into account in examining centres of government (Blondel 2000). According to Blondel, party politics, or 'party government', matters because even though the government relies upon the support of the party, it is not unlimited in its decision making ability. Rather, the party acts as a form of check on government, and possesses its own interests and dynamics that can (and often do) conflict with those of the government (Ibid: 2). In contrast, a body of literature on dominant party systems highlights the extent to which these parties can become fused with the government and the state. For example, in parts of South America, sub-Saharan Africa and the former Soviet Union, dominant parties can "have a virtual lock on the system" (Carothers 2006: 8). The centre of government can therefore be bound by political party interests.

These features shape centres of government in multiple ways. Firstly, very practically, they shape how the centre of government is organised. Presidential systems, for example, commonly have large presidential staff and smaller staff to support the Cabinet, while this is reversed under collegial systems⁵ (James and Ben-Gera 2004: 5-6). This is more complex in hybrid systems, where both the President and the Cabinet may require a large staff (Ibid). Secondly, the nature of the political system shapes the focus of the work of centres of government. This is because "staff must show particular sensitivity to where power lies, and to shifts of power between institutions and between personalities", for example in terms of the political support they provide to a President or to Cabinet (Ibid). Thirdly, the political model shapes the remit of centres of government. In some contexts the legal and constitutional framework might be such that these centres are largely an administrative organ. In others, there may be greater room for political manoeuvre, for example where centres of government themselves help shape the balance of power between the President/Prime Minister and other Ministers (Ibid.).

While these general categories have some utility, there is consensus on the need to be careful in the assumptions made in comparisons between presidential and parliamentary systems. Blondel and Manning usefully remind us that the assumption that cabinet government is always 'collegial' in style and that presidential systems are uniformly 'hierarchical' is not always accurate; in practice, there are a wide range of systems under these labels (2002: 472). In many fragile contexts, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, some form of presidential or hybrid system is predominant (World Bank 2001).

Alongside comparisons of presidential, parliamentary and hybrid systems, it may be useful to consider the number of veto holders or "veto players" in each context (Tsebelis 2002, Box 1). These are the actors who need to agree to any policy or political change. They are likely to set the parameters for centre of government operations. Each system has its own configuration of power and veto players, determined by the nature of the political system and how power is distributed. The effective number of veto players is likely to increase where there are multiple power centres vying for influence, where a given context has a higher number of institutional veto points (for example, in terms of separation of powers), and/or where political actors who control those veto points have diverse interests (IDB 2006: 20).

Box 1: Defining veto players (drawn from Tsebelis 2002)

Veto players are defined as “individual or collective actors whose agreement is necessary for a change of the status quo” (Tsebelis 2002: 18). The number and location of veto players shapes the ability to change the status quo. They can include:

- Individual veto players: a president or monolithic political party
- Collective veto players: a parliament or a weak political party
- Institutional veto players: generated by the constitution e.g. the US Constitution specifies that legislation be approved by the president, House of Representatives and the Senate
- Partisan veto players: generated by the political game. For example, if the House of Representatives is controlled by a single cohesive party then, while the House is an institutional veto player, the majority party is the real (partisan) veto player.

The features described above primarily draw on non-fragile contexts (reflecting higher levels of analysis of centres of government, and policy processes, in these contexts), but they do have some relevance for fragile and conflict affected countries. Understanding some of the formal functions for centres of government in fragile states needs to be embedded within an understanding of the wider political system (whether parliamentary, presidential or a hybrid), the balance of power between different branches of the State (and state and non-state actors), the nature of party politics and the incentives and location of key ‘veto players’. For example, in Afghanistan, warlords may be key veto players and they exert great influence in policy processes, while in other fragile contexts, particular ethnic or religious groupings may play these roles (Brinkerhoff and Johnson 2008).

There is a vast literature on the different challenges that fragile and post-conflict states confront, and wide-ranging debates on definitions and concepts of state fragility. This review does not attempt to synthesise this work. Rather, it seeks to identify some of the most salient issues in relation to centre of government functions. According to the OECD, a fragile state is defined as, “[a] state with weak capacity to carry out the basic state functions of governing a population and its territory and that lacks the ability or political will to develop mutually constructive and reinforcing relations with society” (OECD 2007b). Others have highlighted the need to move away from seeing fragile states as static, towards recognising the wide variety of contexts included under this category and viewing fragility as a spectrum (Elhawary et al 2010; Cramer 2006; Brinkerhoff and Johnson 2008). Bearing this in mind, this review highlights some of the factors likely to be present in fragile and post-conflict states specifically, while also recognising the heterogeneity of these contexts (see Table 2).

Table 2: Typologies of fragile states⁶

State Typologies	Description
Fragile state	Failure of the state to perform functions necessary to meet citizens’ basic needs and expectations. Fragile states are commonly described as incapable of assuring basic security, maintaining rule of law and justice, or providing basic services and economic opportunities for their citizens (DFID 2010; OECD 2007b)
Weak State	Poor states suffering from significant gaps in security, performance and legitimacy. They lack control over certain areas of their territory, however may still be capable of repression and authoritarian tendencies (Rice 2006)
Crisis State	State under acute stress where reigning institutions face serious contestation and are potentially unable to manage conflict and shocks. A state can recover from crisis, or can remain in crisis over relatively long periods of time, or can unravel further and collapse (CSRC 2006)
Failing State	States that are substantially failing their citizens and/or are failing to achieve economic growth (CRISE 2009)

Failed state	State is marked by the collapse of central government authority to impose order resulting in loss of physical control of territory and/or the monopoly over the legitimate use of force. Crucially, it can no longer reproduce the conditions for its own existence (Rotberg 2009)
Collapsed state	Collapsed and failed states are often used interchangeably to convey a situation where the state has entirely ceased to function (Zartman 1995)
Warlord state	State where virtually all power is channelled through a real and highly organised (but not formally recognised) patronage system based on rulers' control over resources and violence (Reno 1998)
Conflict-affected states	States which are in conflict, are transitioning out of conflict, or which have previously been affected by conflict (often in last 1-3 years)

States may exhibit more than one of these typologies, and will often move in and out of these categories over time. As the above table demonstrates, experience of violent and recurrent conflict can remain a defining feature of many fragile contexts, with countries entering periods of relative stability but then falling back into conflict (Elhawary et al 2010: 1). This is particularly the case where the nature of the political system and the political settlement is in flux. The authority of the state may be challenged in these contexts, with different groups vying for power (Engberg-Pedersen al 2008: 30). Conflict dynamics – including ideological, ethnic, social or other tensions – therefore shape the overall context for governing (and may have led to some form of power sharing) (UNDP 2007).

Such instability can impact upon the centre of government in at least two ways. Firstly, it may render political leaders insecure in their positions, encouraging them to build more centralised or authoritarian regimes which rely on an elite and loyal cadre. Secondly, the lack of institutionalisation can mean structures themselves shift very quickly, making the policy process unpredictable and ad hoc, or there may be fragmentation within the policy management system, which also undermines the internal coherence of the state.⁷ It is therefore important to keep in mind that, in fragile states, the structures and functions of the centre of government are likely to be fluid or contested, which makes it difficult to determine with full certainty what exactly the centre of government looks like in such settings. Furthermore, where return to conflict or increased violence seems likely, centre of government functions may need to be assessed in terms of whether they contribute to resolving or perpetuating patterns of exclusion and conflict. In other words, centres of government may be sites that help to address or to perpetuate drivers of fragility.

Some of the root causes of fragility include histories of armed conflict, political instability, demographic pressures, poor human development, and international or regional drivers – trigger events can then push countries into conflict or support their transition out of conflict (Brinkerhoff and Johnson 2008). As Brinkerhoff and Johnson note, it is important not to rely on static analysis (as these states are themselves dynamic) and the application of general lessons needs to be contextualised to a given country's trajectory and circumstances (Ibid). Collier usefully suggests lengthening timeframes when approaching fragile states, as history reminds us that non-fragile states themselves went through 'painfully slow' and circuitous processes of formation (2009: 169). We bear these issues in mind as we consider both what shapes centres of government in a range of countries and the different roles and functions they play in relation to fragile and conflict-affected states.

The role of informal institutions

As has been emphasised, much of the analysis above is based on formal institutions and rules. Pouligny warns, however, that too often we focus on "the formal design of institutions more than the social context within which these institutions operate and the norms that support them. Yet, in their absence, institutions may appear as mere shells or 'empty boxes'"

(2010: 2). Looking at the centres of government through purely formal institutions might mask the fact that in practice much power and decision making takes place through informal channels. There is increasing recognition of the extent to which many of the rules of the game which structure political life are informal, in that they are “created, communicated, and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels” (Helmke and Levitsky 2004: 725). As an example of how informal institutions work, Helmke and Levitsky cite the fact that for decades, Mexican presidents were selected not according to formal rules (in the Constitution, party statutes or legal rules), but rather “via the *dedazo* (“big finger”) - an unwritten code that gave the sitting president the right to choose his successor” (Ibid: 726). To understand the incentives that shape and constrain political behaviour, we therefore need to assess the interaction between formal and informal institutions and processes. In many developed country contexts these tend to be mutually reinforcing whereas in many developing country contexts (and particularly in fragile states) they tend to work in tension.

Informal rules and institutions impact on national policy making in that they can determine how funds are used, which policies are promoted and how decisions are taken (Cammack 2007: 602; Unsworth 2010). In some contexts, this has contributed to the prevalence of patronage and clientelistic networks which political leaders use to secure loyalty and consolidate their power (Cammack 2007: 600; Aye 2005). In others, informal rules and institutions may rely on ‘divide and rule’ strategies, such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Nigeria, where there is a more fragmented, “spoils system” (di John 2010: 5). And in others, these systems may have become more formally institutionalised, contributing to a wider distribution of patronage which may have helped facilitate greater stability, as di John argues in relation to post-conflict Zambia (di John 2010; Box 2).

Box 2: Understanding the political settlement in Zambia

Di John argues that the ability of post-independent political leaders in Zambia to construct a centralised form of patrimonial patronage actually provided the executive with the ability to view the distribution of state resources and the valuable assets in a more encompassing way. He argues that this has meant that “[w]hile there has been substantial faction fighting within Zambia, the maintenance of a centralised form of patronage prevented such faction fighting from developing into alternative sources of authority and power in the polity, which have proved de-stabilising to political order in more fragmented patrimonial regimes” and this was seen as crucial in contributing to subsequent conflict prevention (di John 2010: 4). For di John, what is crucial is the institutionalisation of centralised rule, which provides the executive with an interest in maintaining political stability (Ibid: 8-9).

Informal processes and institutions often have particular significance in fragile contexts. As Haider notes, “[w]hile formal state institutions may be weak or deemed illegitimate in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, there are often informal institutions that persist and retain legitimacy. These institutions are diverse and may include community mechanisms or customary local governance institutions. Often, they fulfil some of the functions expected of the state” (2010: 10). For Migdal (1998), the state’s struggle for social control is characterised by conflict between state leaders (who seek to impose a single set of rules), and other social organisations applying different rules in parts of society. The distribution of social control that emerges from this conflict is, according to Migdal, a main determinant of whether states become strong or weak. Challenges of fragmentation and mobilisation can guide leaders to focus on concentrating power and preventing other social organisations or competing leaders from accessing this power.

Understanding whether and how centres of government operate in contexts of patronage and the contestation of political power is therefore important in analysing the roles the centre of government plays within fragile and conflict-affected states. Moreover, centres of

government in these contexts may not be situated within the formal offices under the executive (such as the Office of the President or Prime Minister) but rather in external influences to which political leaders are responsive – it is in this regard that an understanding of informal processes and how they interact with formal institutions is particularly significant.

The role of political leadership

Political leadership is shaped both by formal institutions and the nature of informal rules. Drawing on experiences in a number of Latin American contexts, Grindle highlights the important roles which can be played by political leaders in reform processes. Where leaders faced significant political and institutional obstacles, Grindle argues that they drew on “institutional sources of power to undermine the institutional resources of reform opponents”, including using their ability to control the timing of reform initiatives, using their powers of appointment to increase capacity for policy change, and seeking to change the discourse or terms of political debate in order to increase public support for reform (Grindle 2004: 20).

Analysis from sub-Saharan Africa supports the argument that the nature of political leadership shapes the ability to set the agenda and develop policy reforms. Analysis of Uganda’s significant economic reforms and recovery from prolonged periods of civil war, from the 1990s onwards, reveals that many of the reforms adopted would have been impossible without the leadership provided by President Museveni and a small group of trusted advisers: “line ministers were furious at the expenditure cuts imposed by MoFEP [Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning] and at being told to live with their approved budgets. However, it soon became clear that MoFEP had the President’s full authority to do whatever was necessary to contain inflation. The economic technocrats had taken over” (Tumusiime-Mutebile 2010: 42). Collier also emphasises the importance of political leadership, particularly in uniting diverse or fragmented societies, pointing to the role of Sukarno in Indonesia and Nyerere in Tanzania (Collier 2009: 66). The extent to which political leaders can shape policy agendas will determine to a large extent the roles and level of influence of the centre of government, including in relation to key line ministries and other sites of political power.

Political leadership can be particularly important in transitions out of conflict. Khadiagala and Lyons (2006), for example, highlight that post-conflict governments in Uganda (led by President Museveni) and Rwanda (led by President Kagame) showed high levels of cohesion and organisational hierarchy in top leadership and decision-making structures. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has also been recognised as playing this role in post-conflict Liberia (Bøås 2009). Leadership can positively affect transition trajectories where unity is maintained and decisions can be quickly taken, although in some cases, including Uganda and Rwanda, they also undermined open debate and the acceptance of political rivals (Khadiagala and Lyons 2006: 10). Within this, understanding the extent to which the specific offices or the broader functions of the centres of government may reinforce closed decision-making and concentration of power will be crucial.

The role of interest groups

Centres of government are conventionally conceived of as primarily playing coordination roles across government (see Section II) but in practice, they also relate to actors outside the state in a number of ways. OECD-EC Support for Improvement in Governance and Management (SIGMA) programme country studies in the West Balkans and Eastern Europe have highlighted that only about a third of governments reported consulting with civil society on a regular basis (Ben-Gera 2007: 22). However, this does not necessarily imply a lack of

linkages between central government (and centres of government) and those outside the state, but rather differences in definition. A growing body of political economy analysis, for example, demonstrates the extent to which state-society relations are embedded in political and policy decision making.⁸

As Peters highlights, in virtually all political systems, attempts are made by interest (or pressure) groups to influence public decisions (Peters 2010). These interest groups may include business, trade unions, think tanks or civil society organisations (OECD 2003a:9). The extent to which centres of government are open to these influences will depend on a wide number of institutional, political and cultural factors (Peters 2010). These will shape the nature of the relationship between the two. It can include forms of 'legitimate' consultation, which in some countries are initiated by the government through formal consultation processes (such as corporatist representation through peak associations, as in Germany and Sweden). In terms of 'legitimate' influence, organisations like think tanks can play roles in consultation processes, alongside a range of civil society, labour and business interests. Bulgaria and other parts of Eastern Europe, for example, experienced a proliferation of think tanks, and an increase in their ability to inform and engage with policy (Krastev 2003). The extent to which and ways in which centres of government consult, are pressured by, and engage with different interest groups in formal or informal consultation processes therefore shapes their decision-making processes (and their openness or closedness in different contexts).

Peters also highlights other forms of engagement between interest groups and government. These include clientelistic or 'clientela' relationships in which an interest group becomes seen as representative of a given sector and becomes the natural reference point for those within government. The United States is often pointed to as an example of this in relation to particular business interests or, in developing countries, this role may be played by the church or the army (Ibid 2009: 184). More informal processes may also present, in which certain groups exert undue levels of influence given the constellation of power in place (such as war and drug lords in different fragile settings). 'Parantela' relationships may exist in which kinship or ethnic ties cement links between interest groups and those within the centre, or forms of 'illegitimate' relationships (where interest groups resort to violence or try to oppose the centre) (see Table 3). Parantela relationships involve a dominant political party or faction which links a pressure group to government policy making. These are more common in the former Soviet system, in a majority of African single-party states and in a number of Latin American countries (Ibid: 186). Peters also points to examples such the Indian National Trade Union Congress and its links to the Indian Congress Party or to the British Trades Union Congress and its links to the British Labour party (Ibid: 187).

Table 3: Characteristics of interest group-bureaucracy links

Types	Scope	Influence	Style	Impact
Legitimate	Broad	Great	Bargaining	Redistribution/self-regulation
<i>Clientela</i>	Narrow	Moderate	Symbiosis	Self-regulation/distribution
<i>Parantela</i>	Narrow	Moderate	Kinship	Regulation/distribution
Illegitimate	Variable	None/great	Confrontation	None/redistribution

(Source: Peters 2010: 171)

Dimensions of state capacity

Levels and forms of state capacity influence policy processes and centre of government functions in a number of ways. Grindle identifies different dimensions of state capacity -

institutional, technical, administrative, political and implementation (see Table 4 below). Technical capacity refers to the ability to generate analysis and options, alongside the ability to set and manage policy. While Grindle does not focus on centres of government specifically, it is this form of capacity which is most commonly linked to these centres, particularly in terms of generating analysis and policy options (as discussed in Section II). Grindle highlights that some forms of crisis (particularly economic crisis) can strengthen this form of capacity, because it generates a sense of urgency to act on reforms and in this way increase the visibility and influence of technocrats and technical capacity (Ibid.). Grindle distinguishes between institutional and political capacity. Institutional capacity is linked to the formal 'rules of the game' in terms of the legal and constitutional frameworks which regulate economic and political interactions. Political capacity, on the other hand, refers to channels for representation and conflict resolution, linked to the responsiveness of political leaders and the ability of citizens to participate in decision making. Centres of government are also expected to have a certain level of political capacity, in terms of coordinating key actors both inside and outside the state.

Table 4: Five dimensions of state capacity (adapted from Grindle 1996)

Concept	Definition	Key variables
Technical capacity	Includes capacity to generate analysis of economic problems and options as well as the ability to set and manage macroeconomic policies	Level of experience and training of analytical staff in economic agencies; authority of central economic agencies (Ministry of finance, central bank etc); levels of managerial capacity.
Implementation capacity	The extent to which policies can be delivered	Particular dynamics of the state (e.g. level of centralised control); nature of political settlement and rules of the game; access to resources; role of external actors
Administrative capacity	The effective administration of basic public services and infrastructure	Ability to deliver basic services; ability to mediate social and economic demands within administrative processes.
Institutional capacity	The 'rules of the game'; the legal and constitutional frameworks which regulate economic and political interactions	Authority and legitimacy of the government; levels of societal agreement on rules.
Political capacity	The channels of representation and mediation between citizens and the state	Levels of responsiveness of political leaders, levels of civil society activism, role of special interests

Overall, state capacity in the different dimensions outlined above is likely to be very low in many fragile and conflict-affected states and territories. Technical and implementation capacity is likely to be particularly weak (especially where there are poorly skilled staff and weak infrastructure). Institutional capacity may be more variable, as it depends on levels of prior institutional capacity. For example, Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina have been shaped by their transition from UN trusteeship or externally controlled governing authority, requiring the recruitment of new government officials and the transfer and reorientation of officials working for the previous governing authority. However, they are working from some institutional memory of state capacity (Rondinelli 2006: 2).

In contrast, countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan and Timor-Leste present contexts in which there is a need to create entirely new governments based on new constitutions, along with partially or wholly new civil service systems (Ibid.). In other contexts, regime change has

instigated the reshaping of state capacity. In Cambodia, a coalition government had to be formed from opposing factions, sometimes requiring a balancing of the civil service by recruiting new public officials from dissident groups; In Ethiopia, an existing government has sought to establish its legitimacy with, and extend its authority to, territories or groups that militarily opposed the ruling regime (Ibid.). Furthermore, the incentives of political leaders themselves are important – where they are more concerned with maintaining security or consolidating their power, developing functions for longer term strategic thinking or planning are likely to be a lesser priority (Campbell and Hannum 2009). Related to this, where there is low state capacity (particularly at the central level) this in turn can shape incentives towards political competition on non-policy grounds (for example, patronage).⁹

The role of bureaucracies¹⁰

One important element of state capacity is the capacity of the bureaucracy. Typical approaches to bureaucracies draw on Weberian notions of professionalism and impartiality (Weber 1947). However as IDB and others point out, in practice the roles played by bureaucracies have not always conformed to this ideal: “The bureaucracy plays varied and contradictory roles in the policymaking process, depending on how closely it approaches the ideal of being a neutral and professional actor that guarantees the stability, adaptability, and public interest of policies or mainly functions as a private resource: either of political parties, which use it to obtain votes, or of civil servants, who defend their own interests while being protected by job security” (IDB 2006: 67). Similarly, Rocha Menocal draws on examples from Mexico to argue that technocrats may not always be free of a political agenda (Rocha Menocal 1998). In contrast, Evans argues that an effective bureaucracy needs to be embedded within a wider network of actors and interests (1992: 176). This points to the importance of analysing bureaucracies in relation to their surrounding political context and the motivations and networks of political leaders (see also Grindle 1996).

Peters highlights that in many developing countries, civil service staff have tended to be recruited on the basis of patterns of patronage or party membership, rather than merit (as is assumed under models of an impartial or neutral bureaucracy) (Peters 2010: 193). He points to parts of Francophone Africa where he argues that “a number of one-party regimes have attempted to use partisan control to replace “selfish individualism” with “patriotic socialism”” (Ibid.). He also highlights past examples of partisan control over the bureaucracy from the former Soviet Union and other European communist countries, as well as modern day China (Ibid.). The IDB (2006, 2010) usefully suggests a typology of bureaucracies, which analyses the impact of low capacity, clientelistic relationships and parallel systems – all of which are common in many fragile and conflict-affected states (Table 5).

Table 5: Typologies of bureaucracies (drawn from IDB 2006: 71-73 unless otherwise stated)

Type of bureaucracy	Key features
Administrative bureaucracy:	Low capacity and relatively high degree of autonomy; Civil servants hired for political over meritocratic criteria, but have some job security; low technical competence and orientation toward good performance; limited influence on decision making processes
Clientelistic bureaucracy:	Low autonomy and low capacity; Public officials temporarily enter government because of loyalty or party affiliation, high turnover; “This type of

	bureaucracy is an extension of the political party”.
Parallel bureaucracy:	Defined as “technical teams” or “project teams”; characterised by low autonomy and high capacity; comprised of managers hired for specific technical skills under flexible contractual agreements (Ibid.)
Meritocratic bureaucracy:	High autonomy and high capacity; composed of permanent civil servants recruited on the basis of merit and incorporated into professional careers.
Hybrid bureaucracy	As the above categories are largely for heuristic purposes, it is probable that many states will exhibit a hybrid of two or more of these bureaucratic categories (IDB 2010: 164).

A report on US support to key ministries in Iraq highlights a number of challenges which seem to confirm aspects of both clientelistic and administrative bureaucracy. These include a lack of personnel with key skills; challenges of sectarian influence over ministry leadership; pervasive corruption; and poor security, limiting access to key counterparts and preventing key staff from attending training (GAO 2007). Box 3 examines centre of government capacity in Afghanistan, which seems to largely conform to the administrative bureaucracy typology.

Box 3: Centre of government capacity in Afghanistan (UNDP 2005)

UNDP implemented a ‘Support for the Centre of Government Programme’, which focused on the Office of Administrative Affairs and the Chief of Staff. It identified a number of key capacity constraints:

- Inadequate physical facilities;
- Complex, fragmented and cumbersome administrative processes;
- Lack of adequate information technology;
- Most staff lack necessary skills or experience to perform the functions required of them under the structures of the new government;
- Organisational structures are complex and include legacies of the previous eras of Afghan government;
- Current decision making processes at the centre of government are seen as unclear and ad hoc.

Finally, in many fragile states, human capacity is likely to be extremely low, due to the outflow of skilled individuals (from fears of repression or to seek better opportunities elsewhere) or the lack of use of existing skills (for example, the process of ‘debaathification’ in Iraq) (Symansky 2010). In part, large influxes of donor aid following a peace agreement or end to conflict further undermines this capacity, where it contributes to ‘brain drain’ of personnel and to the establishment of parallel systems (similar to the parallel bureaucracy model above) which further weaken state capacity. As a recent OECD report notes, the creation of these parallel structures can create “centres of resource allocation, focal points of lobbying and sources of patronage outside of the state, which can have a significant impact on the political processes that drive statebuilding, the processes for articulating and implementing policy and the sources of legitimacy of the state” (OECD 2009a: 15).

Box 4 summarises the main factors discussed in this section. This demonstrates the range of drivers and institutional features which are likely to shape how centres of government

develop. In seeking to locate and analyse centres of government, it will therefore be useful, as a first step, to map these factors.

Box 4: Contextual factors which are likely to shape centre of government functions

Regime dynamics:

- Nature of political system and the level of separation of powers
- The configuration of veto players
- Interaction between formal and informal rules of the game
- The nature of political leadership and of party politics
- Conflict drivers

Bureaucratic and administrative culture:

- Type of bureaucracy (administrative, clientelistic, parallel, meritocratic)
- Role and influence of technocrats
- Role and influence of interest groups

State capacity:

- Levels and forms of state capacity

IV. How do centres of government operate in different contexts?

Section II posed some challenges for how to locate centres of government, suggesting that in practice these centres may play a range of functions, may be located in multiple sites, and that the location of centres of government is itself likely to be dynamic or influx in fragile and conflict-affected states. Section III set out some of the key historical legacies and institutional features that shape how centres of government develop and the functions they play in a given context. Taken together, these suggest that centres of government cannot be approached in isolation but rather require an in-depth understanding of the wider political system and the power dynamics and incentives at play. With this in mind, this section provides some comparative analysis of centres of government in a variety of contexts, from developed, transition, developing and fragile countries, before Section V focuses specifically on support to these centres in fragile and conflict-affected states. The comparative approach employed here draws upon the work of Blondel, who suggests that as each country or region operates with particular political models or cultures, comparative politics is a useful methodological tool for cutting into such differentiated experience (1999: 160). This approach shows the wide variety of functions and forms that centres of government take.

Centres of government in developed countries

Providing an overview of centre of government models in developed countries is not meant to suggest that the analysis applies in the same manner to transition, fragile or post-conflict countries. However, developed country experiences can be revealing, not least because of the extent to which colonial and post-colonial experiences have shaped political institutions in many developing countries (World Bank 2001). Again, in practice these forms of government operate very differently across different contexts, but there may be some value in comparing experiences across countries.

How centres of government operate in developed country contexts are shaped by the wider contextual factors identified in Section III, such as the nature of the political system and configuration of veto players, administrative cultures, and the impact of changes of government. In some contexts, this contributes to greater roles in policy coordination and

even policy making, or to a more dynamic and flexible nature. Box 5 summarises some of the key features of the offices at the centre of government in France, Germany and the UK, revealing a wide diversity in terms of how they are constituted.

What explains this diversity in terms of the form and functions of centres of government in these countries? As suggested above, part of the explanation lies in the wider political and administrative context. For example, in Germany, German Basic Law makes the federal level government responsible for the majority of government policies. Implementation is carried out by 'Länder administrations' (at state level), which also have participatory rights in policymaking at federal levels, giving them an opportunity to act as veto players. In contrast, in UK, the unitary Westminster system with (often) single party governments and the concentration for policy formulation and implementation at the central level means potentially fewer veto players, and greater leeway for policy units in coordinating and managing the policy process (Fleischer 2006: 4).

In France, each minister in the government can appoint a *cabinet* (a dozen or more advisers) to provide policy advice, press relations, communications and planning (Peters 2010: 146). The use of such ministerial *cabinets* is even more extensive in Belgium – to the extent that they have been called 'counter administrations' (Ibid.) and it is prevalent in many other countries too. This can lead to multiple sites of power which centres of government must work with. It can also contribute to tensions within the centre of government itself, for example between political advisors and civil servants, particularly in contexts of transition or where political advisors are newly introduced to contexts with traditions of civil servants (OECD 2007a).

Box 5: Centre of government offices in France, Germany and the UK

- In France, the centre of government offices are constituted within the **Elysee** and the **Matignon**. The Elysee is the official residence of the President, as head of state, and houses his office, as well as the Council of Ministers' Chambers, where the Council of Ministers meets. The Matignon is the official residence of the Prime Minister who acts as head of government and head of the Council of Ministers. The civil service is staffed by *fonctionnaires*, with their Ministers reporting to the Council of Ministers on behalf of the Ministries.
- Germany: The centre of government office is the **German Chancellery** (*Bundeskanzleramt*), a federal agency serving the executive office of the Chancellor, or head of the German federal government. The chief of the Chancellery holds the rank of either a Secretary of State or a Federal Minister. The agency's primary function is to assist the Chancellor in coordinating the activities of the Federal Government and it is staffed by civil servants.
- UK: The centre of government office is known as the **Cabinet Office**, a Government department responsible for supporting the Prime Minister and Cabinet. It has various units to support Cabinet committees and to co-ordinate the delivery of government objectives through other departments. From 1999 to 2010, the Cabinet Office contained the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, which included a Communications Unit, Policy Unit and Delivery Unit. Since 2010, and following a change of government, these functions have been transferred to other parts of the Cabinet Office. This Office is staffed by a combination of career civil servants and politically appointed staff.

These factors have all shaped the particular configuration of centres of government, and have structured the extent to which these centres go beyond policy coordination to play roles in policy development. In the UK, policy units under the Prime Minister have had significant influence on the policy process, particular under the Labour Government (1997-2010); in France, numerous *cabinets* have been instrumental; in Germany, the scope for influence of these units is more constrained.

The development of centres of government is also impacted by national administrative cultures. Germany's legalistic administrative culture means that the German civil service is highly formalised and characterised by strong legal provisions which support a more unitary and hierarchical civil service. This creates stronger constraints for centre of government functions. In contrast, in the UK there is greater flexibility in light of the British common law tradition, contributing to fewer legal provisions governing the British civil service structure (Fleischer 2006: 5). In France, while there is a similarly legalistic administrative culture there is also a well-established tradition of civil servants – especially those in the *grand corps* – being more openly political (Peters 2010: 134). This again shapes the extent to which centres of government can go beyond their formal mandate of policy coordination to one of policy development. Finally, analysis of these centres in developed country contexts reinforces their dynamic nature, with centres of government often re-shaped (in terms of structure and personnel) in line with major changes of government and leadership (Box 6). This has relevance for many developed and post-conflict contexts too.

Box 6: The role of personalities in shaping centres of government (drawn from Fleischer 2006: 20)

Under Prime Minister Tony Blair, the British Labour Government post 1997 sought to use the centre of government as a device to gain greater control over Whitehall (in response to a perceived conservative bias from the previous government). The Prime Minister's Office's Policy Unit was designated to think through policy issues which the Prime Minister took special interest in (and also to look at cross government concerns) and was staffed largely by non civil servants (so called 'special advisers') (with the Cabinet Office taking on more of role in later years). In Germany, the Schröder Government post 1998 established a new unit under the Head of Chancellery, initiating a more ad hoc process which again sought to respond to perceived conservative bias of the previous administration and to address perceived internal political rivalries (with moves to concentrate centre of government staff under the leadership of key supporters).

Some of the thinking which underpins approaches to public management, including centre of government roles, in countries like the UK draw on concepts of New Public Management (NPM), which itself draws on management techniques and practices from the private sector. The main elements of this approach include promotion of forms of decentralised management within public services (for instance, through the creation of autonomous agencies and devolution of budgets and financial control), the increased use of markets and competition, and an emphasis on performance, outputs and customer orientation (Larbi 1999). Manning and Parison argue that this approach has the advantage of providing an internally coherent set of reform measures, but it is also based largely on the experiences of a small number of countries (UK, New Zealand, Australia) who share broadly similar characteristics (2003: 17). There has been wide debate as to the extent to which NPM concepts can be applied to developing countries (Adamolekun 2005; Ayee 2005; Polidano 1999). What seems clear is that many of the required characteristics or preconditions may not be present in many fragile and conflict affected states, and that overly ambitious NPM reforms have often had little traction in these contexts (Adamolekun 2005; Ayee 2005).

Centres of government in transition countries

Countries in Central and Eastern Europe have, in the main, transitioned from authoritarian communist rule (particularly under the former Soviet Union) to forms of democracy in which cabinet government has often been dominant (Blondel and Muller-Rommel 2001). However, these countries have still faced challenges of governmental leadership within these forms of cabinet government. For example, in the Baltic States and in Bulgaria, prime ministerial leadership has often been weak, contributing to governmental instability. In other countries (Albania, Romania and Poland) the dominance of Presidents have at some points also undermined government leadership (Ibid: 4-5). A lack of administrative capacity or effectiveness has also proved challenging (Ibid).

Within this context, a number of reforms have been instigated to centre of government offices and functions, either as a result of internal reform processes or due to the involvement of international actors, such the OECD, the EU, and the World Bank. Goetz and Wollmann usefully highlight that any understanding of reform efforts in this respect needs to recognise that under communist rule, the tasks of the central executive were primarily of an administrative nature, and did not involve policy formation, the discussion of policy alternatives, arbitration amongst contending interests or substantive decision-making (2001: 864). At the same time, party loyalty was demanded of all those in senior government positions (Ibid.). Centres of government were largely restricted to administrative-technical tasks serving the Council of Ministers (the prime minister and ministers), and did not carry out more political functions. To respond to this, a number of reform efforts began during the early phases of post-communist transition, including efforts to reshape organisational structures and functions at the centre of government.

Some of the pre-existing Councils of Ministers in these transition countries were re-shaped. In both Poland and Hungary, Prime Ministers sought “to underpin gains in formal and informal powers by remoulding the inherited centre of government” from an Office of the Council of Ministers to a Prime Minister’s Office, orientated towards serving the head of government rather than a collegiate body (Ibid: 872). In contrast, Goetz and Wollmann argue, centres of government in the Czech Republic and Bulgaria continued to focus on ‘administrative-technical’ duties for government as whole – and these offices continued to be known as the Offices of the Government and of the Council of Ministers, respectively (Ibid).

Goetz and Margetts (1999) highlight that progress in reforming centres of government in many transition contexts remains mixed. In practice they have tended to operate as “solitary centres” at times in isolation to their wider political and institutional environments (Ibid.). In part, this reflects historical legacies of these post-communist countries as well as ongoing capacity and capability gaps. Goetz and Wollmann suggest that what may emerge is a system in which “‘islands of excellence’, whether inspired by the precepts of Weberian public bureaucracy or the doctrines of the new public management, may enter into a stable long-term co-existence with unmodernized or at best partially modernized public institutions” (2001: 883). This could lead to new models of centre of government roles and functions.

A series of reports have looked at public management systems in the West Balkans and Eastern Europe and these have addressed centre of government dynamics too. They highlight some commonalities (at the time of writing), including a lack of centre of government capacity to provide strategic direction in Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Ben-Gera 2004: 25). Some variations were also highlighted – for instance, according to the country report, Albania was, at the time, seen as exhibiting a more vibrant NGO community involved in policymaking than most other

countries in the region (OECD 2003b), although the motivations for these NGOs may be disputed.

At the time of conducting these reviews, Croatia had a substantially larger centre of government than most countries reviewed, including the Cabinet of the Prime Minister, the Secretariat of the Government, Offices of the Coordination Committees, the Legislation Office, Offices report to the Government (different to line ministries), the Public Relations Office, the Office for Internal Supervision and the Office for Protocol (OECD 2003c: 19-20). Of potential relevance to post-conflict situations, Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina had ethnic quotas or prescriptions within their Parliaments or Council of Ministers, to balance the interests of previously warring groups (OECD 2003d: 15-16; OECD 2004: 19).

Since 1998, the OECD and the EU have been assessing policy making and coordination capacity in Central and Eastern European Candidate Countries and the West Balkans, using an agreed baseline through their Support for Improvement in Governance and Management (SIGMA) programme (which produced some of the reports referenced above)¹¹. This has taken place within a broader concern with public administration reform and includes considerable donor-funded support for reform in the Balkans/Central Europe and the countries of the former Yugoslavia (including Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia). In general, public administration reform efforts (which support to centres of government have often been a part of) have had four central aims:

- To reduce public expenditure: in part to maintain the attractiveness of the investment climate and the competitiveness of national companies
- To improve policy responsiveness and implementation: to overcome resistance from vested interests to the implementation of legitimate policies or ending of past programmes or practices
- To improve government as an employer
- To improve service delivery and build public and private sector confidence (Manning and Parison 2003: 12).

This has generally involved support to strengthen centre of government capacity and capability in terms of its functions of policy coordination and management, through a range of training, resourcing and other forms of technical assistance. There is less evidence of support towards strengthening policy or political advice to the political leadership, although some peer support and related activities are highlighted.

One of the key lessons identified in SIGMA reports is that the centre of government is a rather loose term that covers a large variety of practices in different country contexts. Moreover, and importantly for informing our understanding of fragile and post-conflict countries, these models are in a continuing state of flux (Ben-Gera 2004: 39). They are yet to reach (if, indeed, they ever will) a state of permanence or a fixed structure. Ben-Gera and others emphasise that commitment from the highest levels of the political leadership is particularly important in undertaking public administration and centre of government reforms in these countries (Ibid.).

Furthermore, attempts to reform centres of government in these contexts suggest that models or approaches imposed from other contexts are unlikely to take hold where they are not sensitively adapted to country context (Ben-Gera 2004: 11). Thus:

Lessons learned from international public administration reform cannot simply be transplanted without careful consideration of a particular country's own circumstances, institutional arrangements and capacities. This is perhaps even more

the case with respect to policy and performance management reforms, which are close to political leaders and processes and which represent one of the most complex areas of public administration reform (Dobrolyubova et al 2005: 94-95).

Centres of government in developing countries

Specific analysis of the role of centres of government in developing countries is limited, but a comparative study of Executive Offices (which play centre of government roles in many settings) in six African countries¹² highlights some of the challenges. These include the perception that the effectiveness of Executive Offices in parts of Africa has been undermined by the concentration of power in Presidents, patterns of patronage, legacies of secrecy resulting from colonial experiences, and the lack of legal or other constraints. This has meant that “[w]hen challenged, some African chief executives ...[have] change[d] constitutional or electoral rules in order to disadvantage their political opponents or to maximize their policy-making discretion.” (Bratton et al 1998: 6).¹³ Thus for Bratton et al, Executive Offices in many African contexts have sought to weaken checks and balances (Ibid.)

Similarly, van de Walle highlights that the centralisation of power around the President in many African settings has effectively placed the Executive above the law and in control of large proportions of state resources, with few accountability mechanisms. In these cases, the author argues that the Office of the President or similar can in fact become “a parallel government, with considerably more executive power than the actual ministries” (van de Walle 2003: 310). He goes on to argue that “[m]iddle-level managers within the presidency often wield more effective powers than permanent secretaries in the ministries, and even government ministers find themselves with little discretion over policy” (Ibid.).

Other case studies highlight centre of government functions that have played more productive roles in reform processes. In sub-Saharan Africa, there have been a number of efforts to reform centres of government as part of wider public administration reforms focused on improving service delivery. In Nigeria, for example, DFID has funded the establishment of SERVICOM (which stands for ‘Service compact with all Nigerians’) in order to improve service delivery across government. This included a SERVICOM office within the Office of the President responsible for monitoring whole of government progress and ensuring effective reporting and communication with the Presidency (Abdullah with Dyk-Robertson 2008: 13). South Africa similarly launched reforms of its centre of government, including the re-organisation of cabinet, in the late 1990s, with an eye to both decentralising power and improving centre of government leadership (Cameron 2009: 10-11). Furthermore, a recent study argues that in Tanzania the growing capacity of the government to design and lead complex reform programmes, led by the President’s Office, has set it apart from other African contexts (Morgan et al 2010) (see Box 7).

Box 7: The role of the President’s Office in Tanzanian public service reform (Morgan et al 2010)

The leadership provided by the Public Service Management Department in the President’s Office was seen as playing a crucial role in overseeing public service reform in Tanzania. In part, this reflected a number of initiatives undertaken by the government to strengthen the centre of government. This included: 1) bringing in skilled Tanzanians on transfer from other government departments (as well as skilled individuals from private sector, and some transfers from other countries) 2) peer to peer support as well as learning from reform practitioners in other countries (such as Canada and Malaysia) and 3) on the job training for middle and junior level PO PSM staff, including mentoring from senior staff (Morgan et al 2010: 32). The leadership of the Permanent Secretary in charge of the President’s Office was also seen as crucial, as was the role played by the working culture established: “Part of the explanation of the growth of PO-PSM’s capacity and performance lay in the importance of social, value-based, and symbolic incentives in shaping bureaucratic behaviour and the development of its motivation as an organisation” (Ibid.)

The strengthening of centres of government has also been characteristic of emerging 'developmental states' in the 1980s and 1990s, such as Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Chile and Brazil. Some analysts have argued that a 'development-oriented leadership' evolved within the centre of government in these countries, emerging from a clear consensus within the governing elites (administrative and political) over the scope and direction of development (Meyns and Musamba 2010; Weiss 2000). This suggests that strong centres of government can either reinforce patterns of patronage and the weakening of checks and balances or can support developmental strategies, depending on context (and the factors discussed in Section III). This makes it key to understand when centres of governments play developmental roles, and how these can be supported.

Centres of government in fragile states

By their very nature, fragile states often have ill-formed centres of government. Furthermore, this remains an understudied aspect of the emerging literature on centres of government. However, a brief overview of the make up of centres of government in several fragile states is instructive in highlighting the variety of forms and functions they can take.¹⁴

In Liberia, the centre of government formally revolves around the Executive Mansion, housing the President's residence and offices. Technically, the President is assisted in fulfilling their duties by the Vice-President and the Cabinet, though informally the President also seeks advice and support from other trusted advisors on a regular basis. The Office of the President is administratively led by the Minister of State for Presidential Affairs. This office is responsible for coordinating the activities of the President, and for providing support to the President in their executive functions in consultation with the Cabinet, key ministries and other institutions. But the formal centre of government remains weak in these areas. The Office of the President currently hosts advisers provided by the African Governance Initiative, with the aim of improving centre of government functions.¹⁵

The Afghan centre of government is located in the Arg, containing the Gul Khana, which serves as the offices of the President and the President's Protocol Office, the Offices of the President's Chief of Staff, the National Security Advisor's building and the Offices of the Spokesperson to the President. The President is supported administratively by the Office of the Chief of Staff. Highlighting the blurred nature of centre of government and central government functions, government departments function within the executive branch of the government and are able to propose acts and regulations pertaining to their portfolio.

The centre of government in Iraq is led by the President, as head of state (with two deputies, together forming the Presidency Council) and the Prime Minister of the Council of Ministers, as head of government. The Prime Minister wields executive authority and appoints the Council of Ministers that acts as a cabinet. The Prime Minister is assisted by two deputy-Prime Ministers and the Office of the Prime Minister. The President has limited executive authority and is a figurehead, as well as protector of the constitution.

These examples of centres of government in fragile states demonstrate the variation across countries. They also portray a rather static picture of centres of government, as they have come to be constituted after a period of conflict. But understanding how a centre of government has taken the particular shape that it has (to the degree that it can be identified) is crucial, which again highlights the importance of context and historical processes and trajectories. In other words, centres of government in fragile states cannot be analysed in a vacuum, but rather within the context of how a particular state has evolved over time and why. Moreover, Afghanistan and Liberia have not yet had a change of government following

post-conflict elections, and thus the implications of changes to political leadership cannot yet be assessed.

V. What role for external support to centres of government?

General challenges for donor engagement

Recent donor engagement in fragile and conflict-affected states, including support for processes of state-building, have generated a number of broad lessons that also apply to engagement with centres of government (OECD 2007a; OECD 2009a). This includes the recognition of the need to pay much more attention to context, to avoid the use of universal templates, and to commit first and foremost to 'do no harm':

By not understanding the history and power dynamics in a partner country, donor actions can disrupt the political settlement that underpins the state, weakening the incentive for powerful elites to buy in to statebuilding processes and increasing their incentives to opt out. "Doing no harm" means ensuring donor-supported programmes do not impact negatively on statebuilding processes, and that donors recognise that statebuilding is a long-term process and requires detailed analysis since what is appropriate in one country will not be appropriate for another (OECD 2009a: 29).

This implies the need to engage with political, economic, social and cultural realities, which may be challenging for the normative agendas that can inform statebuilding and development strategies more generally (Ibid: 29). In the context of centres of government, as the sections above demonstrate, this means engaging with the (formal and informal) realities of the forms and functions of these centres, rather than using models or templates drawn from other contexts.

Pritchett and de Weijer (2010) similarly point to the need to work within existing contexts, highlighting that donors often have unrealistically high expectations for reform in immediate post-conflict stages. This results in "a thin layer of compliance with international standards on the surface, but merely scratching the surface will expose the real characteristics of the organization, which is based on different values and is in possession of its own internal logic" (Pritchett and de Weijer 2010: 28). This can lead to a growing gap between *de jure* and *de facto* capability, further weakening an already fragile environment.

Donor imperatives towards short term results add additional pressures, contributing to supply-driven approaches that do not account for the longer time frames involved in building state capacity. This can be seen in the short term nature of much of the funding in fragile states – in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, only 10% of funding goes to programmes of three years or more (the majority going to shorter term support) (OECD 2009b). As Brinkerhoff and Morgan (2010) note, in unstable contexts, incremental and longer term forms of capacity development are more likely to be effective, whereas narrow interventions are unlikely to have much impact, but this is not yet reflected in much of the donor support provided to date.

External actors, including donors, influence governance arrangements and dynamics in fragile and post-conflict countries in multiple ways. Where there has been an international intervention either to prevent or stop conflict (or for a variety of other motivations), there may be a significant military presence, as is the case in both Iraq and Afghanistan. External actors can provide support to strengthen state capacity and to strengthen core functions of the state (such as security) as well as supporting development interventions. For instance, UK initiatives to strengthen the state and reform the security sector in post-conflict Sierra

Leone have been ongoing over the last decade, representing perhaps the most comprehensive efforts at state building by an external actor to date (Jackson and Albrecht 2010). Yet this post-conflict assistance can risk being wasted if capacity is not quickly developed to effectively absorb it. In Afghanistan, the World Bank has acknowledged that: “[i]nternational technical assistance flowed into the vacuum [of authority] at a rate that government was largely unable to plan for, or effectively control and coordinate. Some leaders have observed that there is little to show for the estimated US 1.6 billion that has been spent on technical assistance since 2002” (World Bank 2008: ix).

While significant amounts of development assistance are directed towards post-conflict countries, it is not often directed towards public administration or centre of government functions. In Afghanistan, for example, very little of the large amounts of development assistance have been directed specifically at public administration reform (World Bank 2008: xv). It should be noted, however, that it is also difficult to determine exactly how much assistance has been provided for public administration reform, as different donors use different categorisations and these categories often overlap with other related projects (Ibid). This difficulty highlights the lack of clarity surrounding concepts such as public administration reform, centre of government reform and civil service reform, which often overlap in practice (UNDP 2005: 6). Moreover, donors have themselves taken different approaches. The World Bank, for example, has been increasingly open to engagement with centres of government, while others (such as the African Development Bank) have been more reluctant. Greater clarity in the literature and amongst donors on these issues is needed.

In examining support to centre of government functions, attention needs to be paid to the extent to which donors or other external actors themselves substitute or crowd out some of the functions associated with these centres. In relation to Afghanistan, Ghani and Lockhart argue that the aid system has contributed to the creation of a “dual bureaucracy” where some work within an underpaid, under-resourced national system while others work for donor agencies or NGOs, leading to a brain drain from the managerial tier of government (Ghani et al 2005: 10; Ghani and Lockhart 2008: 100-101; see also OECD 2009a). Thus, where donor agencies are themselves fulfilling some of the policy coordination functions meant to be played by centres of government, or undermining their capacity through brain drain, the use of international experts, or substitution of the state, this will arguably need to be addressed, or at least recognised, before engagement with these centres is considered.

Support to centres of government in fragile states

Turning specifically to donor support to centre of government capacities in fragile and conflict-affected states, there are a wide range of activities which can be supported. These are commonly phased, with an initial focus on establishing the foundations for key centre of government functions and operations, including establishing the physical infrastructure of the office(s) and initial support systems (such as information and communication technologies), developing regulatory and policy frameworks for reform and building trust between key officials and donor staff or implementers of support (Haider 2010; Morrison 2006). Support then broadens to include support to strengthen policy coordination functions; policy and analytical support functions; strategic communication functions; and systems for monitoring key priorities, as well as support to linkages with other levels of government (see Haider 2010; Checchi and Company Consulting, Inc., 2008, Morrison 2006).

Some specific projects of support to centres of government that donors have undertaken offer some useful insights.¹⁶ For example, DFID has embarked upon such a project in Iraq, spending \$25.7 million and posting three full-time advisors and a number of international experts to support the Prime Minister’s Office, the Council of Ministers’ Secretariat and the

Government Communications Directorate (Office of the Special Inspector for Iraq Reconstruction 2007: 16). UNDP has previously provided similar support to the centre of government in Afghanistan, working with the Office of the President's Chief of Staff as well as the Office of Administrative Affairs (thus spanning both the political and administrative components of the centre of government) (UNDP 2005: 1). UNDP's support focused on building capacity, rationalising organisational structures and decision-making processes, redesigning administrative processes and upgrading equipment and facilities (Ibid: 5).

USAID has spearheaded efforts by a consortium of donors to assist the centre of government in Liberia through the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program (GEMAP). This Programme has worked within the Office of the President, as well as more broadly within the public service and state-owned enterprises, to promote good economic governance and appropriate public spending (USAID 2010). USAID perceives such improvements to be central to enabling the executive to push forward with its reform agenda (Chessen and Krech 2006: 7).

Similarly, in Iraq and Zimbabwe, DFID has been working through Adam Smith International to support centres of government. In Iraq, consultants worked with the Cabinet Secretary from 2007-2009, planning for the post-2010 election transition and drawing some lessons in terms of the structure of government for presentation to the new Prime Minister, when elected (International Development Commons Select Committee 2010). Assistance was given directly to the Prime Minister in Zimbabwe, in order that his Office might 'perform the normal functions that a head of government's office would usually undertake, including oversight of the budget, ensuring ministries followed through on the Government's agreed work plan and helping to resolve disputes between government departments (Ibid).'

A related, although more limited, series of projects have focused principally on leadership in fragile and post-conflict states. Of note are eight World Bank projects in Low Income Countries Under Stress (LICUS), including Burundi and Timor-Leste. These projects aimed to build "new skills, behaviours, and attitudes in situations, groups, and organizations playing a critical role in moving the war-to-peace transition forward" (Campbell and Hannum 2009: 1). The focus on leadership has also been picked up by AusAid, who have funded research into ways to foster better leadership in the Asia Pacific (Hanson and Oliver 2010).

An evaluation of UNDP's work in Afghanistan found that while a primary goal of the support was to strengthen coordination of policy decision-making, this objective had not been advanced, in part because of the lack of a wider enabling environment (Checchi and Company Consulting, Inc., 2008). It argues that a remaining challenge is that "[t]he Presidency requires an independent policy voice with the capacity to do policy analysis at a high level. Critical policy development functions that require strengthening include: framing the policy debate; focusing the voices that currently drown out critical policy issues requiring Presidential attention; initiating, formulating, developing, and/or synthesizing cross-cutting policies; managing policy records; and organizing Presidential policy advisers" (Ibid: 3). More straightforward areas of support (the renovation of facilities, IT support, streamlining administrative processes) were seen as much more successful. This suggests that while the first phase of reforms to centres of government can be effective (for example, establishing basic systems and infrastructure), moving to later phases of support poses additional challenges in terms of the wider enabling environment and how to work with existing incentives.

The Africa Governance Initiative (AGI), set by former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, has worked in Sierra Leone, Rwanda and Liberia to help strengthen centres of government and support political leadership.¹⁷ Its work suggests that even simple improvements to the systems around a leader (such as reforms to presidential diaries, standardised reporting on

government performance across ministries, or more effective Cabinet processes) can have significant impacts on a leader's capacity to drive delivery, also reinforcing the need to start slowly and incrementally (Blair 2010: 13).

Morrison (2006) discusses the work of Adam Smith International to support ministerial offices, including in Iraq. He sees the main objective of this support as assisting the creation of a "strategic space" which can ensure that access to (and the time of) a new leadership is managed appropriately, preventing them from being overloaded by "petitioners, press, and the multitude of administrative matters that always tend to rise to the top of the pyramid where and when government has broken down" (Ibid.). He argues that this form of support can help strengthen the image of a government following a conflict, citing an example of the French Press Corp, who reportedly never forgave the Interim Prime Minister of Iraq Ayad Allawi for keeping them standing in the sun for two hours outside the Prime Minister's Office in Baghdad due to confusion over scheduling (Ibid.). This may highlight the importance of some of the administrative and logistics functions of centre of government organs (such as diary management) which, if performed poorly, can undermine the credibility of the political leadership.

Lessons for support to centres of government

Ben-Gera sets out some recommendations for work with centres of government, drawing on experiences in transition countries, which have relevance for some fragile and post-conflict countries. These include:

- an emphasis on the importance of support at the highest political levels to reform the policy management system and centres of government (for example, the President or Prime Minister);
- the need for reform to seek to strengthen the main institution at the heart of the centre of government, which should be led by a senior internal official;
- the fact that reforms require longer time frames than is often conceived by donors (according to some estimates, even modest reforms can take approximately four years or more); and finally
- the need to properly sequence reforms (for instance to ensure that legal changes are first established, followed by recruitment, then new methodologies introduced and so on) (Ben-Gera 2009: 7).

This seems to be in line with many of the findings from evaluations of support to these centres in fragile contexts.

Morrison (2006) highlights a number of lessons learnt from operational experience in conflict-affected countries. Firstly, he highlights the need to act quickly. When a government is newly established, there may be a particular window of opportunity and openness to support the strengthening of strategic capabilities (Box 8). Secondly, he argues that establishing a mixed team to implement reform programmes is useful, and should include those with political skills. Such a combination of technical and political skills can enable the team to gain the attention of senior counterparts and to build the necessary support amongst the staff of the offices involved (Morrison 2006: 6). Thirdly, Morrison points to the need to focus on core staff such as the chief of staff, and emphasises that donors should not be perceived as running key positions:

An example of this was the USAID team that was 'running' President's Karzai's office until 2004 and was removed after being seen to be making policy decisions. It is also

thought that Interim Prime Minister Allawi lost credibility by utilising a British implant to fulfil the Chief of Staff function in his Office in the latter half of 2004 (Ibid: 4).

Other cited lessons include the need to avoid establishing precedents, for instance in terms of the pay and conditions of civil servants, as well as the danger of being drawn into political or partisan issues, which can be potentially damaging to support in the long run (Ibid.).

Box 8: Adam Smith International/DFID support to the Palestinian Territories

Adam Smith International and DFID were able to provide immediate support to Mahmoud Abbas when he was first appointed to the new post of Prime Minister in the Palestinian Territories. Early support to his office reportedly “enabled us to provide and have accepted competent professional advice on the proper roles of the Prime Minister’s Office and the Cabinet office – which then didn’t exist”. Further support was provided to establish a Cabinet Office to carry out a proper policy coordination function” (Morrison 2006: 3)

Members of the diaspora can be tapped into, instead of international staff, where they have the skills, experience and networks to adopt critical positions in government (PDG/OECD 2010). In Afghanistan, the IOM’s Return of Qualified Afghans Programme supported the Afghan government to place returnees in senior government positions, including the former Minister of Finance, Ashraf Ghani (Ibid: 16). But this can be challenging in post-crisis countries, where governments may rely too heavily on diasporas (instead of utilising skills available in the local population) or where they may reinforce informal ties (through patronage or kinship) if diaspora staff are recruited informally. Addressing these challenges may require basic needs analysis to identify specific skills required within centres of government and to ensure the cross-over of skills between diaspora and local staff (Ibid: 8).

Drawing on these general lessons, a number of factors seem to be particularly important for donor engagement with centres of government. Firstly, there is consensus on the need to pay much closer attention to context and to the political and historical processes around which centres of government have evolved (drawing on the dimensions discussed in Section III). This implies moving away from support for imported and superimposed models towards supporting localised – and locally driven - solutions (OECD 2009a; Pritchett and de Weijer 2010). Related to this, PDG/OECD has identified the need to provide support to strengthen strategic planning in fragile states but also the need to be realistic about what can be achieved by external actors. One concrete area that has been identified for support is the public outreach and communications arm of the government, including crisis management PR functions. (PDG/OECD 2009).

Secondly, the political nature of centres of government cannot be ignored. Rondenelli, in reference to public administration reform more broadly, has argued that “the prescription that reforms should make public administration more depoliticised, objective, and neutral in carrying out policies and providing services is often inappropriate in countries plagued by conflicts among ethnic, religious, cultural, or ideological factions” (Rondenelli 2006: 20). This is particularly apt for centres of government, which may, for example, need to play roles in balancing different ethnic or other tensions, as has been done in Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosovo.

Similarly former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair has argued that:

[T]o engage effectively with African leaders we need to be able to think politically, not just technically. This doesn’t mean being partisan or backing one political player over another. But it does mean recognising that when we work with leaders we are working with politicians, facing a particular set of pressures and with a particular set

of priorities, and standing in a leader's shoes means understanding what these are. (Blair 2010: 14).

This requires a greater focus on country ownership, and the buy-in of political leadership, in any external engagement with centres of government (Ibid.). According to Blair, donors often focus on minimising the ability to do harm, but not enough on "maximising the ability to do good" (Ibid: 8). He critiques existing capacity development efforts as unaligned to leaders' priorities and as tending towards parallel structures or attempting unrealistic reforms. Instead, he argues that what is needed is "a middle ground that links long-term system improvement to leaders' more immediate political incentives" (Ibid: 12). He usefully highlights that governments, in practice, are not monolithic but rather are "a set of sometimes co-operating, often competing organisations and personalities, with different values, worldviews, incentives and loyalties" (Ibid: 13). Situating centres of government within this analysis implies the need for much more nuanced and politically informed strategies, with strong ownership from the political leadership in-country. Box 9 summarises some of these general lessons for engagement in fragile states.

Box 9: Support to centres of government in fragile and conflict affected states

Centres of government can take a variety of forms and functions and may be spread across a range of actors and institutions. This means a first important step is to locate or map centres of government in these contexts. Following from this, experience to date suggests a number of possible lessons (which would benefit from further research):

- Support locally owned strategies, which work with leaders' political incentives
- Ensure buy-in from political leadership for reforms and act quickly to capitalise on 'windows of opportunity'
- Sequence support to focus on simple improvements to systems around the political leadership first, before moving to more complex reforms around policy coordination
- Consider the use of diaspora staff, rather than international staff, if there are key skills gaps within the centre of government
- Support leadership strengthening, including through specific training programmes

VI. Gaps in literature and further research

This literature review synthesises some of the relevant literature in relation to centres of government, and the contextual factors which shape their development. At present, there is a lack of evidence on the roles and functions played by these centres in fragile and post-conflict contexts, and a lack of robust analysis of how donors and other external actors have supported and engaged with these centres, other than that referred to above.

Particular gaps, which would benefit from further research, include:

- What are the distinctive features of centre of government offices and functions in fragile and post-conflict states? To what extent are the key functions of centres of government located within conventional forms, or are they located elsewhere?
- To what extent are reform strategies locally owned and do they work with existing political incentives? Where they do not, how might this be addressed?

- How should reform to centres of government be sequenced and what needs to be prioritised? Does some level of (administrative and political) capacity need to be in place for centres of government to be effective?
- What do 'good enough' reforms to centre of government functions and capacities in fragile states look like? To what extent are the policy coordination roles envisaged possible in many fragile contexts, in light of the plurality of actors involved in policy and implementation?
- How can donors more effectively support centre of government functions in fragile contexts (including for different phases of reform)? In what ways do donors undermine centre of government functions, and how might this be addressed?

¹ This literature review was commissioned by the OECD Partnership for Democratic Governance as part of a study on “Capacity Gaps at Centres of Government – Coordination, Implementation Monitoring, Communications and Strategic Planning in Post-Conflict and Fragile Situations”. Two case studies, in Liberia and Rwanda, will also be undertaken as part of this study, and a synthesis report will bring together hypotheses and lessons emerging from this literature review and the case studies, as well as recommendations for future donor engagement with centres of government.

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³ See the original Terms of Reference for this project.

⁴ This represents an ‘ideal type’ based largely on a Westminster model of government; in practice, for example, political cabinets may work as part of centres of government (officially or unofficially).

⁵ In collegial systems, the Council of Ministers is central to decision making processes, with an emphasis on collective responsibility (James and Ben Gera 2004: 5-6).

⁶ This table was compiled by the authors, drawing on a variety of sources, as referenced in the table, and on GSDRC analysis, see <http://www.gsdrc.org/go/fragile-states/chapter-1--understanding-fragile-states/definitions-and-typologies-of-fragile-states>.

⁷ For example, Weyland argues that higher levels of ‘organisational fragmentation’ can undermine the internal unity of the state (Weyland 1996: 42). Transitions out of fragility may increase the number of actors involved in decision-making processes and hence the number of veto players for centres of government, exacerbating organisational fragmentation. Mann also looks at the reach of the state, in terms of its ability to enforce policy throughout its territory, which he refers to as ‘infrastructure power’ (Mann 1989). Fragile states may suffer from a lack of ‘infrastructure power’ where the state does not have full control of its territory.

⁸ For an overview of political economy analysis see (DFID 2009).

⁹ Drawn from feedback from the Africa Governance Initiative.

¹⁰ There is a vast body of literature on the role of bureaucracies and their capacities, which is beyond the scope of this literature review. For further reading, please see Peters (2009); IDB (2006); Farazmand (1991); Evans 1992.

¹¹ Policy making assessments were conducted at the beginning of the exercise, then stopped, and then reintroduced. Initial assessments (in the late 1990s) examined: 1) Coherence of the legal framework for policymaking, 2) Inter-ministerial consultation on policy proposals 3) Agenda planning 4) Dispute resolution mechanisms 5) Central coordination capacity 6) Central strategic capacity 7) Coordination of European affairs 8) Overall assessment. Other assessments cover: civil service; administrative legal framework; public integrity; public expenditure management; public internal financial control; and external audit.

¹² These were: Benin, Botswana, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Mali and Zambia.

¹³ This argument is supported by others (such as van de Walle 2003) but has also been countered by more recent analysis which argues that some forms of patrimonial behaviour can also be developmental (see Kelsall et al 2010).

¹⁴ Keeping in mind that information about these centres of government is highly schematic and based on secondary sources, except for the example on Liberia.

¹⁵ Liberia is also one of the case studies that has been selected for this project so a fuller analysis of the centre of government in that country will be available in the near future.

¹⁶ These are meant to be illustrative examples of the kind of work that a variety of donors are undertaking to support centres of government and/or public administration reform, but they are by no means exhaustive.

¹⁷ The AGI is part of the Advisory Board that has been put together for this project.

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