

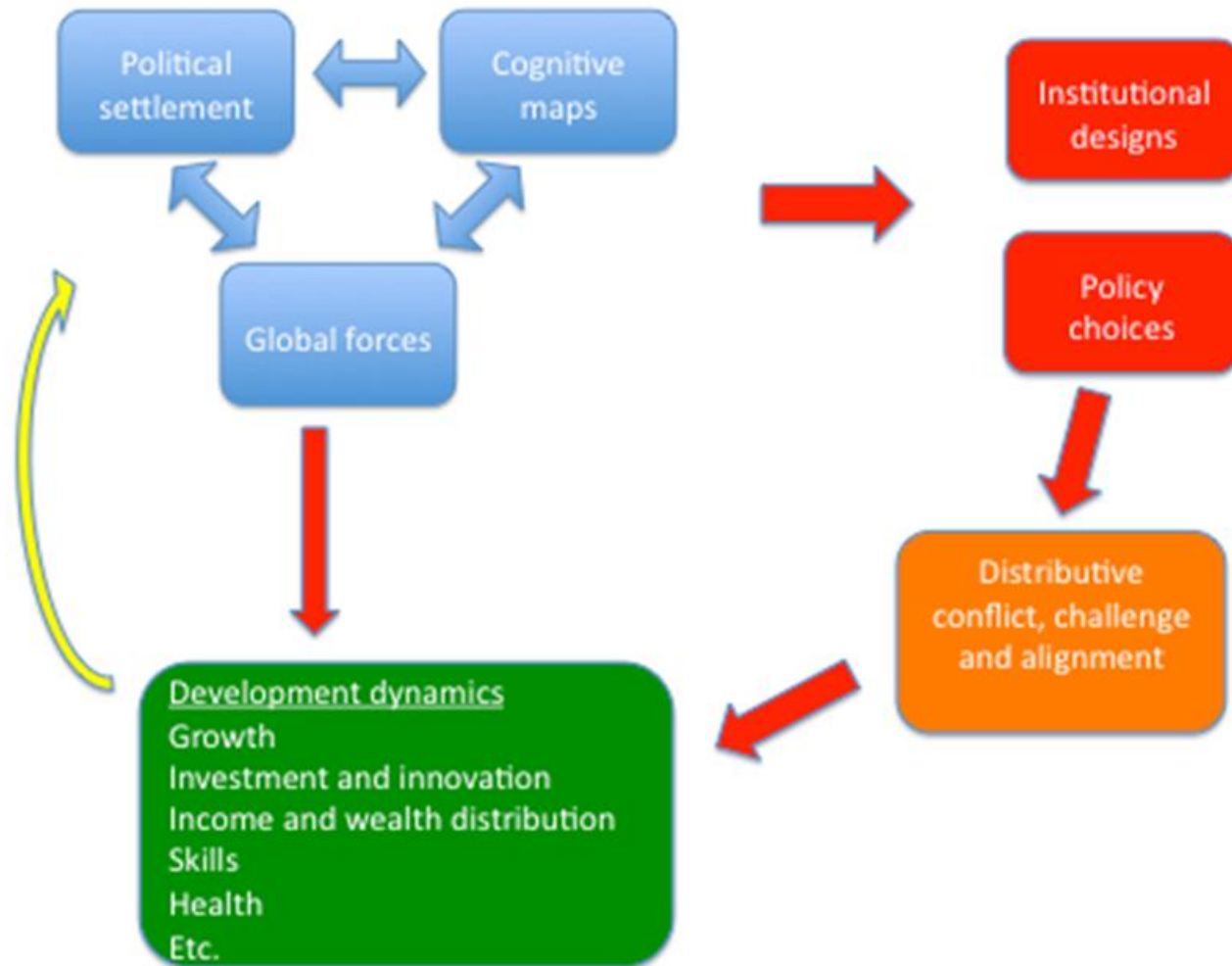


The Politics of the Middle Class

From Nationalism to Post-Democracy

Pratap B. Mehta

The Formation of Political Order



Cognitive Maps of Middle Class Politics



- Middle Class As Social Theorists
 - Ghosh, Heller, Deshpande, Fernandes, Baviskar
- But is the vanguard of almost every movement
- Middle class and the rise of nationalism (1885 - 1947)
- The Nehruvian middle class (1947-1991)
 - “I am a middle class person”: Nehru
- Post-Liberalization (1991 - present)

Middle class rent seeking

- Macro economic stability makes the Expansion of the State Self Limiting
 - Low Inflation
 - Moderate Taxes---small direct tax base
 - Sectional interests– teachers, lawyers, public sector unions:
- Locational Rents and Configuration of Space:
 - Urban Areas
- Pricing of Services-----What will they pay for?
 - Energy, Water, Health, Education, Transport,
 - Answer is Contingent---services have been shaped by political economy of rent seeking; middle class has ability to extract rents in rent based system, does not (YET?) have the ability to shape the rules.
- Huge lock in effects of current institutional choices



Middle class Identity

- Tradition versus modernity/universal versus particular
- Weak professionalization
- Meritocracy
- The politics of affirmative action
- PETTY domination—from servant to contract

Middle class and post democratic accountability



- Accountability: the race between voice and exit
- The delegitimization of the public:
- The rise of post representative institutions (courts, tribunals, media, independent regulators)
- Does the size of middle class have ability to transform state?
- The politics of anti politics

Affirmative Action

- India has the most ambitious affirmative action program
 - Government jobs and Education.
 - 22.5 percent reservations for SC/ST
 - 27.5 for Other Backward Classes (OBCs)
 - 3 percent for differently abled;
 - Some states exceed this
- Affirmative Action most significant locus of middle class politics
- Discrimination and the Private Sector – the challenge of discrimination in informal labor markets.



Thank You