

Technical Notes

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Management and the Environment for Implementation of Policy Change: Part Two

Policy Environment Mapping Techniques

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One of the first tasks required of strategic managers is to fully understand the terrain upon which they will have to play. The variety and complexity of political and decisional processes found in the making and implementation of policy change calls for a wide variety of tools for mapping, diagnosis, and analysis. The purpose of this note is to introduce and describe a variety of mapping and analytical tools useful for increasing managers' comprehension of the decision and implementation context in which they must work. Three policy mapping techniques will be discussed in this technical note: micro-political mapping, policy network mapping, and force-field analysis.

Political mapping need not be confined solely to the macro or national level as discussed in Part One of this series. Two other useful techniques are micro-mapping and policy network mapping. Micro-mapping diagrams the relationships between actors at a micro-political level, and is especially useful to

illustrate relationships among actors in a particular sector (e.g., health, education, agriculture). For instance, should the Minister of Agriculture of Boliguay wish to evaluate intra-sectoral support for new policies or ideas, then a micro-political map denoting the components and constituencies of the agricultural sector would be useful. If, on the other hand, the Health Minister wanted to focus specifically on a particular policy and gauge the potential efficacy of her strategy for getting through the approval process, she might wish to develop a policy network map in order to zero in on the key pressure points in the policy process.

Micro-Political Mapping:

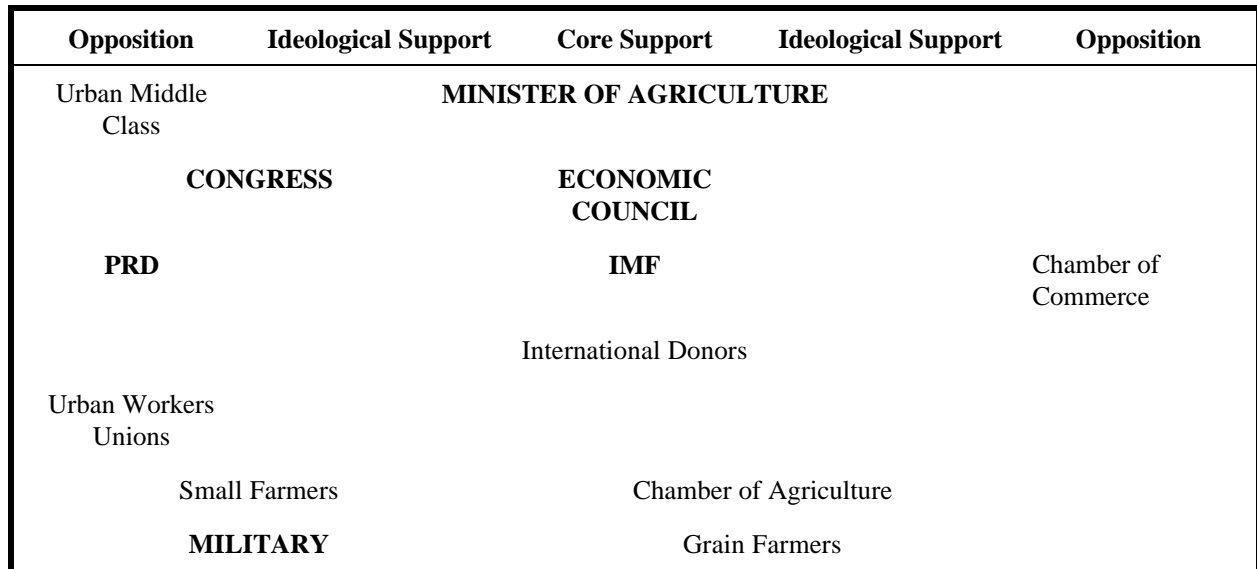
Although a macro-political map shows overall support for the government, it does not necessarily reveal support on specific issues. It is possible that though a government has solid overall support, on specific issues there may be massive or particularly intense opposition. A micro-political map can clarify the distribution of support for specific issues, indicate how certain sectors will react to particular policies and clarify the positions of different organizations within the same sector. If, for instance, a Minister would like to promote a policy altering the nature of relationships

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within the sector, a map can reveal the extent of support for the policy, where support is located, where opposition lies, and possibilities for alliances or coalitions — should they be necessary. A serious lack of support, would certainly be an indication to either drop or substantially modify the idea, rather than

wasting precious resources. Suppose, for instance, that the Minister of Agriculture of Boliguay wished to examine support for a reduction of price controls on grains in order to stimulate production, the forces around the issue might be arrayed as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Micro Political Map of Boliguay
Agricultural Sector
(Reduction of Price Controls)



The micro-map indicates less support than one might assume from simply looking at the macro-map. The reason is that the particular issue of price controls on grains only interest a relatively limited number of actors and in this instance most actors are opposed to the issue. Judging from the array of actors present and the controversy that socially charged issues like price controls provoke, if the Minister of Agriculture wants to pursue the issue, he will have to think about how he can widen his support. The combination of ambiguity of support from powerful actors such as the Congress, the military, and a significant part of the President's political party pose a very uncertain environment for pursuing the elimination of price controls. However, if at least two of these powerful actors could be brought on board, their support would probably be enough to cancel the strong, but amorphous and difficult-to-mobilize opposition of the middle class, urban workers, unions, and small farmers. The

combination of forces arrayed both for and against price control on the micro-map suggest that if the Minister were to go ahead he might have to alter the structure of the policy or otherwise modify it so as to decrease opposition. Tactics and strategy apart, it is quite clear that although there is a good general level of support for the government, the micro-map indicates that this particular policy is not likely to do well.

Should the Minister give up? Not necessarily. The micro-map can help indicate who needs to be satisfied in order for the policy to progress. Can a coalition be put together that will be strong enough to prevail over the opposition? Is the opposition coalesced around a single point or is it dispersed and fragmented? How entrenched and distanced is the opposition or potential coalition partners? What would the Minister have to concede those potential coalition partners? If a

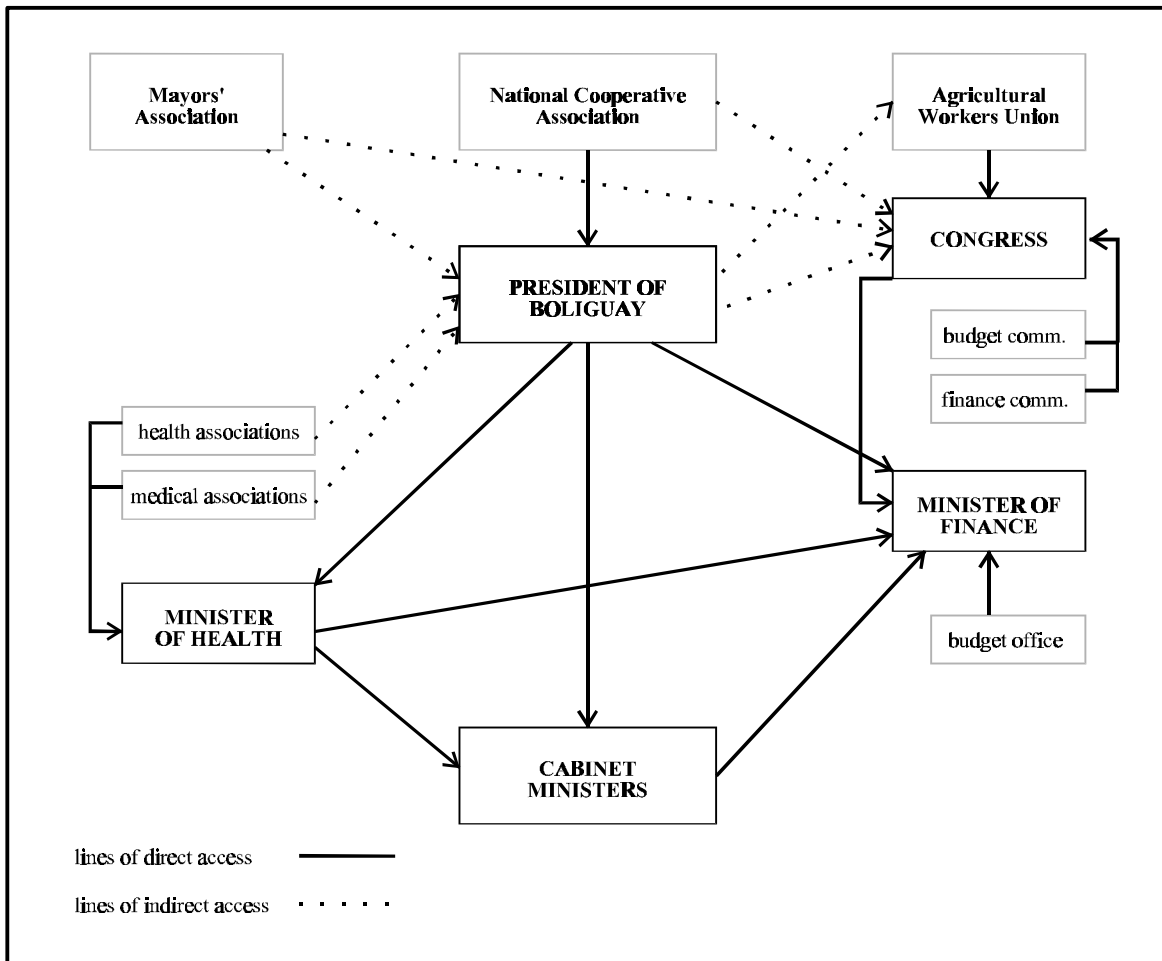
coalition does not seem to either be feasible or desirable, is there a way to neutralize key opposition actors—what changes would have to be made in the policy and what kinds of concessions would have to be made to those key actors? All of these questions can be answered by determining the level of resources and mobilization capacity possessed by each of the key actors (both opposition and support) identified on the map.

Policy Network Maps:

There are instances when officials would like to concentrate on a particular policy idea and would like to remove from consideration unimportant or

irrelevant actors. The construction of a policy network map can be extremely helpful in such circumstances. There are several steps to develop a policy network map: first, what are the different points through which a project or policy passes to become approved and implemented? Second, who are the actor(s) in charge of each step? Third, how can officials gain access to these actors? Are there other actors, though not officially part of the process, that have substantial influence over those who decide? Finally, in which ways can officials exercise influence over this process? Do they have any particular skills or contacts that might help in this process? An illustration of how this process works can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2
Policy Network Map:
Health Sector of Boliguay



Let us assume that the Health Minister wishes to increase budget allocations in order to establish better service in rural areas. The key actors in the policy decision process are the Health Minister, the Minister of Finance, the President and the Congress. But within that process there are several others who can and do influence decisions. The Minister of Finance's budget staff is charged with preparation of the budget and shapes most of the process and inter alia, many decisions about which projects will be maintained and which will be curtailed. Who, then, are the members of this staff and might there be some way to gain access to and to influence them?

Among the more important constituents of the President's political party are the health workers union and the medical association. Each of these might be brought into alliance with the Minister, and then bring pressure to bear on the President. Within the Congress, it is actually the committees on budget and finance that are in charge of approving the budget submitted by the President. Might there be some mechanism to influence directly the committee or the committee staff charged with the actual preparation of legislative authorization bills for the budget? Does a certain member of the committee have a keen interest in the problems of rural health? Perhaps the Minister could bolster the member's interest with pertinent and timely information that could be used to defend the policy in committee debates or hearings.

Finally, the pressure of rather diverse groups such as the Mayors' Association, the National Cooperative Association, and the Agricultural Workers Union,

might also be brought to bear. While these groups are not direct players in the policy process, in contrast to the member of Congress or the Minister, they are the eventual recipients of the policy and can be important sources of influence on elected officials such as the President or the members of the Congress.

It should be pointed out that while all these points of access are possible, to be useful they must be mobilized. This will require initiative, time, and energy on the part of the Minister or some credible representative or delegate. If the Minister does not make the effort, it is likely that no one else will. But mere effort won't be enough. Each point of access will have to be examined for its potential for collaboration and for how much it can add to the objective of improving budget allocations for rural health.

Force-Field Analysis:

Force-field analysis is another, rather convenient method to illustrate support and opposition to a particular policy. The technique for applying the analysis is simple and straight-forward: groups are placed on a continuum of "strongly in favor," or supportive, to "strongly opposed" to "x" issue or policy. The middle of the continuum is a neutral position. The product is a "map" of who supports and who opposes a particular policy. It is particularly useful as a "first-cut" mechanism for sorting out positions of different stakeholders, and for giving the manager a quick impression of where major opposition and support lie. An example of force-field analysis application to Boliguay can be found in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Force Field Analysis Reduction of Price Controls

(-) Oppose	(0) Neutral	(+) Favor
Urban Middle Class		Economic Council
PRD		IMF
CONGRESS		International Donors
MILITARY		Grain Farmers
Urban Workers Unions	Chamber of Agriculture	
Small Farmers		
Chamber of Commerce		

Clearly, the analysis shows a great deal of opposition to the proposed reduction of price controls simply in terms of the number of groups opposed or supportive. But it does not indicate why such groups are opposed, if they might go along with the idea simply because they are part of the government's coalition, whether such groups are opposed for the same reason, nor much about the quality or resources of the opposition or support. In this particular situation, the oppositional configuration of the force-field analysis ought to signal the manager to more closely analyze these questions before making any strategy choices.

Force-field analysis has certain limitations. Unlike the techniques for political mapping described earlier, force-field analysis does not examine questions of political support for the government on the policy or the value of a group's support on the issue, the degree to which the group supports a particular policy, or how much influence the group might have in determining the configuration or final outcome of the policy. Force-field analysis merely states whether the group is for or against the policy. Since the design of strategies for policy implementation generally requires more information, the manager will find the tool most useful for initial reconnaissance analysis.

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