The World Bank

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Tool Name: Macro and Micro Political Mapping

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What is it?	Political Mapping is a tool for organizing information about the political landscape in an illustrative way. Macro-political mapping provides analysis of political alliances at the macro (national or sector) level, while micro-political mapping provides more disaggregated insights into meso- and micro-level political landscape. The tools can be used as an entry-point to a more in-depth analysis of the political economy.	
What can it be used for?	Political mapping can be used to illustrate concentrations of support for the government.	
What does it tell you?	The tool can illustrate the distribution and nature of support or opposition to government with respect to a given reform.	
Complementary tools	Micro-political mapping; force-field analysis; stakeholder analysis	
Key elements	Political Mapping is usually constructed as a two dimensional chart with the government placed at the center as the primary decision maker. Along the vertical axis, the identified stakeholders can be grouped into different discrete units such as external actors, parliamentary actors, civil service, interest groups and civil society organizations. The X axis depicts the degree to which the actors support/oppose the government and the nature of their relationship with the government. Brinkerhoff & Crosby suggest grouping government support along the lines of core to moderate support and the opposition along the lines of legal and anti-establishment opposition. A more complex political mapping would also include the relationship between the different actors to determine the centrifugal or centripetal characteristics of the political system. The more the actors are clustered in the middle of the map around the government with respect to a given reform, the more power and stability the government would have to implement the reform. Having actors dispersed at each side of the government is more likely to produce an unstable and antagonistic political environment for reform implementation depending on the commitment and cooperation of the opposition.	
Requirements	Data/ information	Analysis compiled from key informant interviews, literature reviews (including government documents and newspaper articles) and stakeholder workshops

		Time	If integrated with ongoing key informant interviews, political mapping can be conducted in a single week, In cases where there is no significant qualitative work planned, a thorough exercise would involve two to three weeks of research. However, analysis that is meant to map political positions in different reform scenarios is not a one-off piece of work and should emerge from the findings of other analytic work. Ensuring a complete and updated picture may require that specialists conduct the analysis over several months.
		Skills	Sociological or anthropological training is helpful, as is a background in political science. Local knowledge, including contacts with local experts is crucial. Those carrying out the analysis must also thoroughly understand the reform and the recent history in the sector.
		Supporting software	Specialized software is not necessary to conduct a robust and informative mapping exercise. Software does exist, however, such as PolicyMaker 2.3 (a limited version can be downloaded at http://www.polimap.com/), for analyzing support for reform and mapping out the results.
		Financial cost	When combined with other qualitative work, the incremental cost of political mapping can be as low as $10,000. When no qualitative work is planned, costs can be up to $25,000.
Limitations			In political mapping actors are depicted as homogonous unities at the macro-level but the government, for instance, consists of multiple fractions at many different levels. Micro-political mapping is necessary to gain an understanding of lower level analysis. The relative power relationships between the actors can be described qualitatively but is not depicted in the map. The map could therefore be supplemented with a force-field analysis.
References and applications			Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002)

Macro- and Micro-Political mapping: Procedures and examples

The basic purpose of a political map is reduce complex reality to a two dimensional chart. The political system is characterized by multiple processes, hidden agendas, power-struggles among a myriad of different actors operating at different levels.

Time, materials and skills needed

Political mapping (whether macro or micro) is based on the analysis generated by other qualitative tools such as literature reviews, key informant interviews and focus group discussions. These tools are necessary to identify the main

actors of a given reform and to gather enough information to allow for the creation of a map where actors are placed relative to each other. Researchers should be experienced in using qualitative techniques and in analysing political relations. Once the information has been obtained, the mapping exercise in itself takes very little time. Researchers involved in the data gathering process should preferably be in involved in the mapping exercise as well.

Possible approach

Step 1: Identifying dimensions

The dimensions of the mapping need to be adapted to the analytical purpose. The most applied dimensions are power and support of reform (as in the two examples depicted below) but other dimensions could also be of included. In some cases, it might be beneficial to have integration in society out of one axis in order to determine how the different actors channel their opposition/support. Low societal integration would indicate that opposition/support need not take place through formal political institutions but instead through violence, corruption or the establishment of counter-productive informal institutions. Such activities that are external to the narrowly-defined political process could have significant impacts on the intended outcome of the reform. Determining the stages in which the opposition to reform would be most severe might also be of interest. In such case, the dimension could reflect when the different actors are most capable of posing a risk to reform: in the design phase, in the political negation phase, or in the implementation phase. The usual power dimension might also conceal a great deal of internal disparities that can only be uncovered by including the aspect of internal cohesion. The government, for instance, is the most powerful actor in reform implementation but further studies (for instance a micro-political mapping) could reveal a strong degree of heterogeneity and internal conflict within the government, which could pose a serious risk to the reform. At times and extra dimension can be obtained by changing the size of the observation according to for instance power.

Step 2: Identify Stakeholders

The initial identification of stakeholders will often be based on secondary literature and similar empirical cases. The identification of actors, however, is an iterative process where stakeholder interviews of the initially identified actors might lead the researcher to include other actors or groups that were overlooked in the preparatory stages. The actors that might influence or be influenced by the proposed reform should be categorized into different groups. Brinkerhoff & Crosby suggest grouping stakeholders according to the following five categories: government actors, external actors (multinationals, international donors/NGOs, foreign embassies etc.), social sectors (urban workers, indigenous people, women, small farmers etc.), political parties, and pressure groups (labor unions, business associations, churches, etc.) but other categories can be applied based on the data available and the analytical purpose. In the example below, for instance, an extra category of media has been included.

The next step is to place the identified actors on the map containing the chosen dimensions. The value of political maps lies not in the numeric coordinates of each actor on the map but in their placement vis a vis each other for a spatial illustration of their relationship. It often helps, therefore, to give each stakeholder a one-page description and then spread them out on the floor to move them freely around among the chosen dimensions. This exercise could be conducted independently by all team members that participate in the social analysis to uncover overlaps and to discuss the reasons for divergence. The most important actors should be placed first to act as focal points for the mapping exercise. In the PSIA context, the government will often be the most important actor with respect to reform implementation. The next actors should then be placed with respect to the government and each others. It will often be necessary with adjustments of positions as the organization and population of the political map progresses.

The exact format of the mapping will depend on the analytical purpose and the initial mapping process. If the process reveals a large demand for addition qualitative information to supplement the mapping exercise, a table format might be preferred over a graphical illustration. One of each type has been include in the examples below.

Points to remember

The political mapping is static while the political process is highly dynamic and a political map can therefore become outdated overnight (with a sudden change of government). To include some dynamics, one approach would be to

conduct mappings each year and then track them over time. Another would be to complement the mapping with other tools that are better at catching dynamic effects such as process tracing.

Attention should also be given to the fact that often a mapping might contain sensitive information. This is especially so if the mapping uncovers informal alliances and networks.

Political mapping case study: Reducing import tariffs on staple foods
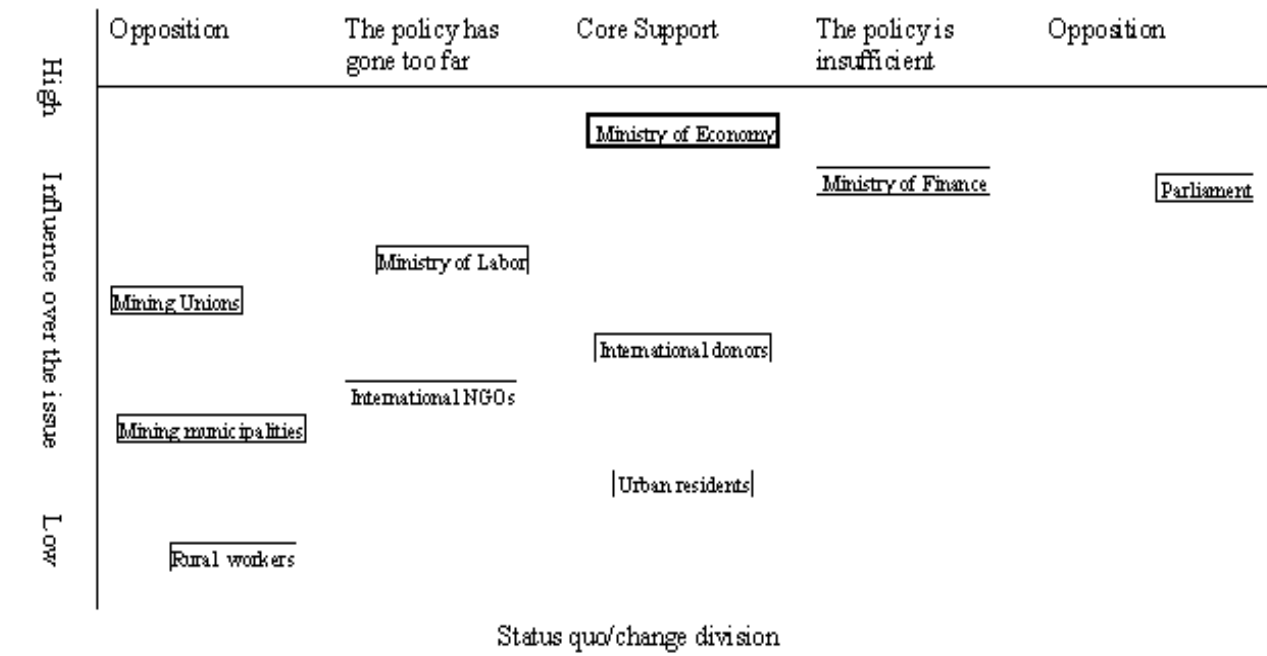
Political mapping can make use of many different formats adaptable to the analytical requirements.   The illustration below simulates a political context in which a government is proposing a reform to reduce import tariffs on staple foods. The matrix makes explicit the likely or actual responses of the different actors to the reform. The top row describes the different types of support and opposition that have been identified with the use of qualitative methods. One can use the same categories for both support and opposition or – as is the case in the mapping below – choose different categories for support and opposition. The five opposition categories focus on the channels through which opposition can be expressed while the three support categories describe the nature of the support. The first column lists the group of stakeholders that have been identified, and in this table the media has been included as an additional actor compared to the graphical illustration. The government is placed in the top left corner with a robust support of the reform. The television media – with the channels being state owned – is also predicted to provide robust support for the reform. More moderate, fragile support for the reform is expected to be provided by the urban middle class, international donors, and many of the independent newspapers. Here the support of the reform can be more easily affected by external shocks or unexpected outcomes. The opposition can materialize through many channels. The parliament and the local municipalities mainly work through political channels although the civil service of some municipalities might also obstruct the implementation of the reform. Local radio stations covering specific rural areas are set against the reform. Although farmers have limited power over the reform outcome they are likely to engage in a strategy of violence that could prove highly destabilizing for the government and the reform. Interest in reform is another dimension for consideration. Although the WTO in principle would be very much in favor of a reduction of import tariffs (and thus score high on the support dimension), the organization's interest of seeing this through might be negligible if the reform relates to small developing country. Due to the table format, more text can easily be added as needed in each cell.

	Support Robust	Support Fragile	Support Ideological	Opposition through public mobilization	Opposition through political channels	Opposition through disobedience	Opposition through conflict	Opposition Limited channels
Political Actors	Government				Parliament Municipalities	Municipalities		
Social groups		Urban middle class					Small farmers in certain remote regions	Small farmers/landless laborers
External Actors		International donors	WTO	International NGOs				
Media	Television	Most newspapers		Local radio stations				

Micro-political mapping case study: Liberalising the mining sector

The map below illustrates the micro-political environment surrounding the government proposal to liberalize the mining industry. Reforming the mining sector is likely to both reduce the strain on state finances and increase productivity but in

the process it will produce both winners and losers. On behalf of the government, the Ministry of Economy has proposed a plan for sector liberalization within a ten year period and a preliminary macro political mapping reveals strong support for the reform. However, by disaggregating the government entity in a micro-political map conflicting fractions can be identified. In the example below, the powerful ministry of finance would have liked to see a more comprehensive reform and full liberalization within a five year period while the Ministry of Labor would suggest that the massive lay-offs inherent in liberalization should merit a more cautious approach than suggested. Still, none of the fractions would actually oppose the reform at this stage but they do reveal an underlying tension that could flare up in the implementation stage with the two ministries pulling in opposite directions. The real opposition at this stage stems from both sides of the Ministry of Economy. The parliament is placed at one side. Not being directly accountable to the voters for the implemented policies, the parliament has argued for more drastic reform packages that would once and for all solve the problems in the sector (if only they had enough mandates!). At the other side are the political groupings of stakeholders that will be adversely affected by the reform (mining unions, mining municipalities). Opposition to the reform from both sides is likely to follow the reform through the political process to the implementation phase and might pose risks to reform effectiveness. The micro-political map also reveals that the majority of political actors believe that the proposed policy is going too far; they are, however, balanced out by the fewer but more influential actors on the other side.