



Map the Terrain

Exercise – Identifying Allies & Opponents: Using the Spectrum of Allies Tool¹

Methodology:

The “Spectrum of Allies” tool is used for understanding Sun Tzu’s directives regarding “Know the Terrain” and “Know your Opponent.” The “Spectrum of Allies” provides a critical opportunity to define the stakeholders in an issue, and, used alongside the “Tactical Map,” better guides organizations in the effective selection of targets and tactics.

Objectives:

- To encourage more optimistic and realistic efforts by narrowing the focus.
- To identify the stakeholders – people, groups, organizations and institutions that are already involved in the issue (potential allies).
- To identify those who are most likely to be opponents.
- To help the group realize that tactics need to be planned in relation to how much they do or don’t attract key allies.
- To understand that it is not necessary to “win over” opponents to have successful movement on your issue.

Getting Ready:

This exercise will take 1 hour. In order to do this exercise, the group will need a completed tactical map (see Exercise to Define the Terrain Using the Tactical Map Tool). The group will need the handouts of the “Spectrum of Allies” diagram and the classification of the different types of allies. Provide the group with large sheets of flip-chart paper, newsprint, or construction paper that can be taped together to make larger sheets; “Post-its” (at least 4 colors and at least 3X3 size) or small pieces of different colored paper; markers or crayons; masking tape. You will need a large table or floor space for working with the maps and a wall to display the Spectrum of Allies tool alongside the maps.

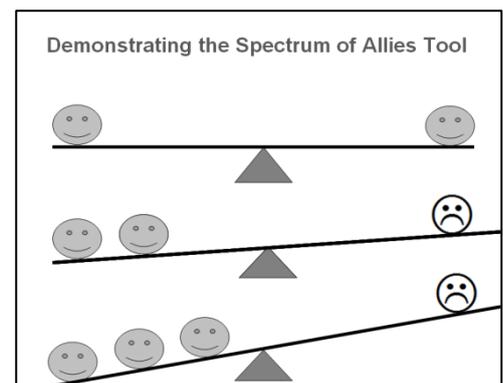
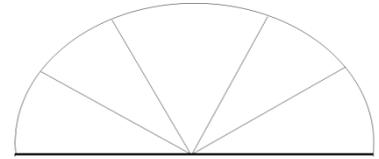
¹ The original “Spectrum of Allies” comes from Martin Oppenheimer and George Lakey, *A Manual for Direct Action*, Quadrangle Books, 1965, and can be found on Training for Change (www.trainingforchange.org). The original spectrum identified seven segments: 1) Active Allies; 2) Passive Allies; 3) Friendly Neutrals; 4) Oblivious Neutrals; 5) Hostile Neutrals; 6) Passive Opponents; and 7) Active Opponents. New Tactics modified the spectrum to five segments, and includes only one “Neutral” segment.



Facilitation Note:

It is very helpful to demonstrate the “Spectrum of Allies” tool. Use the tactical map example from the previous exercise and use the relationships from the map to discuss with the group where actors appear on the “spectrum.”

1. Demonstrate the meaning of the tool by using a large piece of paper or a white or black board. Draw a horizontal line. Then draw a half-moon or half a pie with wedges (See the handout at the end of this activity) but leave the “wedges” un-named at this point.
2. Use the issue from your previous tactical map demonstration. Suggest a demand we might have and ask who in society might be inclined to be most supportive, least supportive, and in the middle.
3. Describe the idea that in most social change situations there is a struggle between those who want the change being proposed and those who don't. Those who want the change (allies) are represented by a + (plus sign) at one side of the sheet (on the left side of the paper), and those who don't want the change (opponents) are represented by a – (minus sign) at the other side of the sheet (right side).
4. Give the good news: In most social change campaigns it is not necessary to win the opponent to your point of view, even if the power holders are the opponent. It is only necessary to move some, or all, of the “pie wedges” one step in your direction. If we shift each wedge of the spectrum one step in the “allies” direction, we are likely to win, even though the people on the other side don't move (See example – like the children's game of game of balance - “teeter-totter”.)
5. Next complicate the picture slightly: sometimes polarization happens, and the people, organizations, institutions in the wedges closest to the opponent move away from you and toward the opponent. You can still win, if enough of society – the people, organizations and institutions in the wedges - takes a step in your direction.
6. Now, NAME the “wedges” or categories in your Spectrum of Allies diagram and describe each of these segments (Use the Allies Classification information in the Handouts section to illustrate).
7. Use your sample tactical map and the “post-its” of the relationships developed. Pick a “post-it” and discuss with the group where it should be placed on the “spectrum”. Show the process of making a NEW “post-it” (to keep your tactical map in place). Choose a number of relationships from your tactical map that will show how they would be placed in the different “wedges” of the “Spectrum of Allies” tool (Active Allies; Passive Allies; Neutral; Passive Opponents; Active Opponents).
8. Ask for any questions and discussion on the tool before the group creates their own Spectrums.



The Group Exercise Process:

1. **Ask each group to DRAW a “spectrum” diagram and provide the Participant Handouts**
[Note: New Tactics has found it most useful to use TWO pieces of flip chart paper that are taped together.] Instruct the group to keep in mind their PROBLEM and VISION that was used to identify the relationships on their tactical map (provide participants with the HANDOUT: Spectrum of Allies).
2. **Monitor and assist the groups during the process.**
 - The groups may have thought of additional relationships during this process. If so, they should add the new relationships to their tactical map as well.
3. **Ask the groups to review and discuss the TARGET they had selected from their Tactical Map.**
Ask them to consider:
 - Does this still look like the best target? Do they see a better possibility based on this additional information?
 - Each group indicates their chosen TARGET by drawing a CIRCLE on this “post-it”.

Reflection and Sharing:

It is important to provide opportunities for the group to learn, share, and explore their target ideas. Ask the group to explain why they chose their particular target. Ask how their position on the spectrum may change depending on different advocacy goals the group might choose.

When using the Spectrum of Allies tool, remember the following points:

- You are trying to move an identified stakeholder just one segment in the “allies” direction.
- The tactics you choose will be different depending in which segment the stakeholder is located.
- If you are undecided about how to categorize a stakeholder in the spectrum, it is a good reminder that you need more research on this person/group/etc.
- Important note: the stakeholders in the spectrum MAY shift their position according to a specific goal you choose in relation to your problem.

Source: New Tactics combines the tactical map with the “Spectrum of Allies” tool adapted from Training for Change (www.trainingforchange.org) to provide a concrete way to use all the relationships identified on the tactical map and to consider where each might be positioned – ranging from an active ally to an active opponent.

New Tactics in Human Rights is a program of The Center for Victims of Torture

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