

SYMLOG Interactive Display Tool Polarization-Unification Overlay

The standard Polarization-Unification Overlay is one of the most significant aspects of the display capabilities of SYMLOG field theory. The movable Overlay in the SYMLOG Interactive Display Tool (IDT) provides the consultant with yet another tool for exploring the potential dynamics involved among images shown on an Individual or Group Average Field Diagram.

The pattern of the Overlay represents the SYMLOG general theory of group dynamics. It consists of a large design showing two large circles tangent to each other; a long line passing through their centers and tipped with arrowheads pointing in opposite directions at the ends; a long dashed line; dotted circles within the large circles; and, a third dotted circle residing in the center of the design.

The intent in showing the Overlay on a constellation of images displayed on a field diagram is to help bring the theory of Polarization and Unification to life. Currently in written reports produced by the SYMLOG Consulting Group, the Overlay is fitted at a 45-degree angle from the center, with the Line of Polarization in the PF-NB direction. This fitting is consistent with research that shows that the images most commonly referred to by raters as positive, and used to guide their behavior in groups, fall within the PF quadrant. For more information on these “referent images” (and the meaning of the “Reference Circle”), see the booklet, “Images that Guide Leadership”.

One of the more powerful uses of the Overlay is as a guide to the eye in formulating hypotheses about what dynamics might be at play in the mind of the rater, or in the interaction within a group of images. Moving the Overlay to fit various constellations of images can aid in determining possible subgroups, coalitions, polarizations, outliers, and/or possible images that might be used as mediators or scapegoats within the group generally, or when the group is focused on a specific issue. For more information on the components of the Overlay and its value in bringing to light the dynamics at play, please refer to the booklet, “Overview of the SYMLOG System”.

The Overlay design moves in its entirety. That is to say, the Line of Polarization, Line of Balance, and Scapegoat and Mediating directions move along with an alternate placement of the Overlay. It may be tentatively moved around in search of the location that seems best to match and contain the major clusters of images within one or both of the two large circles. It can be used in this way in a search for the systematic underlying pattern of forces that could have acted on the image locations to produce the clustering, separation of clusters, and other features of the image constellation.

The implication is that the standard fitting of the Overlay in the PF-NB direction might not be the “line of best fit” for all constellations of images. For example, some of the important polarizations within the image cluster on the diagram might be better shown if the Overlay were moved to intersect the Wish and Reject images, particularly if these two images are not well aligned with the normative location in the center of the PF quadrant.

The Overlay, if moved, may help generate hypotheses of what was in the mind of the rater or raters, and what dynamics are potentially at play. Often in groups there are more than one set of conflicting groupings. In conversation with the rater or raters, these hypotheses can then be explored further in discussion. Group members often help to choose the fit that

best agrees with their more intimate knowledge of the group, or that seems to give them new insight. The picture of the group that comes into focus when the Overlay is well placed on the diagram is usually so recognizable and provocative of discussion that very little additional information needs to be added.