

Spectogram - Private Property or Common Wealth

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The **Spectogram** is an exercise that allows everyone in the group to express their opinion at once—like raising of hands—but also allows a way to show degree of feelings on a subject—unlike raising of hands. It also gets folks out of their chairs, so it makes a good break in a presentation. A Spectogram can be used for any subject, only the statements will be different. This one was created to explore the group feelings, thoughts and convictions around property and commons.

Working the Spectogram:

In a clear area of the room, put a sign on one wall saying “**Strongly Agree**” and on the opposing wall “**Strongly Disagree**”.

In the mid-point between the walls, mark the floor with masking tape or some object. This is to be the line between **Agree** and **Disagree** or **No Opinion**. The participants stand in the space and move to the place on the Spectogram that best represents their feeling about a statement that is read aloud. The statements can be read quickly and the positions taken without much discussion or thought...just a gut-level reaction.

Or the statements can be taken more slowly and the folks standing at the most extreme positions can voice their reasons for standing where they are and see if they can convince others to move closer to or further from their positions. If time allows, the participants can make statements from within the Spectogram off the top of their heads and they and their fellow participants can show the group feelings on the statement.

Statements: *Make first statement, then follow-up statements if needed.*

1. If a person buys beach front property, they should have the right to restrict others from crossing their private property to get to the beach.
 - a. If it is the only access for 10 miles.
 - b. If there is a public staircase 100 ft. away
 - c. If this was a pathway that the community had been using for decades.

2. An author of a book and his heirs should have the right to the royalties from that work for 10 years.
 - a. For 50 years.
 - b. For 100 years.
 - c. Forever.

3. A pharmaceutical company who holds a patent on a new drug should have right to charge what the market will bear.
 - a. Even if most of the research was paid for by taxpayers.
 - b. Even if the medicine is lifesaving and its cost is prohibiting patients from access.
 - c. Even if it was from a tradition plant remedy.

4. A corporation who owns desert land should have the right to drill a well into the aquifer and sell the water.
 - a. Even if it causes the water level to drop.
 - b. Even if this destroys the aquifer.
 - c. Even if they choose to sell the water to another country.

5. A timber company should have the right to cut timber in national and state forests.
 - a. If they pay a fair market price.
 - b. If the cutting reduces fire hazard.
 - c. If local jobs are created.

6. A coal company should have the right to the coal underground if they buy the mineral rights.
 - a. Even if mining the coal causes homes to collapse.
 - b. Even in environmentally sensitive areas.
 - c. And any restrictive legislation should be considered a “takings” and the company paid for future profits.

7. The oceans are common territory and fishing in them should be unrestricted.
 - a. Even if certain species are driven to extinction.
 - b. Even if certain nets cause dolphin casualties.
 - c. Even though industrialized nations are depleting the fisheries that less developed nations rely on.

8. Global warming must be stopped.
 - a. Even if that means outlawing all personal vehicles.
 - b. Even if that means poor countries will not be able to have electricity.
 - c. Even if that means going to nuclear power.

9. Quiet is a common and everyone should have a right to quiet.
 - a. Even if that means no one can play a stereo or practice the violin.
 - b. Even if that means noisy subways will be shut down.
 - c. And that includes noisy dogs, geese, roosters, crows, and other loud animals.

10. Genetic Engineering is an extension of traditional plant breeding practices and the resulting plants should be privately owned by the companies that produced them.
 - a. Even if the propagation of these plants contaminates the plants in the commons.
 - b. And the saving of these seeds will be illegal.
 - c. Because the companies invested capital in the creation and marketing of these plants.

11. A shopping mall is private property and the owner should have the same private property rights as a homeowner.
 - a. And that includes the right to restrict free speech and expression.
 - b. And that includes keeping certain people off the property.
 - c. Even though the city government has given them big tax breaks.

12. Because a contract is considered a form of property, the cancellation of a California contract with a Canadian corporation should be considered a takings and a loss of future profits for the corporation.
 - a. Even if the product canceled was polluting groundwater.
 - b. Even though any jobs lost during such a cancellation are not considered loss of future profits for the workers.

13. An idea you think up and patent should be your private property.
 - a. Even if you thought it up while being employed by another company.
 - b. Even if it draws heavily on the commons knowledge.