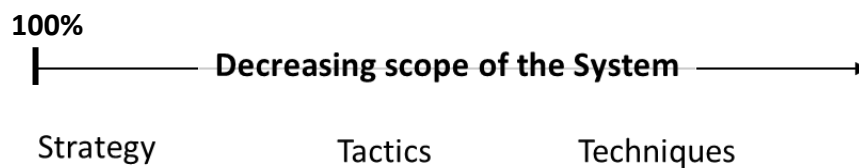


Continuum of Rules

A way to bring more clarity to the definition of tactics as rules applying to a partial scope (rather than shorter time horizon) is the recognition that strategy and tactics are actually part of a continuum of rules. The continuum is defined by the portion of the scope of the system to which the rule applies:



The strategy is at one end (it is 100% of scope of the system), then tactics follow, and rules of smaller scope can be added. The number of components can be divided into an arbitrary set of ranges. Here, *techniques* are added, rules that govern an even smaller scope than tactics. You can think of the progression of strategy-tactics-techniques as akin to the often invoked 30,000-, 300-, and 3-meter level analogy.

Note that as scopes get smaller, the uncertainty of the outcomes gets smaller too. The uncertainty declines because there are fewer and fewer variables involved as you reduce the scope. The U.S. Military manual, *Military Tactics, FM 3-90* makes this point when they say in Section 1-2,

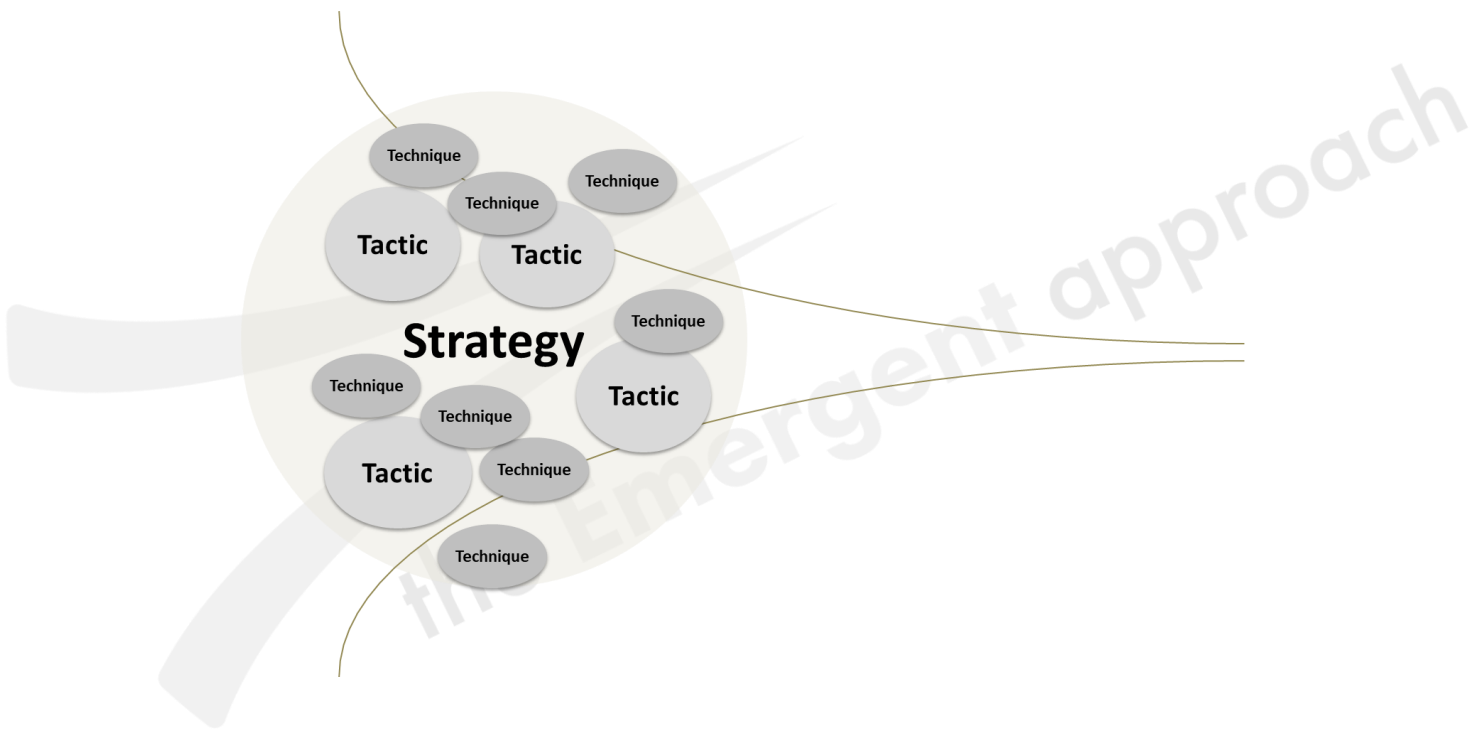
Tactics always require judgment and adaptation to the unique circumstances of a specific situation. Techniques and procedures are established patterns that can be applied repeatedly with little or no judgment in a variety of circumstances.

Here the army adds techniques and another category of rules called *procedures*, both of smaller scope.

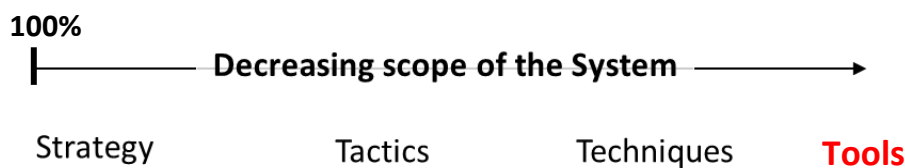
Another illustration of the continuum of rules is the traffic light example from Chapter 5. It was stated that a traffic light to improve the flow of traffic and safety at an intersection isn't really a

strategy, it is a technique because everyone knows how to do it. The outcome of using a technique like a traffic light with the rule “stop on red” is known by traffic. Compare this to a strategy for dealing with traffic congestion in an entire city or a tactic for which type of construction firms to hire. These large scope questions are no solvable by simple techniques such as installing a traffic light.

The continuum of rules can be conceptually illustrated in the influence diagram too, showing the scope ranges of each of the rule components.



An interesting question is whether *tools* can be placed on the continuum of rules.



A tool might be thought of as a rule codified to the extreme, and generally for a small scope. When you use a wrench the scope of its application to turning bolts for fasteners or to make adjustments to equipment is quite small. And the rule is very simple: lever the wrench to turn the bolt. There is relatively little uncertainty as to the way the wrench is used or the outcome of using it. The wrench tightens much more and possibly much faster than your fingers can. But that it is much less flexible and applies to relatively few applications compared to your fingers, is an indication of its small scope.



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