THE PROBLEM-RESOURCE SYSTEM (PRS):

The PRS consists of all the key people engaged in interacting about the problem, its definition and dissolution.

DISTINGUISHING THE PROBLEM-RESOURCE SYSTEM

The following are questions which guide the professional in distinguishing the principal actors of the PRS and their relational dynamics.

A. Who are the key people/agencies concerned about the problem?
B. What relationships exist between these parties?
C. What is your own and/or your agency's relationship to other members of the PRS?
D. Are the relationships within the PRS more likely to be competitive or co-operative?
E. What are the likely conflicts of agenda/interest?
F. Who has the final say as to what agenda is adhered to?
G. Is there any person/group likely to be silenced or disadvantaged?

Diamonds

1. The diamonds are simplifying forms which enable the observer to make sense of ambivalent social fields i.e. situations of apparent oppositions, contrasts and contradictions.

2. They allow the observer to see the field inclusively i.e. to incorporate dimensions which would otherwise disqualify or mutually eliminate each other.

3. They illustrate a logic of "both/and and either/or".

4. They
   a) identify the key actors and/or themes of the problem-resource system (PRS - see below);
b) distinguish the systemic (relational) patterns between those actors and/or themes;

c) articulate four domains of potential conversation;

d) guide the observer in relation to useful and non-useful questions and actions.

DEFINING THE PRS AS POTENTIALLY SYMMETRICAL OR COMPLEMENTARY

A. Situate key actors (including yourself as observer), their alignments and non-alignments in diamond form as above.

B. Indicate major themes which constitute those alignments and non-alignments.

C. Discern the form of the PRS as symmetrical or complementary i.e. situations of competition or co-operation

C. Assess likely implication of one's chosen or obligated position/action.

Symmetrical and complementary diamonds.

Two major distinctions may be applied to the diamond configurations. Symmetry implies relations of similarity e.g. a football game or an argument. Complementarity implies relations of difference i.e. fox-hunting, teaching, therapy.

These distinctions illustrate the forms of alignments and non-alignments, competitions and co-operations between the four main actors or groups of actors or themes.

a) Symmetrical Diamonds

Choose two persons/groups (i.e. A and B) in disagreement and then choose another dyad (i.e. C and D) who are allied to the positions of A and B. In this system A, B and C, D stand for two correlated polarities.
b) Complementary Diamonds

Choose two persons/groups (i.e. A and B) who are in co-operative agreement around the issues of another, C, who is part of a dyad, C and D, where C is aligned to both A and B and D is excluded.
FIFTH PROVINCE APPROACH

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