

Part B. Visualizations and patterns

This part is a partial response to the needs of many for new ways of thinking about the complexity of international organization networks – and the networks of problems with which they deal, the networks of strategies advocated in that process, and the networks of values that guide such undertakings.

There is a major challenge in enabling people to obtain greater insight into complex networks of relationships amongst international organizations, world problems, strategies in response to them, human development and human values. The challenge is to compensate for the natural tendency to rely on focused information on urgent issues by enabling people to work with contextual information and configurations of related issues and responses to them.

Representations of non-quantitative relationships and patterns between organizations, problems and strategies are provided here in the form of: network (spring) maps, concept (decision) maps, etc. Online variants in colour of many of these may also be accessed from the web URLs referenced on individual presentations. The accompanying CD-ROM (inside back cover) also has many of the Figures from this part, some of them in colour. and various formats.

The preoccupation of this section is with what has been termed “concept mapping” of which one form is “mind mapping”. As such it is strongly related to what are termed “semantic networks” – a focus that is likely to be fundamental to “semantic webs” as the next conceptual revolution in the future organization of the web. The increasing concern with “knowledge management” also calls for new techniques in visualizing knowledge to render comprehensible vital patterns of connectedness. The direct generation – on-the-fly – of these images according to use preferences is a feature of the online version of the databases associated with this Yearbook. Many of the figures are examples of what can be produced according to particular design metaphors. They should be considered experimental rather than definitive.

The figures are generated from data on relationships that are naturally subject to a variety of forms of error. In the case of international organizations, the relationships are dependent on information available. Information on world problems or global strategies is also dependent on the methodology, logistics and resources by which the relevant databases are maintained.

For further explanatory information on displaying complexes of problems, strategies, values and organizations, see Appendix 3: Visualization and patterns.