
Document 10.3.

Five-fold pattern language

This paper, available on-line at <http://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs80s/84patlan.php>, is a draft of a 4-fold "translation" of selected patterns from Christopher Alexander's A Pattern Language (1977). Individual texts were subsequently included in "Patterns of Concepts", an experimental part of the Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential (1986). A variant is available in the on-line version of the associated databases.

Introductory notes

In a 3 volume work, designer-architect Christopher Alexander has elaborated and tested a "pattern language" for building and planning at both the macro and the micro level. The titles of the volumes are:

- Volume 1 *The Timeless Way of Building*
- Volume 2 *A Pattern Language*
- Volume 3 *The Oregon Experiment*

These volumes have all been published by Oxford University Press (1977-).

The value and purpose of such an exercise is to provide people with a kind of vocabulary, a phrase book, a large and accessible store of metaphors, images and elements that are formed into the patterns of our various environments.

Enriching vocabulary enriches the structure of choice. A person with a limited vocabulary has a limited field of consciousness. Pattern languages provide this enriching vocabulary of semantically meaningful concepts – each a pattern of elements in themselves and yet each combinable with the others in the definition and design of the environments in which people choose to live.

Certain patterns are intuitively recognised and predictable, they appear wholesome, they have a quality, impossible to define, yet experienced and understood deep in the collective consciousness of the human race. Emphasis is placed on these concepts, these patterns which help to define a qualitatively superior environment.

Alexander (and his team) have clarified 254 interlinked patterns as providing one such language. They stress that other languages are possible and other patterns may be added to the language they have elaborated. Nevertheless, their language can be viewed as a very useful coherent structure.

Alexander's language focuses on the **physical environment** of towns, buildings, and construction. It has been used here as a form of template from which 4 corresponding sets of patterns have been generated. The numbered patterns [on the referenced pages] are therefore split into 5 sub-paragraphs:

- **Template:** This endeavours to describe the pattern in content-free terms as pure relationship. As such it is a guideline for the elaboration of patterns for other arenas.
- **Physical environment:** This is an adaptation of Alexander's own pattern description
- **Socio-organizational environment:** This describes the pattern as it applies to the organization of social groups, organizations and networks.
- **Conceptual environment:** This describes the pattern as it applies to the organization of a conceptual framework or a body of knowledge.
- **Intra-personal environment:** This describes the pattern as it applies to the organization of modes of awareness adopted by a person.

The procedure of "translating" or transposing the original physical pattern to other domains obviously raises difficulties. These include:

- problem of adequacy of terminology;
- stilted phrasing.

These are normal problems encountered in translation. These difficulties can however be reduced by further editing. Clearly it would be an advantage to get feedback from those more familiar with the terminology used in each domain.

The basic reason for attempting to complete this exercise is that as a set of physical patterns it provides one of the very few coherent, yet precise, efforts to organize the environment in a manner which is qualitatively sensitive. If it is possible to learn from this by adapting the patterns to other realms in which humanity is faced with incoherence and problems of quality, then the exercise has merit.

Selected Patterns

Individual texts are accessible at <http://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs80s/84patlan.php>

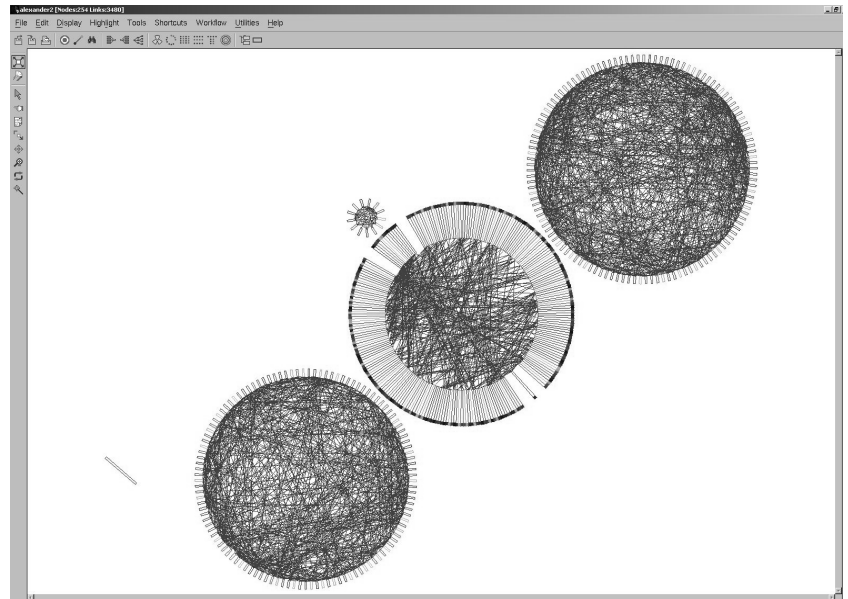
Independent domains
Distribution of organization
Interpretation of complementary modes of organization
Regenerative resource cultivation areas
Network of inter-relationships
Intermediate scale organization
Non-linear organization
Variety of forms and processes
Decentralized formal processes
Access to intensity
Local interrelationship domains
Individuality in multiplicity
Sub-domain boundary
Identifiable context
Context boundary
Web of general interrelationships
Encirclement
Network of redefinitions
Web of selective interchange
User-determined specialized communications
Four-level structural limit
Occupiable temporary site limit
Compensating relationships in parallel
Positions enabling transcendence
Relationship to indeterminacy
Functional cycle
Complementarity
Coherent pattern of relationship densities
Stable density gradient of local relationships
Activity nodes
Cycle of relationship reinforcement
Selective interchange axis
Underdefined processes
Interchange
Adequate variety of cyclic elements
Differentiation by relationship density
Cluster of frameworks
Standard frameworks
Integrating a new dimension
Integrating the historical dimension
Informal context for formal processes
Chain of fundamental transformation zones
Presentation of new dimensions
Local focal points
Local action network
Diversified interchange environment
Functionality enhancement
Adaptive interstices
Local relationship loops
Three-way relationship entrainment
Linear relationships enhanced by non-linear processes

Interfacing vehicles of communication and networks of unmediated relationships
Principal points of entry
Intersection of differently paced communications
Protected low intensity relationships
Special modes of relationship
Protection of emerging foci
Context for disorder
Low-intensity communication pathways
Accessible non-linearity
Bounded common small-scale interaction domains
Points of wider perspective
Appropriate conditions for perspective nourishment
Partially exposed perspective context
Appropriate configuration for input processing
Appropriate configuration for perspective interaction
Appropriate configuration for perspective inactivity
Appropriate configuration for interaction of complementary perspectives
Occupiable sites for perspective inactivity
Context for forms of perspective presentation
Variation in size of perspective contexts
Appropriate proportions of perspective contexts
Overview of external contexts
Partially enclosed internal domains
Internal connectedness between domains
Framework for transition between structural levels
Eccentric access to perspective contexts
Substantive distinctions separating domains
Inter-domain contexts for perspective adjuncts
Exposure of input processing context to external insight
Facilities for perspective adjuncts
Accessible facilities for perspective adjuncts
Structure-enfolded occupiable sites
Exclusive spaces for emergent perspectives
Exclusive contexts
Congruence between spaces defined by the framework and spaces defined by the processes within it
Efficient enclosure of spaces with minimal structural distinctions

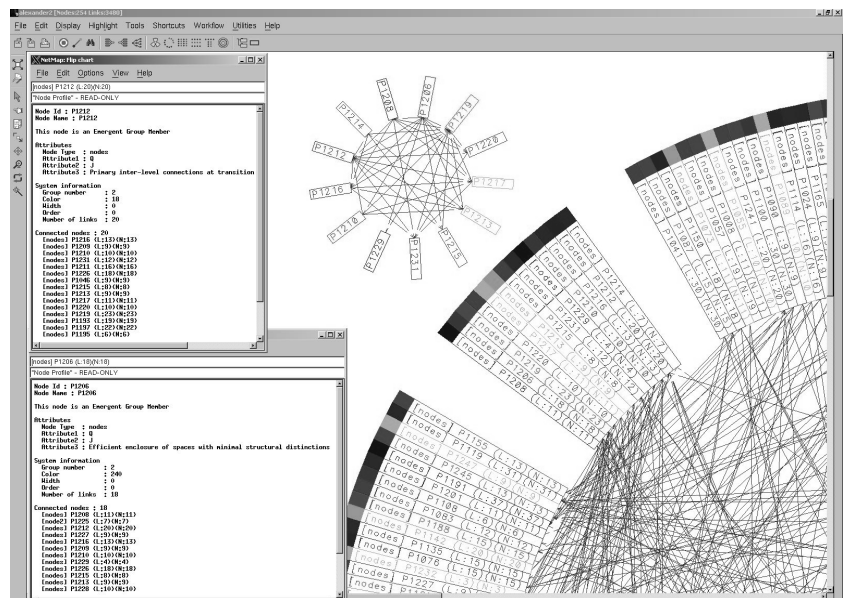
Appropriate construction elements
Progressive framework definition
Organization of integrative superstructure
Harmonizing space distribution between levels
Boundary expansion permitting new level generation
Primary inter-level connections at transitions in boundary orientation
Distribution of secondary inter-level connections
Integrative infrastructure
Initial level formation
Inter-level connections
Perimeter continuity
Distortion resistant boundaries
Level generation of minimum tension
Integration superstructure
Aperture compatibility
Ground-level visibility
Zones of intermediate insight
Emphasizing transitions across boundaries
Inter-level zone
Inter-level integrity
Appropriate superstructure to contain transitions between levels
Provision for pathways for automatic communications
Unmediated supportive emotion
Overview sites from integrative superstructure
Symbolic connection to encompassing domains
Zoning internal domains
Maintainable, multi-element external boundaries
Unalienating internal boundaries
Displaceable frameworks
Connectedness in isolation
Filtered insights
Multi-faceted frameworks
Tolerance at level interfaces
Attractive temporary positions
Intermediate position
Ambiguous boundaries
Flexible interfaces
Protecting variability to enhance fixity
Integration within context
Embedding fixity within variability
Time binding
Symbols of integration
Encouraging emphases
Different settings
Domains of insight
Meaningful symbols of self-transformation

elaborated from a socio-architectural design template
developed by Christopher Alexander, *A Pattern Language*, 1977 (see document 10.3. in this volume)
represents 253 patterns and 3486 links

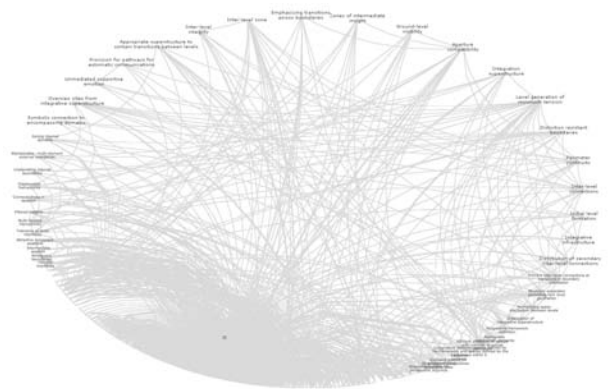
emergent groups



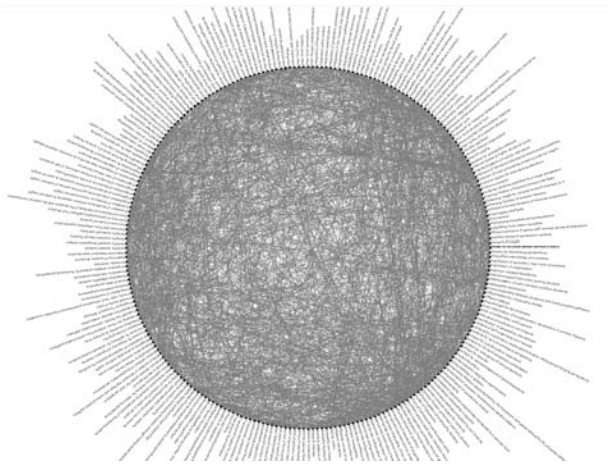
emergent groups, detail



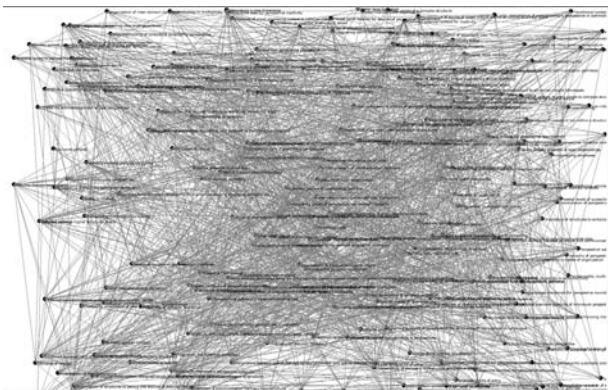
Hypergraph



PNG



PNG scatter



SVG

