



PLAST FB discussions- Dec 2015 & Jan 2016

The following was very engaged 55,000 words/ 75 pages but they felt cornered by Jessie’s patient effort to guide them toward studying and writing designs for transformation using pattern language, what the group was organized to work on. So, a bit mysterious what the resistance really amounted to, except it seemed to lead everyone to become blind seers and toward breaking up the group.

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PLAST FB GROUP DESCRIPTION

This group was initially created under Next Edge Agency Catalyst Workgroup, to explore the notion of human agency and how we as change activists could help unleash, cultivate and maximize human agency to bring about transformative change. In June 2014 the new banner picture was put up as we were focusing increasingly on patterns and pattern language. Now as the name has been changed to Pattern Languages for Systemic Transformation, we continue to explore the relationships between meta theory and action, and examine the types of frameworks

and guiding principles that would be needed to improve common understanding, sharing of needs and resources for systemic transformation, and how patterns and pattern language can help us do that.

Group members are people actively involved in using pattern languages for social change (or seeking to be). If you wish to join but don't have an existing connection with groups members or pattern language communities, please message the group admins explaining why you are interested.

News Feed

RECENT ACTIVITY

David Braden December 16, 2015 · Denver, CO
Systemic Transformation



I am very interested in "Systemic Transformation" but I am having a little trouble finding my way around this group. My best guess is that I will be in this category of the "Work Process":

- Working individually or collaboratively in subgroups on specific topics (concept, semantic elements, orientation engine, pattern languages, domain specific applications).

The domain specific application that interests me is the power of the individual human being to influence the pattern of interactions in which they find themselves. What is required, I think, is a pattern of thought in which individuals explore the system as it is operating locally looking for opportunities to facilitate new interactions . . . thereby changing the pattern . . . transforming the system.

Just to share why I think this is important I ask if anyone here believes that the wicked problems we face will be solved from the top down? Will our governments come to an international agreement that ends poverty and heals nature? Will free market economics end up ending poverty and healing nature?

I think the answer is no. The pattern of interactions in which we find ourselves is a complex adaptive and self organizing system, a living system, that is built up from individual interactions among the living things that make it up. As such, change occurs at the level of the individual interaction.

I am searching for collaborators to help me build out and refine the concepts that make up this pattern of thought that might empower individuals to transform the system. I have learned a lot already participating here and I wish you all satisfying progress toward your goals.

LikeComment

Nicolas Stampf, M Ichael Josefowicz and David Eggleton like this.

Comments

3 of 634

[View previous comments](#)



M Ichael Josefowicz Dmitry Sokolov "Should we develop "The Intentions Test" to measure openness and willingness to participate in whatever project? " When I was teaching I started each semester with "If you had all the time and money in the world, what do want to be true that is not true today? Then I encouraged the students to think about themselves as well as whatever project they chose. It worked pretty well most of the time. Maybe that is a way to go...

The next step was to take account of the real constraints of time and money. Then they have the task of whittling down the dream result to something that could be done within their constraints. Some very innovative things emerged.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · 3 hrs · Edited



M Ichael Josefowicz Helene Finidori I take " I am not rewarded back either for the stuff I share and produce" as a measure of people's Intent. The proof of intent is behavior. People say they have Intent, but the only way to know is by what they do. My approach is to notice who responds, how they respond.

It only takes a triad with common intent to trigger a productive conversation. Notice that you and Esteban Trev and I seem to have a common Intent. It has to emerge, there is no way to force it.

In general, I've found the strategy of continuing to build and share a body of work is just right. My rule is you share what is Interesting to you. As the receiver I've found that what is Interesting to you = interesting to me. That is the approach I use at Twitter. Seems to be working out. I have 5500+ followers. I don't care a hoot about followers smile emoticon

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 3 hrs



David Braden "The world economy, financial markets, air transportation, pandemic disease spread, climate change, and insect-driven deforestation are examples of truly complex systems:"

I have not had time to review the entire article [Giorgio](#) but I do want to pointout that each of those truly complex systems listed is a part of an even more complex system that includes all of them. As noted, each of those systems "consist of multiple components, each component active in different domains and structured in its own right, interconnected in ways that lead to emergent collective behaviors and spontaneous architectural re-organization."

The system is fragile because the components out of which these systems are built are no longer stable . . . The entire system is built up from individual interactions . . . stability begins at the level of the individual interaction.

That was the point of this thread: "the power of the individual

human being to influence the pattern of interactions in which they find themselves."

When we talk about change at any other level we must be prepared to overcome the existing pattern because that pattern is individuals engaging in interactions through which they obtain value.

"The Fall 2008 near-collapse of the global financial system and its heart-wrenching impacts are empirical evidence that pure-market ideology does not work as a design principle for the world's economies."

Governments have only the power to constrain or subsidize economies . . . they do not design them (nor does anyone else). What and when to constrain and what and when to subsidize create fragility when we treat economy as something separate from the whole system.

Like · Reply · 1 · 2 hrs · Edited

OLDER

David Braden January 10 at 1:28pm
Poverty and impoverished environments



Poverty and impoverished environments are the failure of the system to provide a home for the individuals impoverished. This failure results from humans organizing all their affairs around the market.

Each of us has the power to reach out to the the impoverished within our locality and, in exchange for providing a home, they will contribute their gift to enhance the flows through the system. Exercising this power does not require any one to give up any thing.

Rather, when we insist on buying through the market that which we could produce for ourselves in cooperation with the living things around us, we impoverish the habitat in which we live. We then deny our children and grandchildren the enriched world we could have produced.

It is this practice of honoring the gift of the least among us that will allow the system to heal nature and produce abundance.

LikeComment

5 people like this.

Comments

3 of 94

[View previous comments](#)



Alex Lavigne-Gagnon I like the idea of investing in my community. It would be fun to have proper vehicles, instruments, something akin to crowd-investing.. I don't know, say a bunch of us decide we want to refurbish a local school.. Say it needs work, the plumbing or heating system, the hallways need painting, I don't know. So say we decide, hey, together we can cover the cost, we have access to the resources, etc. In essence, it's the concept of barn-raising, right? Grassroots, boittom-up.

I'm just saying I'm not against any of that. Also, though, I'm thinking of more formal ways of investing, say I have \$20.00 I want to invest every week. There's not a heck of a lot I can do with that right now except stick it in a drawer. Say I'm risk-averse, what am I going to do? There are options.. Maybe I could give it to someone as a micro-loan, though. Or I can invest it in keeping my grandparents' grave and tombstone clean..

Like · Reply · 3 · 23 hrs



M Ichael Josefowicz David Braden Good piece by Seth Godin that speaks to the issues being in a CLP for the feeling of making a difference.

<http://sethgodin.typepad.com/.../volunteer-engagement.html>



Seth's Blog: Volunteer engagement

It's possible that there's a woman who walks around your neighborhood every day, generously...

SETHGODIN.TYPEPAD.COM

Like · Reply · 1 · 14 hrs



David Braden "hey, together we can cover the cost, we have access to the resources, etc" **Alex** might have an extra \$20 and one extra hour each week . . . he could 1) invest it in mutual funds (the hour goes to waste [or pleasure :-]), 2) give it to charity, 3) invest in the capacity of his community.

Right now I have 5 families that own 15 laying hens. Those hens give each family +/- a dozen eggs per week. We share the work and share the cost. The cost goes down as we produce what the chickens need as a by-product of other processes that provide other products . . .

I did this survey a couple of years ago to make this point . . . intellectually people seem to understand . . . there is some other block that I have yet to identify . . . perhaps it is in "An agenda, Peer support, A hierarchy of achievement" **M Ichael**.

"Every one has some balance of discretionary time and/or money. If you decide to invest that resource, which of the

following investments will be most effective at creating the kind of world you wish for your children?

- a) Work as hard as you can and invest in stocks and bonds,
- b) Attend meetings and sign petitions for government action,
- c) Buy most of what you need from socially responsible companies, or
- d) Work with your neighbors to build the capacity to provide for yourselves."

Like · Reply · 1 · 10 hrs

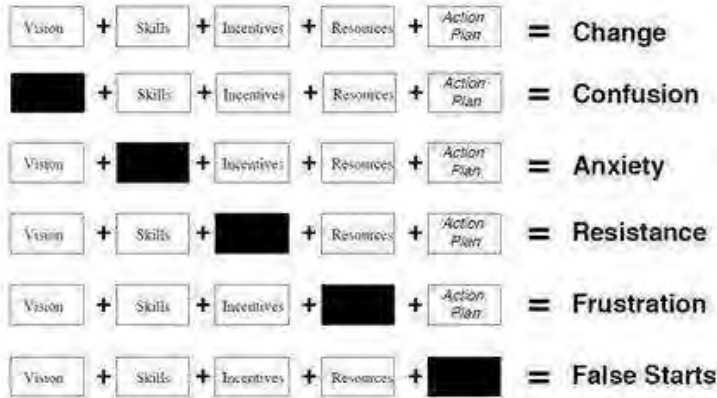
David Eggleton · June 26, 2015

Shared Michael H Ballard's photo



Explains and guides.

Managing Complex Change



Michael H Ballard

June 26, 2015

Thought provoking

LikeComment

Helene Finidori, Mark Frazier, Michael Josefowicz and 10 others like this.

Comments



David Eggleton To the left of Vision goes Conscience, perhaps?

June 26, 2015 at 3:38pm · Like · 2



Bruce Waltuck Hmm... A couple of comments off the top...

- on incentives- people are motivated by different things. We may have alignment or disarray because of the degree of difference among the various people in the system. There are also boundaries and enablers from the context and culture- is there a culture supporting change and exploration? Or a culture of fear and blame for any failure?

- on learning and adaptation- particularly when acting in a complex challenge/system, the causal relationship between actions and outcomes is not known or knowable prospectively. So we need to try promising options without fear, and assure learning and adaptation as needed, to move towards desired outcomes.

- before vision- what each person lives, shapes knowledge, understanding, beliefs, expectations, and intentions.

June 26, 2015 at 7:03pm · Edited · Like · 2



Mark Frazier Yasuhiko re vision -> action

June 26, 2015 at 10:46pm · Like



Larry Victor We need many such EXERCISE FORMATS to challenge our thinking and dialog about our options. NO single PATTERN will represent REALITY. All that we create and propose are tools, to be applied collaboratively in novel configurations.

RESISTANCE to engagement and action is much more complex than this useful chart. It varies significantly with the diversity of human cognitive styles and cultures. All solutions that assume a normal patient/client/subject (average with deviations) is doomed to fail. Humankind IS A DISTRIBUTION, not an entity with variation.

Bruce Waltuck good comment.

June 26, 2015 at 11:32pm · Like · 2



Helene Finidori Esteban, take these all (that you mention in your first comment, and multiply them in diversity i.e all this in plural. Your mentioning clarity reminds me of Bonnitta Roy's work. Larry I like your comment. Particularly humankind (and therefore it's actions and visions) is a distribution not an entity with variation.

June 27, 2015 at 2:25am · Like · 1



Helene Finidori Coming across this again, and wondering whether the list could be complemented with "orientation"/direction/telos. Unless this is included in vision?

5 hrs · Like · 1

David Eggleton January 4 at 3:45pm
Permaculture as Pattern Language



I don't mind if this link moves (into a Doc, for example).



A Pattern Language Explained | Permaculture Magazine

Understanding patterns is a key concept in permaculture. But what are they? How can we 'see' them with systems thinking and how can we apply them? Michael...

PERMACULTURE.CO.UK

Like Comment Share

Helene Finidori, Nicolas Stampf and 5 others like this.

Comments



Jessie Henshaw David, Great to have more resources. Here we're trying to learn how to write good design patterns. Do you have any good ones you've written for permaculture, to mention and link on our references page (see 'Files'), or would you like to start one that others could contribute to? The links to our present template for that are at the top of the references page. If you look over the references you're likely to see lots of things missing. We'd be pleased if you added what's important for you and your group.

Like · Reply · 1 · January 4 at 8:33pm



Helene Finidori Great article [David Eggleton](#). I was wondering what you meant by "I don't mind if this link moves (into a Doc, for example)". Did you mean as a link in a resource repository or as part of a reflection and basis for studying the commonalities between Systems Thinking and Pattern Language and how they can serve each other?

18-Jan-16

I personally don't mind if it's the latter smile emoticon.

Like · Reply · 5 hrs

David Braden January 16 at 1:06pm
Community making project



We are looking for individuals ready to accept their power/responsibility/opportunity to heal nature and and build an inclusive community within their locality.

In this quest to be effective in the use of our power you will learn that the only thing each of us controls is our own choices. Our power to heal nature and build inclusive community is in helping to make new connections in our habitat. A Community that makes a place for all its people and all its species will be healthy, resilient, and productive.

We participate in a complex adaptive system in which there is no one in control. It is a pattern of interactions in which every actor is doing what they believe they must. The more participation in the pattern the more the pattern carries what humans and the many species need to participate. A review of the Fable of Community, Market and Charity might help you decide if this quest is for you.

<http://www.livingsystemsinst.org/.../fable-community-market-a...>

For examples of how these new connections might be made in your locality review the projects listed on the home page of the Living Systems Institute web site. Be sure to sign up for the newsletter.

<http://www.livingsystemsinst.org/>

If you are still interested, the skills that you will need on your quest are outlined in this discussion of the Principles of Community Design.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/807609662684706/>

The Fable of Community, Market and Charity | Living Systems Institute

Community, Market and Charity are siblings. For millions of years community worked slowly developing a pattern in which everyone contributed and...

LIVINGSYSTEMSINST.ORG

Like Comment Share

Dmitry Sokolov and 4 others like this.

Comments



David Braden M Ichael, Esteban, [Jessie](#), [Kevin](#), I am thinking that this might be the better approach to spreading the word. Your thoughts will be appreciated.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · January 16 at 1:08pm



Kevin Jones Traveling will try to get to it

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 16 at 2:02pm



M Ichael Josefowicz I can only say it works powerfully for me. Especially this part. I like to do a little reformatting, it makes it read they way I hear it.

"Human began to see that Market without Community was out of balance.

First they stopped feeding bears and that helped but was not enough.

So Human went to find Wolf.

Wolf returned and drove Elk to the ridge lines.

Beaver and Willow and Moose returned.

Micro Organism once again builds fertility into Yellowstone season over season.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · January 16 at 2:29pm



Kevin Jones Better. Less exclusionary and oppositional.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · January 16 at 2:03pm



David Braden The usual way I say that is "heal nature and produce abundance" Esteban. I may go back to that as these "activist/wizard/jedi knights" get deeper into the materials. Abundance has a monetary connotation in our culture . . . what is a better way to relay the idea of accepting the gift of those less fortunate . . .

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · January 16 at 7:34pm



Dmitry Sokolov David, thank you for the links. Lots of reading...

Would you have a more condensed guide, a step-by-step set of actions I could realise locally / collection of best practices and results achieved. An overview of existing self-organising teams / "complex adaptive systems" would be of much appreciation as well.

Thank you beforehand!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · Yesterday at 12:36am



David Braden "why you want to single out that group instead of presenting a come inclusionary and encompassing ideology" Good points Esteban. The concept is that we, as a complex adaptive system, are better off when all the individuals of all the

species have a way to contribute in exchange for what they need to thrive. Observing the pattern in its current configuration, there are few ways to contribute for individuals who cannot contribute to profits . . . so I want to say that the system needs another way to contribute . . . besides the quest for profits . . . to bring abundance to those who are not needed in the quest for profits.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · Yesterday at 9:42am



David Braden "a step-by-step set of actions I could realise locally" I would start with the 3 simple rules [Dmitry](#). 1) everyone gets to make their own decision, 2) what ever we do is open to all residents, and 3) measure progress by the diversity of participation.

It is a complex adaptive system and there are many ways to begin increasing the inclusiveness of the pattern in your locality. Start a deep mulch garden at your home:

<http://www.motherearthnews.com/.../deep-mulch-gardening...>

or start a Bee Safe Neighborhood project perhaps:

<http://www.livingsystemsinst.org/.../bee-safe...>

Deep Mulch Gardening: Building a Habitat for a Whole-Soil Ecosystem

MOTHEREARTHNEWS.COM

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · Yesterday at 9:50am



M Ichael Josefowicz **David Braden** I want to add another step, especially for leaders. The nurturing of a common Intent. My experience is that once you have at minimum three people with common Intent, the steps will come from serrendipity. I would call your steps more rules of engagements or the ethics of the company. Every decision has to be made within those ethics. Sometimes , as infrequently as possible, some decision will rub up against the ethics. It will happen especially if there is some unexpected challenge that has to be overcome.

It might come up with some kind of very attractive opportunity. Especially market pressures or the possibility of funding. If the ethics are strong and shared by everyone, it's usually possible to make decisions that do not violate the ethics.

If the ethics are not shared by everyone, an ethical decision that is against self interest can create divisions within the organization. It's not all that different from a person to live an ethical life. It's a constant battle between what I should do versus what I can do.

My working definition of ethics is not doing what you can do.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 2 · Yesterday at 11:20am



David Braden I edited the post to reflect what I understand to be your point Esteban. I am sure you will let me know what else I need to consider smile emoticon. I am thinking about the intent **M Ichael**. You gave it to me and then I see that it is not explicit in this latest version.

It goes something like: Understanding that we live in a complex adaptive system with no one in control; and that I have the power to influence changes that will increase the inclusiveness (complexity, stability, productivity, diversity) within the system; in ways that will create a better world for my children and grandchildren; I choose to undertake the quest . . . I will learn as much as I can observing and interacting with the system . . . in order to be as effective as I can . . . at making my habitat inclusive.

Like · Reply · Yesterday at 2:02pm



M Ichael Josefowicz **David Braden** I find that I am learning alot when I look at this FB and some other threads as hands on experience with Complex Adaptive System. There is no one in control, you have the power to influence changes which are, in fact increasing the complexity, stability and productivity of the thread.

It seems many people share the Intent of finding ways to make complex adaptive systems visible and therefore accessible to use for change making and also a way to help other people see the power of the CAS stance.

Like · Reply · 2 · Yesterday at 2:41pm

Thor Mann December 13, 2015

Pattern Language Ideas and Transformaion



Thinking about the issues involved in applying Pattern Language ideas to other domains such as Systemic Transformation (of Society? or smaller societal units?) I looked at some recommendations I have drawn from my perspective of 'occasions' and 'image' in environmental design -- e.g recommendations for revitalizing downtown public areas and streets. I am citing just one or two examples from that list: 1. the recommendation to offer a variety of occasion opportunities (of both 'functional requirement occasions' and the 'incidental or 'in-between occasions') and 2 the recommendation to ensure that all these occasions are arranged in a continuous string or network without interruptions or barriers. (A more complete story about occasions is provided in the book 'Rigatopia'). My twofold question is: Can these recommendations be translated into Patterns? And what advantages would

this bring to the purpose of conveying these recommendations to designers and other people involved in the process? While I think the answer to the first question is 'yes', I am not so sure but curious about the second one, which affects all other applications of the PL in other domains. Comments?

LikeComment

David Braden likes this.

Comments



David Braden "encouraging a global discourse fed by the results and experiences of many diverse societal design experiments"

I am not sure how to interpret your use of occasion opportunities. Do you mean structures that allow opportunities for people to interact? I have not read the book but I follow a strategy of many small experiments (empowering individuals to design new connections for themselves, their community and their habitat.)

Like · Reply · December 13, 2015 at 1:38pm



Thor Mann David, thanks for the question. by 'occasions' I mean the events, episodes, interactions of individuals and groups that make up our lives. Built environment places can accommodate ('allow') such occasions to occur, but an appealing environment will 'invite' people to engage in them, even 'invent' and create new occasions. The lifeless environments Alexander and all of us are complaining about in much of new architecture are not inviting anything interestign or appealing to happen there, other than to gape at the daring forms of the architecture... not our life.

Like · Reply · December 13, 2015 at 1:48pm



David Braden Interesting. I approach design from exactly the opposite direction. We are concerned with patterns of interaction among living things and then work to create structure that supports those interactions. Perhaps that is why I am having such trouble communicating the patterns I see?

Precisely the opposite of "daring forms of architecture" smile emoticon :

<http://www.livingsystemsinst.org/.../integrated-closed...>

Like · Reply · 1 · December 13, 2015 at 5:11pm · Edited



Thor Mann I am not sure I understand how the examples imply clear directions that can be seen as 'opposite'. Perhaps it is the focus on 'interactions between 'living things' versus 'interactions between people' that makes the comparison difficult. I thought I had added a picture of a cloister that made the concept of 'inviting' to occasions clear -- it does not show up here, ;I'll try again: here:



Like · Reply · December 13, 2015 at 6:44pm · Edited



David Braden I was just saying that we design patterns of interaction first and structure to accommodate interaction. I understood you to be talking about a approach that designs the structure first without considering what occasions that structure might allow. I was joking that one might not consider my food cell architecture.

Like · Reply · December 13, 2015 at 6:50pm



Thor Mann David, I see that my answer to your post did not make it to the confusing FB surface. I was not sure whether you were talking about the 'standard' practice approach or my proposed perspective. The usual approach starts with a 'program' of conventional 'spaces', described in more detail as needed by listing the 'functional' requirements for activities. That program is given to the designer. Conventional program labels (e.g. 'dining room') refer to conventional occasions, of course, but don't say anything about the 'incidental' occasions nor the image concepts involved; my suggestion is not only that these considerations should be added to the conventional 'program', but that the discussion about those program items must continue throughout the design process because each 'physical' design provision will impact the occasion opportunities the places offer, as well as the imagery they evoke in users.

The conventional approach also allows the syndrome you are talking about: that designer just provides 'enough' space for the user requirement functions, but then focuses on his architectural interests: the structure, the use of new materials, the possibilities of new forms and shapes whose construction is made possible by the new computer program. For the life in the resulting spaces, that can be 'interesting', even serve 'status' concerns (of having the most recent fashion design) or distractions, even dysfunctional or destructive.

Your food cell architecture, as far as I can see, is concerned mainly with the functional requirements for the food production system you envision, -- for which there aren't any agreed upon 'names' yet that designer, client, users understand and whose reference implies adequate provision for all the details involved. So the 'program' for that system needs more detailed work before designing can start. Your story does not include the human participants in the system, as far as I can see, and the occasions and imagery governing those. (That's not a criticism -- your prime

18-Jan-16

and laudable concern is, for now, just to make it work.)

Again: my question really was about whether and how the discussion about these issues would benefit from being carried out in terms of patterns (a language the client/ user would have to learn before engaging in it) or some other vocabulary.

Like · Reply · 1 · December 14, 2015 at 10:45am



Thor Mann Esteban, thanks for your post and example of seating arrangements that clearly illustrate the 'invitation' aspect of physical design features. I am still not sure whether David and I don't 'perceive each others' side' -- I was just trying to clarify whether his questions were about the common practice I criticize (implicitly, with my proposals) or about my ideas. Although I have been writing little items -- papers -- about occasion and image for some time, they have not received much attention (I had plenty of other things to do, and did not promote them very much, my book 'Rigatopia', just out, is the first attempt of a coherent account for all the implications and aspects) so I am still curious about how well they get across and what holes there are in the theory. But this is also a little 'off topic' -- the question of developing patterns for 'transformation' and how well the very concept of 'pattern serve that discourse. My current status about that inquiry, (premature as it is, since I only joined the group recently) is still rather one of confusion.

Like · Reply · December 16, 2015 at 10:28pm



David Braden Thor says: "I see that my answer to your post did not make it to the confusing FB surface."

I recommend only using the reply button if you want to limit the readership of your post smile emoticon.

I understand the interplay between "occasion" and design of the "space". I think I also follow the idea of a space that invites interactions that the users "invent". My primary interest is a way to stimulate many small experiments where the results are shared among the designers. It seems we should be able to use social media in that way.

Like · Reply · December 17, 2015 at 9:35am



Helene Finidori Thor, I had missed this post of yours, and have not yet read all the comments. I downloaded the paper you wrote a few years ago after this big linkedin discussion. It would be interesting to see it and PLAST in the light if each other. Maybe it would help answer these questions.

Like · Reply · January 12 at 4:48am



Thor Mann Helene, if I remember correctly, you were in the process of moving so I'm not surprised at your missing some posts. But as I mentioned more recently, the FB format, for all its advantage over LI (not chopping up posts, including graphic

material) is making the task of keeping track more and more difficult, so in the meantime I have been spending so much time on searching for 'where was I' and getting overview that I'm just about to give up on getting anywhere coherent here. Current tentative sense: efforts to impose 'brand' jargon (including PL) on discussions that by the nature of the planning tasks must include wide participation by non-experts are obstacles to participation rather than facilitating it.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 12 at 9:42am



Thor Mann Helene, Esteban. I am sorry my response was done directly on the email notification so I responded to a different (more general) issue than the two questions of my original post. Confusion reigns. I was looking for clarifying my understanding of whether and how the switch to a PL vocabulary can benefit the discussion / conversation / discourse about some design or planning issue, for which I gave two examples. The first step would be to ensure that a consideration such as my recommendation to ensure that occasion opportunities in a public setting would form a continuous string of linked experiences, could be translated into the PL vocabulary. I thought that the answer to that question was yes. After some more exploration of patterns here and on different sites, I am more confident of this -- mainly because the understandings of what constitutes a pattern turns out to be much more broad and general than I suspected from my original knowledge of Alexander's patterns. I found that just about any concept, goal, principle, aim, observation about a domain has been designated as a pattern -- even what I thought was more like the 'problem' a pattern was supposed to solve. I'm not sure whether this is good or bad; but I have a feeling that it may be less conducive to the easy production of 'valid' design solutions because the different possible interpretations of a concept or general heuristic will generate potential discussions (arguments?) in the process -- precisely what I thought Alexander was trying to avoid. The recommendations could be simply declared to be patterns. I did not see much in the way of answers to the second question about the benefits of talking about a project in terms of patterns (instead of more terms commonly understood by people who haven't learned the PL yet but would like to contribute and express their concerns). So in my mind, the main objection remains the one I mentioned: requiring knowledge of another 'language' may be an obstacle to participation. I'd like to amend the second question with a 'reverse' version: whether beneficial aspects like the easy production of 'valid' solutions that are promised (guaranteed) by the original PL can be achieved by recommendations expressed in common conversational language; both of those are still open, in my mind, requiring exploration.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 12 at 12:27pm



Thor Mann Esteban: I agree with your comment; "... the challenge resides in how best to facilitating each contribution benefits and enriches the conversation..." That is indeed the big question: in part, the design of the 'platform' for the discourse (or 'conversation, as you seem to prefer, though I don't see the

difference); and in part the choice of 'language'. Do you see that given my current hesitation about how to answer my second question, one heretical suggestion would arguably be to refrain from using PL or other 'systems brand' vocabularies and try to stay with conversational 'jargon-free' language as much as possible?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 12 at 12:34pm · Edited



Thor Mann Esteban, I must admit to some crude insensitivity to your 'vile repugnance' towards the term 'discussion'; it is the first time I have encountered it, and don't have the impression that it is shared widely enough and have the indisputable implication of confrontation, to warrant banning the poor word from the ... hmm.... sorry, discourse. Though I can see the possibility of some inspired playful conversation exploring possible alternatives to even the term 'discourse' (the 'dis'-part of this being the key dissonant item? Or to 'con'-versation? So: 'proversation'? 'procussion'? 'procourse'? I agree that design, planning, policy-making talk would benefit from an implied upfront assumption of cooperative attitude, and I think is an underlying assumption behind my work on argumentative planning provisions. Others may find that irresponsibly naive, and I understand that: procussive correctness refraining from using such terms as 'cost' and benefit' in the planning talk, with their implied suspicion that cost and benefits are often unfairly distributed, may irresponsibly stick its head in the sand to the fact that they often are so distributed, and that this must be pointed out, clarified, resolved somehow; 'discussed'? I find that frank talk about pros and cons -- which are not absolute but relative to who's paying and who's benefiting what, helps clarifying things -- whereas, incidentally, the emphasis on general terms such as the Alexander 'aliveness' may be abused to hide that unfair aspect. E-Prime? I can say confidently that it IS not my cup of tea, (so verryvery sorry); nor do I wish to make a tempest in that cup. If you insist, so be it. Then should I just shut up...?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 13 at 6:45pm



Helene Finidori Thanks **Thor**. Indeed I have been moving, and now I am 'in between'. But also I agree, as suggested by **David Braden**, replies to individual comments are very hard to follow...

I think there are two issues or questions you raise here regarding patterns and pattern languages **Thor**.

One is about using the 'jargon' of PL, and the other is about the transformative 'quality' or effectiveness of PL.

What I can say is that:

1. Using any form of jargon or specialized vocabulary at the theoretical exploration level does not imply/prejudge that the same jargon and concepts will be used / imposed on 'users' 'on the field' at the application / practice level. We are not in the realm of 'the commons' here (to refer to one of our earlier

discussion), which had some value content. We are with the pattern at the technical/technology level -of course impeded by the language, but there's no paradigm involved here.

2. Pattern has many definitions / meanings among which design, form, repetition, configuration, blueprint and more... and there are various types of patterns. One of the goals of PLAST is to try and get an idea of what we have (how patterns are understood and used) to see whether we can map an ecosystem of patterns and study how they relate to each other on several dimensions (in an approach of a geographer building a map with the pieces he knows / can see). Such map (with more or less 'translators or connectors between areas) would help describe (using various expression modes) the forms, configurations etc we want to study or create from various angles.

3. Pattern can be "many things", but however, pattern is not "anything" as you suggested Thor. It can be perceived as such because of the diversity of definitions and types. But I think a coherence/red thread can be found.

Pattern can be seen as an actual configuration of elements (their arrangement and generated dynamics/effects) that is recurrent and that may need to be made sense of, documented, kept track of, discussed, applied or probed, evolved, in a context of different perception lenses; it can be a configuration observed (descriptive) with the function to make sense of things, or one desired (projected / to 'tend towards'; or a model, a design) with the function to produce or build something (a configuration, a form, an effect).

Pattern can also be seen as the format of the capture of the above, or the concept of the unit of capture, in a given format, i.e. as the format or unit of knowledge used to describe/express it.

And it seems there has been a 'slippery slope' (to use an expression of Hofstadter shared by Larry) to switch from a definition of configuration of conditions (the diagram or 'system of forces' as element of a greater systemic whole of Alexander in the Synthesis of form) to the pattern as form (the problem solution format as element of a syntax of design as evolved from A Pattern Language), with a loss of connection between the two. A connection we would like to recreate (among others). Because we think the pattern (as a format of knowledge) is a good way of making the pattern as configuration easier to understand, exchange, interoperate, collectively discuss etc etc...

4. So now about the transformative power of the pattern. Of course we are looking at the pattern as configuration here i.e. as arrangement of elements and their dynamics/effects. These patterns can help to recognize and/or make sense of trajectories and their variations, and to try and understand and act upon configurations and the variables that constitute them, not as linear causation but as 'seeds' or 'conditions' for things to emerge (like your spaces generative of serendipitous as well as planned interactions). This is what the 4th gen PL paper is about.

And in this context, of course, the 'pattern as format of capture'

provided it is built with the relevant variables and in a way that can validly describe, probe, discuss arrangements, systems of forces, cognitive elements etc etc can be a valuable tool... with the appropriate 'application' or practice methodologies.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 14 at 5:58am



Thor Mann Helene: thanks.

I can accept the distinction between jargon use at the theoretical versus practical level. (I would worry about that when the discussion takes on flavors of condescension towards contributions at the 'practical' level that even Alexander has occasionally been guilty of, and are present in pretentious calls in other discussions from the (higher?) level of some theory, for others to strive for 'awakening' and gaining higher, more holistic 'awareness' and the like).

But does this mean that at some point, some translation has to take place (which is what I am calling for)? Or does talk about theoretical issues just not take place at the practical level? My question was whether the 'practical level' concept examples I mentioned could be translated (in the opposite direction) into pattern language-speak; and whether that would be useful, and how. In other words: if I am working on something I consider useful (I guess, on a practical level), should I translate those ideas into some PL, and why? How would this benefit the work? You claim it would be "easier to understand, exchange, interoperate, collectively discuss etc etc...", and I would be happy to believe that, but not just because Alexander, or even you claim so, but because I think you must have good reasons for it, and I would like to know (and be shown) those. Does this not also apply to item 4 of your post and its claim 'can help...'?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 14 at 4:17pm

Isabel Bombeke January 11 at 5:44pm

Life is Networks



Something to remind every day. This wisdom in sketches



Living Systems Lessons for Social Change Networks

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Helene Finidori November 2, 2015

PLAST as an example of 4th generation Pattern Lang.



PLAST as an example of fourth generation pattern language, in the continuation of [Takashi Iba's](#) generational progression, oriented towards the active monitoring and the collective interpretation of the evolving directionality of social systems.

Here's the draft of the paper soon to be published in the proceedings of the Purplsoc 2015 conference:



Towards a Fourth Generation Pattern Language: Patterns as Epistemic Threads for Systemic Orientation

This paper charts the emergence of a fourth...

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Shelby Astin, M Ichael Josefowicz and 4 others like this.

Comments



Larry Victor What if, for Humankind, the number of independent variables are 100+, not 3-4-6? Visualization is no longer an adequate tool.

Our senses are what we have to work with; but let us not constrain reality to our access modalities.

By adding temporarily to our displays, and with training, can be create display systems that take us beyond 3 dimensions, for crews if not for individuals?

Like · Reply · 1 · November 2, 2015 at 7:09pm



Larry Victor Venn diagrams and ways of expanding dimensions has always been of interest to me. VISUALIZATION is very important. All I ask is that we not confuse representation with reality.

Like · Reply · November 2, 2015 at 7:15pm



Tim Winton Hi Helene. Thanks for sharing a draft of this excellent paper. PatternDynamics, (www.patterndynamics.net/patterns) based on the criteria stated in the paper, could also be considered a fourth generation pattern language. Members of this group interested in the philosophical, theoretical, and academic underpinnings that support this idea could see a series of 3 papers published sequentially in the Journal of Integral Theory and Practice: "Developing and Integral Sustainability Pattern Language", "Creating Cultures of Sustainability", and "The Meaning of Planetary Civilisation: Integral Rational Spirituality and the Semiotic Universe". These are available for download at <https://independent.academia.edu/TWinton> I'm wondering how the development of PatternDynamics could support your exploration of the idea of fourth generation pattern languages? [Cecile Green](#), [Daryl Taylor](#), [David Hood](#), [Anne Caspari](#), [Eddie Harran](#), [Edward West Bonnitta Roy](#), [Mark Frazier](#), [David Fox](#), interested in your thoughts?



Patterns | PatternDynamics™

These Charts contain links to definitions that will help you learn the systems principle behind each Pattern...

PATTERNDYNAMICS.NET

Like · Reply · 4 · November 2, 2015 at 7:56pm



Helene Finidori Hi Tim, nice to hear from you. Thanks for sharing your papers. I had never seen these underpinnings of your work. There is a lot of resonance, and most certainly PD could support what we are trying to achieve here, in particular as far as ontology and syntax would be concerned. What are your thoughts about it?

I would be interested to know how your practice has been evolving with experience, and how you think PD could be part of a meta-language for tagging identifies patterns and pattern languages, which we briefly address in the paper.

I'm sure [Tom Henfrey](#) will be interested in your permaculture journey.

Also, I'll probably come and visit around June, so we could start some conversations ahead of that. We didn't actually follow-up with our first conversation... time flies... let's catch it up!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 2 · November 3, 2015 at 8:47am · Edited



Tim Winton Hi **Helene**. Yes lets keep the conversation moving so we might be able to continue it in person while you are in Auss. I'm in Byron Bay, but get to Melbourne often for work. We could meet in either place. As far as ontology in relation to pattern languages goes, I have a fair bit to say about my views related to this topic in The Meaning of Planetary Civilisation: Integral Rational Spirituality and the Semiotic Universe paper. I'm advocating for exploring the hypothesis that more univerally applicable pattern languages can provide us with a way to integrate the divides between ontic views of reality, epistically oriented ones, and process oriented ones and that this could be the basis for a generative meta-theory as basis for a Planetary Cosmology. Lots to talk about there. Not sure if this is exactly lined up with what you are signifying re ontology in the context of fourth gen pattern languages, but it could be interesting to explore all the same.

Syntax gets discussed in the Creating an Integral Sustainability Pattern Language paper where I review Integral Semiotics in relation to PD itself. I imagine some of the insights there will apply to pattern languages more generally. I was interested to see that you have referenced C.S. Peirce in your paper. His semiotically orientated 'pragmatasist' view plays a foundational role in my own views generally and specifically to the potential efficacy of pattern languages for participating in the emergence of a Planetary society.

I suppose PD could be used to assist with the project of forming a meta-language for tagging patterns and pattern languages, but I see this as a secondary concern in my own approach. The focus by the PD community more generally has been to find ways to get pragmatic results in helping organisations and communities adapt to a more complex world. We have learned a lot here, especially in relation to our developing strategic partnership with [Lectica.org](#) Shaping PD as a patern language into practical social technology applications like decision making skills and an organisational operating system has been a very interesting challenge and we are starting to learn some useful principles to guide this kind of work.

People like David McLeod, Julian Waters-Lynch, Richard Harmer, Kamyia O'keeffe, Erkki Vedder, Jill Chitra, Gaby McDonald, Sean Esbjorn-Hargens, as well as some of the people who I mention earlier who are members of this group have been using PD and sharing their learnings over the last 3 or 4 years. Perhaps you would like to invite some of these folks to join the group for their input.

I'm very much looking forward to continuing the conversation and to participating in the initiatives of PLAST.



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Helene Finidori Thanks **Tim**, yes, PLAST (as an example of 4th generation pattern language) is indeed trying to bridge the different 'views' or ways of representing of our world in evolution - to avoid using big words smile emoticon. I'm dividing it into what is, how it 'moves', and what powers it, that indeed can be called ontic, process and epistemic (I haven't settled on terminology yet. As you see in the paper the content of these triad elements keep changing depending on what we are looking at). There are probably other dimensions and ways of defining them. It's a bit like the various fields of mathematics, that try to represent and model things in different ways. Alexander himself touched upon these various dimensions in his pattern language work, though he only briefly articulated the differences. I'm interested in bringing the different fields that are working from different start points to do just this.

I would be very interested to hear more about your experience in applying PD, with Lectica and in other contexts. Especially if you, [Cecile Green](#), [Daryl Taylor](#), [David Hood](#), [Anne Caspari](#), [Eddie Harran](#), [Bonnitta Roy](#), [Mark Frazier](#), [Edward West](#), [David Fox](#), have used it or reflected on the approach, I would be interested in your feedback. Don't hesitate to invite the other people you mention in this group, Tim.

Would you have time for a conversation on the week of Nov 16th?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 3 · November 9, 2015 at 2:30am · Edited



Tom Henfrey Thanks for flagging **Helene**; and **Tim** I had heard of and noted your work but not stopped to check in detail... the permaculture angle is of interest, and I also use Integral Theory so look forward to dialoguing about that. I'll drop you a line once I've read your papers.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · November 5, 2015 at 12:00pm



David Braden "active monitoring and the collective interpretation of the evolving directionality of social systems."

Why do you limit monitoring and interpretation to social systems? You credit permaculture as a pattern language and in that language, one of the principles is to observe and interact. That

principle to me means that we observe the system to try to understand it and then interact in order to determine if our understanding is correct.

Permaculture limits itself in practice to the interactions among the many species in a landscape and I understand the statement above to limit PLAST to the interactions of humans within human systems. The most inclusive holon includes both the ecosystem and the human social system. The later cannot exist without the former.

I also have a question about how you are using the term directionality. The purpose of a living system is to maintain itself. There need be no other reason for its existence. From that point of view there is no direction. There is only an increase or decrease in the health or vitality of the system.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · November 4, 2015 at 6:11pm



David Braden I like the parts about reaching out across silos. I do have some experience with translating jargon across specialities if that can be of use to your project.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · November 4, 2015 at 6:13pm



Helene Finidori **David Braden**, yes maybe it may seem, when you take this sentence in isolation, that the focus is on social systems exclusively, but this was a shortcut to socio.technical-economic-environmental systems, i.e. all of them in interaction.

As you say, social systems don't work independently, they are interdependent on other systems, the directionality of which humans can influence by the choices they make. These choices may indeed be (and usually are) determined by the desire to maintain a system. And sometimes to the detriment of the whole and of the considered system itself. This is quite elaborated on in the paper.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 2 · November 5, 2015 at 5:18am



David Braden I did read the whole paper **Helene** smile emoticon. I am still interested in this idea of directionality. How do you understand the difference between a good direction and a bad direction?

I am thinking that we humans have the opportunity to become the conscious aspect of the organism of which we are a part. (In my work I call that the habitat). It is that organization that must maintain itself if we, its components, are to continue in existence.

I am sorry if I am not making the distinction clear. I hope you will bear with me.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · November 5, 2015 at 10:19am



Jessie Henshaw **Larry Victor**, **Tim Winton**, I think you both might be able to find bridges between your symbolic patterns and the natural patterns they symbolize. When you associate them with natural patterns they also become richly informed and associated with the complex natural processes that actual systems work by. So illuminating the meaning of the symbols by association with the natural patterns is one of the values you get, that symbolic patterns by themselves have no direct access to.

Nature doesn't actually use our information patterns really, like Venn diagrams or equations of any sort. Problems even result if you study only the subjects of nature where those abstract representations seem to work. That still leaves you in the dark about how nature actually is working.

My papers on how to do recognize natural patterns in this kind of way might seem rather long and involved. They would be if taken as a whole, but they are also divided up in small pieces, arranged to present numerous "starting points" for learning to associate conceptual models with naturally occurring designs. It generally turns very usefully to let you see the difference.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · November 7, 2015 at 10:15am · Edited



Jessie Henshaw **Helene** - Yes, good rendition of your paper! I'll comment more perhaps when i get to fully read it. I have it printed out to read, but it takes me a while. The general comment I have been making all along is likely to come up though,

Now that I have those two good papers, documenting a parallel pattern language approach to Alexander's. His is for explicitly describing holistic architectural designs, and mine a pattern language for explicitly describing naturally occurring design patterns. So... as both Alexander's and my methods are "object-oriented" rather than "theory-oriented" I think those distinctions need to be included in discussions. What I call that is a "dual paradigm view", you might reference some times while you discuss the phenomenology and semantics for it your own way.

I of course grant that Alexander's notions of pattern language "objects", and how object oriented software design developed as an idea, can be quite confusing til one finds a good use for them. My related discussion of naturally occurring objects of design, even while addressing very familiar subjects, is naturally confusing too, for discussing them in a new way.

The understanding that, in any case, to work with whole systems of nature we need to recognize the natural units of organization in nature, to divide up nature according to its own parts, seems to be what's at the root of it, It goes all the way back to Plato, as very nicely quoted by David West in his PLoP paper:

<http://www.hillside.net/plop/2015/papers/steellers/20.pdf>

"First, the taking in of scattered particulars under one Idea so that everyone understands what is being talked about one...Second, the separation of the Idea into parts, by dividing it at the joints, as nature directs, not breaking any limb in half

as a bad carver might... I love these processes of division and bringing together, and if I think any other man is able to see things that can naturally be collected into one and divided into many, him I will follow as if he were a god."

Plato, Phaedrus, 265BC

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · November 7, 2015 at 10:57am · Edited



Jessie Henshaw Helene - I'm closely reading David West's PLoP paper "the Mystery Case of Undiscovered Patterns" now, It was in my Writers Workshop and highly praised, but I am even more impressed now than before. It's quite a marvel of thorough consideration of the sources of PL mythology, and I love his "Sherlock & Dr. Watson" trope...! <https://l.facebook.com/l.php...>

I find I'm missing all the PURPLSOC papers except yours, now. You quote his "Missing pattern Languages?" in that collection, so I suppose you have a copy. Could you send or reply with a link?

In the new paper he raises various good things for me to add on to, but I must be brief here. One is how Alexander, he and Salingeros all (top of p 12) seem to concur on what defines a well formed "language", as having "every pattern to be connected vertically to patterns on both higher and lower levels". That's true enough for a software code or an algebra, as examples well formed languages fitting that rule. It's not in any way characteristic of natural languages though, Natural languages are enriched immeasurably by their pattern gaps, their openness to metaphor, direct and indirect references, and foundations resting on self-defined externalities, etc., so phenomenologically "well formed" in a rather different way.

I thought you might find that of interest, and wonder if it may be a key insight, hinting at how these two paradigms for "well formed language" might relate to each other and perhaps hint at how problems defined with unclear meaning can sometimes find it in their externalities... smile emoticon

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · November 8, 2015 at 2:15pm · Edited



Helene Finidori **Jessie**, there's a note on the paper with the link to David West's slide presentation (missing languages) which was in the same session as the PLAST, which you attended. I do not know whether the associated paper is the same / similar to the PloP one.

I think the approaches you describe are complementary. Yours is indeed object oriented, with a special attention to observation and perception, and mine is systems oriented. My main goal is to create an ecosystem of tools and methodologies to find our way between different types of / approaches to patterns, trying to find ways to bridge the 'gaps' or 'in betweens' between different domains of practice, approaches, levels of abstraction. In particular between what you call 'nature' and I call reality or phenomenon that may be perceived differently by each of us, and the differentiated perceptions, theories and practices we make of it. So bridging the theory and the practice among

multiple theories and practices, looking at the cognitive cycle. That's the 'nature' I am observing smile emoticon.

I agree with you that if a city is not a tree, a language is not a tree either. And I think Alexander does not consider this either. That a pattern can be at play in a 'larger pattern' (higher level) or be composed of smaller patterns (lower level) does not make the network they constitute a tree. I think what is 'well formed' in a pattern language is rather the 'unit' of the pattern description with its capacity to connect to a web of other patterns to create or reveal meaningful relationships. That which makes it 'interoperable'.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · November 9, 2015 at 3:15am



Jessie Henshaw Thanks for the reminder. I think I even saw that link. We're also gradually moving toward finding out the relation between our approaches too. My tools for learning from material systems and yours for describing conceptual systems, do need to be connected. It's been puzzling to see us using each other's concepts without reference though.

I think we need to continue to provide the energy for the little organization you created, not just the collection of social tools. Without life it's not a system. We do have cognitive hurdles, such as conveying why "tree-like" languages need to be distinguished from "free-form" languages, like natural languages represent. It's actually been decades that I've been trying to understand why I'd get a "ringing silence" so often in response to discussing how words get meaning from the externalities they refer to, like "apple" gets meaning as a word from referring to "apples" as 'things of nature'. There seems to be a large language barrier for people who prefer tree-like language... (even though their native language is free-form and they also use that quite expertly too!!) So, that 'nature' of our cultural dimensions is awfully complex too, and I'm glad we're observing it even if I still am quite confused by it smile emoticon.

I also agree that "what is 'well-formed' in pattern language" needs to be "the 'unit' of the pattern description" with its capacity to be joined with others. The patterns never actually 'connect' exactly, as I see it, as there is quite a lot of invention and work in joining them, not automatic at all. As I see it it's like any material joining, that you have a "joint" as a mediating structure. Natural structures always require a mediated connection, the "joint" or "partnership" or "medium of exchange, etc. It's those kinds of connecting structures that I see as needing to be **discovered** as one uses a design pattern as a guide to learning how to make it work.

So I was thinking in that way about your tool and resource collection, considered as a design pattern for a community as you describe it. As a guide to how to make an actual community with it I started looking for what joints and partnerships and mediums of exchange would bring it to life... Where I ended was thinking the critical element may be the anchoring service it

provides, one valuable enough to motivate people to support it by subscribing.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · November 9, 2015 at 8:01am · Edited



Helene Finidori M Ichael Josefowicz here is the initial discussion on the paper.

Esteban, it seems I missed your previous post. I agree that the unit of description is not enough in itself. There is a big part which has been left aside in the paper about how the patterns can be semantically and systemically connected. So various types of connections distinct from hyperlinks.

I like the idea of the agent that pollinates and brings about specific (contextual?) possibilities. I'm not sure what you had in mind.

What we were thinking of (ping [Martin](#) and [Markus](#)), was a hermeneutical inquiry and set of heuristics to bring about scenarios based on variety of perspectives. At some point in other discussions, we were evoking the possibility (related to genetics) to turn some attributes on and off).

How do you imagine this agent?

The "inbetween" is not described enough indeed. This is what needs to be explored further, in a joint exploration, where no one tries to push forward his/her own approach or methodology.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · January 9 at 4:01am · Edited



Markus Ananda Oskari So basically you're looking at pinning down something like a perspective/orientation catalyst agent? And identifying its core functions and broader role in the system; or? Obviously a component of high value in a system that seeks to avoid stagnation, ie. being jailed into its self-affirming grid of habitual patterns. Have a feel such an agency needs to be given plenty of weight. If it's only entertained as a curiosity and for occasional insights (plucked to fit the old patterns), it would not serve the purpose of calibrating a system that needs to respond and transform to match an environment in a perpetual state of change and evolution. Which I reckon is the case more often than we'd care to admit, being shy of change and fond of the certainty that ships with our definite and durable roles in the game. Need to return to this thread for a complete read, must hit the yonder road for the day.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · January 9 at 4:11am · Edited



Helene Finidori Yes indeed [Markus](#). The great risk with patterns and pattern languages is fossilization. Once a configuration (individual or set of patterns) is established, it becomes cast in bronze. Just as our highways (real or virtual) that keeps us locked in preexisting routes. So initial pattern definition by Alexander of diagram or system of forces to be resolved aka

problem solution 'pair' shifts to problem solution and the systemic and evolutionary nature of the pattern is gone. The pattern becomes a problem solution 'rule'.

How to keep it 'plastic', adaptable is the question... That's why it is also interesting to see the pattern as an object of research (wikipedia entry like without the caveats re Ward Cunningham's paper wiki as pattern language -this is why he invented the wiki in the first place:http://www.hillside.net/.../Group6/plop13_preprint_51.pdf), that keeps track of discussions and controversies, trying to reach an evolving 'meta-stabilized' state.

Though I think we can do better than wiki, in particular in the relationships between patterns...

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · January 9 at 4:20am



Markus Ananda Oskari Underlying layer(s) of abstraction is definitely necessary for the fabric of a pattern language subjected to perpetual evolution, when the top-level language we deal in features any level of particularity and specificity of context. (Which it seems is invariably the case.) Elasticity follows from abstraction. Where it's lacking, many (how many depending on the level of change) of the bronze-cast circuits will have to be severed and we're back to the drawing board to redesign our relational wheels. Where each item/node/etc. is separated into an abstract core overlaid with attribute sets, and where these are rooted in a coherent ontological matrix of derivation and composition (likewise abstract; possibly matched with any number of spelled-out "concrete" ontologies), the degree of elasticity and responsiveness will be much higher. When the changes ripple through, it'll then be more of a task of checking that everything is in place (which really is mainly a proofing of the underlying abstraction paradigms), rather than reconstructing substantial chunks of the affected concrete PL domain. Of course all of this is rather theoretical until we get more hands-on crunching with things. On which note, I should probably construct a miniature prototype language with a couple of sample applications to demonstrate some of the concepts I'm talking about in a more tangible manner.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · January 9 at 4:42am · Edited



Jessie Henshaw Isn't the problem of "fossilization" and need for "dealt more effectively by properly understand what a "design pattern" really is. It's not a "design" but a pattern of questions and objectives for to ask as you are doing a "design". So in that way one can say it's not a "recipe" but a "guide" . You are told what unifying response to that present circumstances to expect if the pattern fits. You still need to find where a pattern fits, as the pattern doesn't tell you that. Isn't that simpler?

That's good theory I think, but also something any designer quickly discovers in practice. It's learning how to practice the use of design patterns that really necessitates a fresh look at the

realities defined by nature in every case, as nature is never an abstraction.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 10 at 9:14am · Edited



Helene Finidori Markus, that would be great.

I just wrote this in another post something which is not directly related but may offer some light on plasticity and the role of patterns in worldviews:

"David Braden. I like Wurman's definition of a pattern.

[Quoting David:

"Identify patterns and relationships between the units of meaning in the data. We 'need to develop a set of patterns that [we] can take with [us] and make into [our] own mental map. These patterns are like templates. [We] can recognise sets of information by matching the patterns they form against similar patterns, even if the information in the patterns is vastly different' (Wurman, 1989)."

Our daily experience is a "pattern of interactions" among the objects that cohabit our locality. The one paradigm is that each of these objects is competing with all the other objects. The paradigm of a complex system is that each of those objects is produced by the pattern of interactions. If we change the pattern we produce a different set of objects." unquote]

Actually it brings to mind a question I came across a while ago. Not sure whether I shared it here, about whether our brains were analog or digital, and the answer seems to be that it is both, but what makes our brains much more powerful than a computer is it's analog capacity, i.e. it's capacity to recognize and create patterns (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JLT6omWrvlw>) and analogy is the key mechanism of human thinking (Hodstadter and Sander: surfaces and essences)...

And the way it works (Stiegler and Husserl) is that what the mind perceives and retains (primary retentions) is stored / categorized in our minds we could say as patterns or in a state that enables analogy (secondary retentions) which are our own and evolves through individuation (feedback loop between our own first and secondary retentions), and co-evolves through co-individuation (feedback loops between individuals' retentions and retention processes), with tertiary retentions as tracks left in the medium (our externalized, collective memory) through which we trans-individuate (across space, time, groups).

So indeed, if we start perceiving differently we start to 'produce' different patterns that change the way we produce patterns and all what derives from our mental patterns.

This is why patterns are central to the PLAST concept, as a unit of collective interpretation and mediation between all kinds of 'multiplicities' (to not use dualities). But patterns as units of 'tertiary' retention must maintain the same plasticity as the

patterns in the brain, but a 'readability' that can be interpreted through various lenses.

cc Martin

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 2 · January 9 at 4:58am · Edited



Helene Finidori Reflecting upon a comment about the need for more or less intervention, i.e. "letting nature do the work" vs inclusive social processes to alleviate poverty for example and the need to balance the things.

I mentioned earlier that "Our stance on CAS is not 100% deterministic, the human has a choice of his actions within the limits of the system boundaries." This need some complementary unpacking.

We human evolve within the boundaries that we set ourselves in the system, and those that the system imposes on us (the difference between the two is sometimes difficult to establish). Though many natural boundaries and phenomena we cannot much about. We have more grip on social organization, knowing however that as I mentioned earlier and we described in the paper, the systems we set in place lock us into behaviors that we have difficulties to escape from.

In terms of social systems, I think one common mistake is to consider that an institutionalized mechanism even if we consider it 'modeled on nature' (such as 'free market' which 'naturalness' is far from obvious to everyone) is nature at work... rather it should be seen as nature (i.e. human nature in social systems) expanding in the limits of the mechanism in place (even social conventions are mechanisms in place) and its margin of manoeuvre...

So the goal of a PLAST approach would be to try and understand or evaluate the behavior and orientation of the system (i.e. this is where the current configurations may take us) and probe the inflection points and limits to evaluate margins of manoeuvre and some form of 'pharmacology', i.e. in Plato's sense: a remedy (something beneficial) can become toxic (detrimental) if overdosed, and something toxic at high doses (arnica) can be beneficial at lesser dosis. This would help determine the 'healthy' degree of intervention...

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 3 · January 9 at 5:56am



Jessie Henshaw Helene Those are good comments on the relationship between human and natural designs, that human designs are mostly extensions or modifications of natural ones. Perhaps more emphasis on learning how our thinking differs from what nature is actually using is needed. We have a very old habit of imagining nature as being the information in our minds, as a primary reason why our information misleads us very often.

So the goal of PLAST would then also include finding better ways of grounding our systems thinking in the nature of systems that

we don't define, but nature does. Those "externalities" of course can't be contained in either the information we collect or in any theory we make up. Nature's systems are independent of what we imagine, including the systems of our thought being exceptionally different from what we think.

So Yes, "We human evolve within the boundaries that we set ourselves in the system, and those that the system imposes on us (the difference between the two is sometimes difficult to establish)." We then need to use our "encoding and decoding" as we observe and document useful patterns to help us understand what gets lost in translation too. That's impossible to represent in a model, as it's what is being left out of the models... ,

We find a need for learning how our "purposeful" designs differ from nature's "purposeless" designs. The purposes of our designs themselves are one of the primary biases in our thinking, central to why our our systems and system boundaries differ so greatly, from nature's actually much more ingenious and better organized, ones.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 10 at 9:43am



M Ichael Josefowicz Esteban Trev Some thoughts about " The "inbetween" is not described enough indeed. "

One way that it is described is the shifting boundary between chaos and complexity. Another way it is described is the seed of a new form between meta ethnic fault lines.

In the case of meta ethnic fault lines. For 200+ years Rome had clear defined boundaries. Then Rome started devolving from interior forces - the elites in Rome itself. The groups outside the boundary saw an opportunity. What [Jessie Henshaw](#) refers to niche seeking.

In the conflict around the weakened Roman boundaries, self identity increases among the new formation. The increased cohesion of the emerging groups increases it's ability to project power.

The positive feedback loop of the more cohesion the more power the more cohesion leads to a new empire that sets up boundaries.

The cycle continues and has for most of history.

The innovation that is the birth of a new empire happened in the in-between. At the higher level of generality, in a CAS innovation happens in the space of the in-between.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 9 at 10:40am



Helene Finidori Esteban, thanks for your elaboration.

Agents being individuals is a good clarification: I had imagined you thought of some automated agent smile emoticon

18-Jan-16

In betweenness: when I said no-one pushes an approach I meant everyone asserts and enriches his/her approach but without imposing it on others, but rather finding the bridges and cross pollinating between the two. The inbetween being the third bridging part you are mentioned.

[M Ichael Josefowicz](#), the inbetweenness being not only between approaches/methodologies, but also between phases, levels, disciplines, domains of application, perspectives or types of technologies etc...

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · January 10 at 6:09am · Edited



Jessie Henshaw The focus on individual "agents" is critical, given what is easy to observe, but also needs to make a distinction between the individuals of theory and those of nature. The former are not actual individuals, but only applications of abstract rules used to roughly represent them, but missing quite a lot. Individuality in nature is an emergent property of individual accumulations of local design, like a snowflake or a person, that evolves from a starting pattern from which the new individual form of nature develops.

More simply said, the choices of people are far more innovative than any rule can define. What we do is search the world for new forms to create, and we swarm to the next "killer app" that satisfies our biased purposes. That search for how to create new designs with emergent properties attractive to us is what pattern language is a sophisticated working method for helping with doing. The way it helps is by guiding you to be explicit in describing the design patterns of things more holistically. So its something you have to learn by actually doing, using the theory to push you into learning the practice.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 10 at 2:45pm · Edited

Helmut Leitner December 22, 2015 at 4:24am

Alfonso Montuori Digestible Systems Theory



An easily digestible overview on systems theory by Alfonso Montuori.

https://www.academia.edu/19565263/General_System_Theory

This points again to the problem that the relationship of pattern theory to established systems theories is still unnegotiated.

General System Theory

An overview of General System Theory and its applications in Organization Studies.

ACADEMIA.EDU

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Helene Finidori, Nicolas Stampf and Dmitry Sokolov like this.

Comments



Thor Mann "the relationship of pattern theory to established systems theories is still unnegotiated".

I take this to mean that while Alexander as the originator of the Pattern Language has distanced himself and his work from the 'systems' perspective, and some people in the systems community don't consider PL as a systems concept, a more general view of systems can look at the Patten Language as a set of related elements (patterns), which is a basic definition of a system. So the PL is a system. It is different from most other systems models in that the patterns are essentially recommendations or rules -- that is, they as well as the relationships are offered to designers as optional moves to apply to a design, or not. Solution components, that on the whole provide a 'guarantee' that the resulting overall design is good, or valid, or 'alive' (Alexander's main concern) by virtue of having been constructed according to the pattern rules. This makes the ordinary goals of systems models inapplicable to a large extent: studying a system to gain 'understanding' not only of its structure and workings, but more importantly of its loop-induced 'nonlinear' behavior over time, which simulation models try to predict, based on the past data the analyst has researched. And selecting an intervention 'solution' based on some evaluation, that is, a solution that will generate some acceptable or 'optimal' measure of performance. The PL explicitly wants to 'free' the designer from such 'evaluation' -- 'from all method'. Now, if the choice of a pattern is the result of a user / designer's (free, creative) decision, that systems aim of prediction is not possible unless the systems model includes the designer and assumes regularities in the designer's choice that can be used to at least assign probabilities to the choices. Unpalatable? To my knowledge, systems models do not attempt to do this -- for a variety of reasons -- a main one being that in a situation with several agents or designer/decision-makers who may have different goals or preferences with regard to the system, each of those individual minds or 'value systems' would not only have to be explicitly included in the systems model -- but each of those would also have to include a model of the others' minds, which would include the other's model of the own model, etc.-- the classical 'Headquarters in the war game sandbox' problem. The model would become somewhat intractable, to put it mildly. There are a lot of efforts around that try hard to sidestep this conundrum by getting everybody aligned to some 'common' perspective so that a systems analysis can be built with the assumption of common goals, values, moral principles. An ostrich strategy?

Like · Reply · 2 · December 27, 2015 at 10:22pm



Helmut Leitner Thor, this is in interesting perspective, very different from what I had in mind. But, maybe, seeking common ground might provide additional insights.

You write that "Alexander as the originator of the Pattern Language has distanced himself and his work from the 'systems' perspective". Where has he done so? How would this be consistent with his work on the "living system", "quality of living system", his use of "centers" for system elements, his use of "patterns" for system parts and system changes?

I see Alexander's work as a new school of systems theory, that could be placed side-by-side among the other schools of systems theory. There are considerable differences in concepts, methods, and goals, and therefore there are considerable problems in joining forces.

There is no doubt -- here I agree with your observation -- that Christopher Alexander intended to introduce a mathematical logic into design, that he saw patterns as "IF context AND problem THEN pattern" rules, enforcing a generative process that would yield high quality results inevitably. I think that here the mathematician and natural scientist showed. But, Alexander also saw that he failed to reach this goal (discussed this with Grabow in Grabow's book "Christopher Alexander. The search for a New Paradigm in Architecture"). This can also be seen in the application of pattern methods in various fields -- I see "best practice" thinking quite often, but not in the sense of Alexander's strict design logic. So, I think, the pattern research community has moved beyond Alexander's original position (which was also a position of strict causality, a mechanistic position).

The problem I see with existing systems theory schools, the conflict potential, is that they hold up in different ways this natural science position of strict causality, and seek general laws and perspectives for systems, without looking at the systems in detail. When looking at systems in detail, they become individual, as you describe it, the designers enter the pictures, prediction becomes impossible. But, this is not the end of science, but the start of new science on a more detailed level. Pattern languages enter the picture, supporting the designer by providing a strategic knowledge and design expertise. Thus, a theory of (design) freedom comes into existence. The new questions are: What options are available, and how can the designer chose the best? And, isn't any person a designer in many different contexts?

This quite different perspective can lead into conflicts with existing schools of systems theory. But, this would be silly, because each perspective, the causal and the contingent, have their merits.

Like · Reply · December 28, 2015 at 2:50am · Edited



Thor Mann Helmut: I consider the discussion about whether PL is a Systems phenomenon as a bit of 'true scot' waste of time exegesis, getting away from the real work that needs attention: Neither one is paying enough attention to the critical issues. In my unqualified opinion.

About your question: To my knowledge, the Alexander break occurred over the period of 1968, 69, 70. I probably should have used the term 'methods' perspective, and explained better that it

was what Rittel called the 'first generation systems approach' which was at that time not yet clearly distinguished from the 'second generation' exemplified by some of Churchman's work (Btw why is his 'Inquiring Systems' or 'Systems Approach' book not listed in the references of the 'Systems Theory' article?) and Rittel's recognition that design and planning problems are 'wicked', (leading him to the 'argumentative model' of planning). There was a 'manifesto' statement in the Design Methods Newsletter (later the Design Methods and Theories Journal, an article by Jean-Pierre Protzen 'The Poverty of the Pattern Language', a discussion about Value, and a discussion of related issues with one of the leading East Coast architects of the era. The mathematical logic aspect was perhaps still guiding the effort to develop a computer program (1968-69) to generate a design, but then mostly disappeared from the discussion about the Pattern Language. The logic you cited would be put in question once you accept that a wicked problem does not lend itself to a clear, unequivocal problem statement.

Don't take my comments as a valid research-based historical account -- I am referring to my 'second-hand' impressions through discussions and comments by Alexander's TA's (I was a TA in the Rittel camp at the time but all the TA's worked in the same room) and my interests were somewhat different. I thoroughly agree that the PL can be seen as a systems endeavor but got the distinct impression that Alexander wanted it to be perceived as something very different from the prevailing systems view. I see the statements emphasizing that the PL will 'free you from all method' in the book as clear indications of this intent. While I appreciate the enormous work going into the project and the appeal and value of many of the patterns, I was put off by his wholesale rejection of methods that were trying to deal with 'unprecedented' (wicked) problems -- the patterns are useful and mostly valid responses to 'recurring' problems in the built environment: precedent. Academical Star Wars? The 'patterns' I see in some of the efforts of using the approach in other disciplines lack the conceptual clarity of Alexander's patterns. Another discussion?

Like · Reply · December 28, 2015 at 10:21am · Edited



Helmut Leitner Thor, thank you for sharing your first hand experiences from the time when this "pattern movement" began. This provides valuable insights. So don't stop to inform us, even if it may seem to be not the right time. There may never be a better time.

There is a saying -- don't know the source -- that a genius is a person who is right 51% of the time. Maybe this is a bit defensive. Let's make it 80% for Alexander. So, we must be able to talk about the 20% where Alexander erred, and where to move beyond Alexander, to create the new science (of living systems) that he suggested.

It is true that a certain percentage of patterns written in other disciplines (30-50%?) are of doubtful quality, but so are many (a smaller percentage, maybe 10-20%) of Alexander's patterns of "A pattern language". The problem is, that critical discussions

about the quality of patterns, from whatever source, have been led too rarely. It could have improved the pattern writing and pattern research of the past decades.

So, if you claim that certain patterns have low quality -- lack conceptual clarity -- please provide an example or two, maybe I provide one or the other Alexander's patterns, and start to discuss the quality of patterns (more exactly: pattern descriptions). This would be highly relevant for the PLAST project.

Like · Reply · December 30, 2015 at 4:02am · Edited



Thor Mann Helmut: Here are some musings that try to respond (by sidestepping) your question, that I posted in my Abbe Boulah Blog <http://abbeboulah.com/.../on-the-usefulness-of-design.../>: On the usefulness of design recommendations (such as 'patterns')

Related to the proliferation of 'pattern language' adaptations in many domains other than the built environment for which C. Alexander developed the original Pattern Language, a question arose about the usefulness of many pattern descriptions; and a challenge to select one or two pattern specifications that do not appear very useful for more detailed discussion.

I am not familiar enough with the specific intentions and expectations of the developers of other pattern language projects to properly judge the appropriateness or usefulness of such patterns, and I have not arrived at a sufficiently thought-through conclusion about whether I am ready to adopt the pattern concept, to spent time on work on patterns for the kinds of concerns I am interested in and have some qualification to make contributions. So rather than offering critiques of others' patterns, I suggest to look at some aspects of usefulness for a narrow understanding of pattern intent that I would prefer to call 'design recommendations' or 'rules', for the time being, on the assumption that they may of partial relevance for actual bona fide pattern work as well.

1 Recommendations as practical guides for action.

The first assumption I am making to narrow the field is that of looking for rules or guidelines for design or planning tasks, that is, activities aiming at the production of a plan, a set of agreements about some intended actions to effect changes in what we perceive as the 'real world'. In this, I am following the original concept of 'pattern' as stated by Alexander, as recommendations for specific arrangements in the built environment that are aiming at remedying certain problems (or arrangements that in themselves are seen as remedies for problems that are perceived to occur in the built environment, given certain specified context conditions.

2 Adequate detail of description

Such a recommendation will be useful to the extent it describes the context conditions, the problem, and the recommended action in sufficient detail for a user to recognize those conditions and problems in the design situation at hand, and to apply the

recommended action or arrangement. This means that the recommendation must take the form of one or more coherently expressed sentences connecting the three parts of the recommendation. The mere listing of single concepts, goals, 'principles', qualities etc. would not meet this expectation, nor would the statement of only one of the three components, e.g. just a 'problem' -- no matter how significant the problems and imperative the implied admonition to do something about it.

3 Limitations of applicability

The above first description of design recommendations is useful only within a narrow range of situations, for several reasons.

a) A first limitation is implied in the validity assertion of the original patterns themselves: the fact that the problem is 'recurring' under the specified conditions, and that the recommendation or 'solution' has proved to be reliably remedying that problem in the past: 'timeless'. Its usefulness is based on precedent experience. This is unquestionably useful, and there are certainly many such situations. Even in the specific dealings with problem situations for which there are no precedents (and therefore no known, proven remedies) many individual activities will rely on such rules and experiences -- but the 'pattern' and implied guarantee of the recommendation 'if context and problem then solution' obviously cannot be stated. For problems of the 'wicked', unprecedented kind, there are no simple, basic recommendations that guarantee success.

b) The first simple understanding of design recommendation assumes that there is sufficient agreement among the parties involved as to the nature and definition of the 'context', the 'problem', and the adequacy of the proposed 'solution'. This assumption does not apply to most situations that call for collective design and planning. Most such situations contain conflicts between the parties involved; and even the most cooperative projects will incur the allocation of resources -- usually called 'costs' in the pursuit of achieving the 'benefits' of the remedy-solution -- and in all but the rarest cases a distribution of costs and benefits that is perceived as equally fair, equitable, acceptable and satisfactory by all parties affected by the problem and its proposed solutions. The 'costs' are 'benefits' to some, and the benefits can often be seen as costs to others. The simple statements even of the most intuitively appealing Alexander patterns blatantly ignore this, by postulating some overriding, absolute (even, in Alexander's view, 'objective' and thus indisputable) 'value'. The claim that the pattern will achieve 'aliveness' of the resulting environment -- a 'quality without a name' -- is a similar postulate removing the recommendation from any discussion: it cannot be described, and must be accepted on faith. Any adaptation of this feature in other domains is likely to generate questions and opposition and cause unnecessary conflicts.

c) The relative vagueness of the pattern recommendations -- even such rules as 'light from to sides' in rooms -- that obviously don't specify any parameters or dimensions of details such as whether the windows should be high up on the walls or reach down to the floor, etc. permit Alexander to claim that the pattern

can be used 'a million times' without doing it exactly the same way twice and is therefore open to almost unlimited participatory modification by the designers / users -- but that this modification must not be allowed to extend to violating the basic pattern itself. This restriction would be unacceptable to many humans who are driven to 'make a difference', to do things 'their own way' -- to break the rule just because it is stated as a rule: a potentially ubiquitous pattern - problem for which the 'remedy' is violation of the rule, by definition?

d) The recommendations do not include any consideration of ability, affordability, of the resources needed to apply the prescribed solution, not of the potential consequences of the solutions if, for example, applied at a large scale.

4 Relationship networks

The recommendations (again, following the original pattern descriptions) cannot be applied in isolation, but must form a network of relationships. Like a meaningful (scientific) theory, the statements or individual descriptions must be mutually supporting. The relationships claimed in the original PL are often merely the 'part-whole' relations: each pattern is part of a larger pattern and consists in turn of smaller patterns. There are undoubtedly other types of relationships that can or should be considered in constructing a whole plan -- the point is that for a plan that will hold together, or a 'language' to allow the telling of a coherent story -- the relationships must be described, again, in sufficient detail to allow a user to apply them 'properly'. Should there also be room for the creation and definition of 'new' relations that will make a new kind of network and language?

(continued)

On the usefulness of design

ABBEBOULAH.COM

Like · Reply · January 4 at 10:46pm · Edited



Thor Mann (continued from prev. post) 5 'Secret' or user ability to discover, construct / reconstruct meaning?

Getting into a bit of unexplored territory here, the recommendation might have to address the question of how its 'solution' interacts with the perception and understanding of the viewer/user. Many recommendations implicitly or explicitly hint at a 'secret' behind the recommendation that lends validity to the resulting design -- but remains silent about how that promise of validity is perceived by the viewer. We are just expected to intuitively accept it as 'alive', 'timeless' etc. Is this enough? I have a hunch that beyond the immediate perception of a design / environment as 'appealing', 'alive', 'beautiful', there needs to be the opportunity for a viewer to begin to explore the setup, to unravel the 'secret', to discover what makes it work -- that is. what makes it work not only on a general level (the 'absolute

truth' level Alexander is emphasizing) but also for individual viewers and their different backgrounds, preconceptions, concerns, sensibilities; their ability to discover how the design connects with those personal concerns. 'Constructing' the personal meaning from what is there, not only 'reconstructing' the meaning of the general context-problem-solution structure of the 'pattern' the designer put there. I have tried to explore some of those relationships with the concepts of 'occasions' (of the life of the individuals using a place) and the 'image' connotations evoked by the design about 'who we are' in the users/viewers. (This issue of personal reconstruction also applies to the use of scale and proportional arrangements in a formal environmental design; 'discovering' the 'secrets' of the proportion and composition devices the designer used to make the solution so 'appealing' both at first sight and increased familiarity. The 'new' exciting forms of much current architecture, for example, that don't reveal anything more to the curious exploration after the first few encounters will soon become obsolete and annoying.)

6 Recurring versus unprecedented problems.

The process of use of design recommendations or rules should be open to the question of whether it applies to the given situation -- whether it can be adequately described as containing a 'recurring' problem for which the timeless 'solution' has been adequately proven, or whether it is an unprecedented, 'wicked' problem, for which a different approach with different tools should be applied. The reminder 'wrong question?' -- repeated on the bottom of each page (in addition to the Jessie's good suggestion of 'what might you add?' question) is a first necessary point of clarification to prevent the perhaps 'efficient' but possibly ultimately dead-end application of inappropriate remedies. It may be necessary to give potential users additional hints and suggestions to recognize such conditions -- for each proposed recommendation. Each collection or rulebook of design prescriptions (pattern languages?) should contain a section of suggestions for useful steps to take in situations where the context contains elements that make the problem 'unprecedented' and calls for a different approach.

7 Specialized vocabulary: jargon?

For design and planning projects that call for wide participation of users or citizens in general, the description of recommendations in a special vocabulary or 'language' will become a 'usefulness' issue. Understanding and mastery of that vocabulary as a prerequisite for meaningful participation in the discourse, will inevitably become a barrier for participation. The flow of essential 'distributed' information about context and the way the problem and its proposed solutions affect different parties will be restricted, with potential repercussions for general public acceptance of solutions. So a general 'meta-rule' for such projects might be to express design recommendations in as general conversational language as possible.

Like · Reply · January 4 at 10:48pm · Edited



Helmut Leitner Thor, I fully agree with your formulation of 5 (continued), 6 and 7. It also conforms to my understanding of

Alexander. Best possible design needs full system understanding (including "users") and needs to involve all stakeholders, transparency (no secrets), knowledge sharing (common language), inviting participation.

The only very small divergence is in the use of the "wicked system" that I do not share. I have not followed this old discourse, but aren't those systems "wicked" that can't be predicted and controlled? That may be complex systems, that we just lack understanding, to control them in a mechanical sense. But more typical, these systems are just "living systems", that CAN'T be controlled and predicted from the outside in a mechanical sense - and the point is that one shouldn't try to do so.

So, one important point for me is to leave that attitude of "complex, wicked system" behind and embrace these systems as "living systems", that can be supported to unfold, by all the measures you describe.

The "situation" is just as important to me, because this means that general principles or advice must be reconsidered in each case. And final judgement is only possible in the situation.

This is even embodied in the oldest and most elaborated informal pattern system, the law system, that abounds with rules. But, the application of the rules is not formal but done by judges, individual to the single case and situation. And human experience shows that there is no other humane way to do this. Any formal application of law tends to become inhumane.

Any formal application of patterns in a design process, without human designers observing and judging holistically the development of the designed system, would go astray. This needs everyone, and needs the inclusive attitude that "everyone is a designer".

Like · Reply · January 5 at 6:22am · Edited



Jessie Henshaw Helmut, does it deserve being added to a section of PL systems thinking references, on our PLAST "Pattern Language intro & Reference Links" page, or even adding a new "Reference Links" page?

If so, would you add my Encyclopedia of the Earth article describing the world of Complex systems thinking communities and some of their history?http://www.eoearth.org/article/Complex_systems



Complex Systems

Brief history As Science has begun to ask where the enduring features of nature come from and how they...

EOEARTH.ORG

Like · Reply · Remove Preview · January 5 at 10:54am · Edited



Helmut Leitner Jessie, I'm not a maintainer of PLAST resources. Personally I think your "Complex Systems" article from 2013 gives me an good extended overview of what is existing. Again, I miss Christopher Alexander on this landscape of systems theorists and wonder why this was the case, and whether and how you would add him in a future or updated article.

Like · Reply · January 6 at 2:22am



Jessie Henshaw Glad you liked my EOE article. I don't think you need to be elected to contribute links to a common resource file, like if you go to use it and see things that are missing. Just click 'edit'. People need to have common sense and back-up their worksometimes, but the group is too big to have someone in charge it seems.

I'd love to be able to update the EOE article, but I think there are big institutional problems with the site, and also a big research task implied. A discussion of why my prior view of general systems omitted Alexander is summed up in a readable way in the intro to my PURPLSOC paper. The difference between Alexander's language and systems theories is also discussed there in relation to the concept introduced as "dual paradigm view".

That's the need to have different ways of discussing "mental constructs" and "external forms of material design", a difference of "representing" v. "referring" as one of the big differences. I think it exposes a major structural difference between "systems theories" and "design patterns" . I'm really just learning how to talk about it.

Pattern language is artfully designed to be able to catalog and organize BOTH connecting AND unconnected subjects and observations... That's something systems theories of all the common varieties cannot do, as they need internal self-consistency as information models, to hold together and "be defined". Nature presents a problem in that we don't and can't define what we are observing, but can only study the patterns we see when studying things that are already self-defined.

That alternation between paying attention to internal issues and external patterns is what I've been associating with the Robert Rosen model of science as "encoding" theories from natural patterns and "decoding" responses.



Like · Reply · January 6 at 10:58am



Helmut Leitner Jessie, if you give me the link to the resource list you have in mind, I'll add your article to it. There should be no problem when you do it yourself, but it is socially simpler if an author needn't act as if serving his own interest.

On the other hand, I think that the minimum group solidarity within PLAST, even taking Helene's motherly approach not into account, would be to be a platform to hold present the views/publications of their members and contributors.

Like · Reply · January 6 at 4:55pm



Jessie Henshaw Helmut, I looked at the Debategraph resource page you mentioned with your nice narrated set of slides, and was delighted to find the essay from Jenny i had not seen before, and the long collection of links Helene added. I added a section below that on the 2015 group of papers most relevant.

It's interesting that with 3 different people you get 3 different styles of doing the same thing. I like nicely organized lists of links with interesting context statements introducing them. That's more or less the style I imagine would be the most effective in writing patterns, careful short statements with links if available. I added a reference to that page to the PLAST Files references page and coordinated.

So with PLAST we're still attracting people with different ways of contributing, and not really taking advantage of it I think, not getting anyone to do anything constructive. Design is about constructing things, and without that It's just endless chatting all the time. It exercises my mind and gives me an outlet, but it really interferes with my work.

In the last month, with dozens of people coming in and out, I've not gotten a single person to add a single line to any constructive pattern work.

Like · Reply · January 6 at 8:22pm · Edited



Helmut Leitner Jessie, let's do it step by step. What is the url of the web page to add your article?

Like · Reply · January 7 at 3:00am



Jessie Henshaw Have a look. I updated the reference link pages of both the Debategraph and FB PLAST sites. I think when we find what the group's actual work will be (presumably doing constructive pattern research for ourselves and others) I think we'll need both.

Helene I found a number of your big collection of reference image links on the Debategraph page very nice to look into, but could they be presented to not require opening and reading all 50+ to know what's there? They'd be more accessible. I also added your recent main papers and the SPANDA issue to the FB ref links page

1-<http://debategraph.org/Details.aspx?nid=343998>

2-<https://www.facebook.com/notes/plast-pattern-languages-for-systemic-transformation/pattern-language-intro-reference-links/852460014871226>

Like · Reply · January 7 at 8:42am · Edited



Helmut Leitner Jessie, the problem of the 50+ image-links is that this is an embedded perltrees.com feature. Even if you have the access right to the debategraph node, this is unconnected to the right to extend the perltrees link list.

perltrees.com

PERLTREES.COM

Like · Reply · January 7 at 1:09pm



Jessie Henshaw Helmut I don't mind the pictures at all. One could insert a screen image of each row and add brief text with the links below without difficulty. To organize it you'd want to put them in other groupings though. I logged in on Pearltrees to see what options there are, and found none, I think it's probably a valuable resource so hopefully **Helene** will have an idea.



Thor Mann Helmut: Thanks for the comment. It looks like our understanding of 'wicked problem' needs some alignment. The 'properties' of wicked problems don't imply that we cannot or should not do something about them. Rather, they imply that there can be no 'systematic' approach, algorithm, step-by-step method that will guarantee a 'right' or even 'optimal' solution -- one the 'expert' for the respective approach can insist upon as the correct one by virtue of having followed the rules and steps and achieved the respective measure of performance. (From this point of view, the posture of the Pattern Language of guaranteeing the outcome as being 'correct' by virtue of having applied the pattern 'rules' -- 'freeing you from all method' -- would still place this approach squarely in the 'first generation systems

approach' category Rittel urged us to overcome.) The properties listed in the Rittel/Webber article 'Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning' clearly suggest that most design and planning problems of any significance ARE wicked problems, and any tactic to sidestep this conclusion -- by invoking concepts such as the 'quality without a name', 'living systems', 'holistic' perspective etc that have to be accepted intuitively, on faith (what to do with the non-believers isn't spelled out, but historic experience is not encouraging...) -- are either reversions to the earlier 'expert planning' model just with different experts, or something akin to ostrich-responses. The implication is that any decisions about what to do about wicked problems should involve input from all affected parties -- that is, a wide participatory discourse, and as you say, 'everyone is a designer' -- and that the decision criterion should not be some calculated/simulated performance measure (like Benefit-Cost Ratio, which ignores the fact that one party's benefits might be another party's costs) but a collective attitude of willingness to share responsibility for the decision -- Rittel called it the 'complicity model'. Voting does not solve this. I have been working on the intermediate steps of developing tools -- measurements -- for decision support that depend on participants more systematic assessment of the merit of arguments and other contributions to the discourse. But even with those, the question of better decision (or agreement) criteria remains open, as does the design of the platform for the discourse.

Like · Reply · January 5 at 11:40am



Helmut Leitner Thor, as I said, I fundamentally question the validity of the concept of a "wicked problem" as if it were a species in a categorial systems. This is as if I would classify insects not by their properties (old) or genetic relationship (new), as biologists do, but by whether they are easy or difficult to catch.

I also disagree on your use of the word "method", as something that guarantees a certain outcome. What you name as method, I would name an "algorithm". An algorithm guarantees an outcome.

The method of natural science (hypotheses formulated in mathematics, and experiments to check them) does also not guarantee a certain outcome. But, it is a basis to create a certain kind of knowledge and a basis for collaboration.

Working methods tend to be "ideal typical". Karl Popper has worked on this for natural science, and his ideas on fallability, the hypothetical character of theories, and falsification are mainstream.

In either sense, pattern language doesn't free from method (maybe a certain type of method) but it IS a central part of a new method. Alexander's work is 95% methodology, about method, and that's what it makes interesting and valuable, at least to me.

Your assumption, that the inclusion of stakeholders into a co-creative process is connected to voting, is wrong. As is your assumption, that "quality without a name" would bypass any

complexity, or guarantee something. The idea is, that at some point of dealing with a design problem, a 80-90% consensus will emerge, including the leading designer, signalling the quality of a solution.

I'd rather compare the design process with the situation in game or war. The nature of a chess game, or a war led, is that predictions are impossible, but design knowledge is possible, in the form of "strategic knowledge". It is possible to collect tools or weapons and the expertise how to use them in certain situations. One can also build intuition by experience, maybe even wisdom.

There are various reasons why design processes fail. And a number of them are attacked by Alexander.

First that enters my mind, is incomplete system perception, the design from a remote position, from a drawing board far away. To move into the place, to put one's feet into the mud, involving stakeholders, using the common pattern language, gives the best chance that any perceptions about the system and the needs of people are voices and can be included into the design.

Second problem is, that remote interests determine the outcome of design, especially that maximizing profit rules over optimizing design. This is what "quality of living systems" or "quality without a name is about". This sets a new value function that replaces all other goals, especially profit. This can be formulated as "Design for life not profit".

Alexander, being immersed in US culture, formulated this between the lines, I am independent and European, and can unveil his attitude bluntly as post-capitalist.

Third problem attacked is the lack of knowledge about the process (timeless way: e. g. step by step, healing) and lack of knowledge about the solutions that can be reused (pattern language). This is what pattern research is about, to close a knowledge gap, to transform existing knowledge about patterns into a useful form. This is a cultural heritage, not personal secret private property.

All this is not about control, prediction or guarantees. This is about "the best possible action to take and the best possible design to achieve" in a given situation of a system in development.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 6 at 3:20am · Edited

Thor Mann Helmut, Your comments regarding the legal system are interesting. Some defenders of the legal basis of conflict resolution would say that the judge's judgment should be based on whether and how the facts of the situation correspond to the previously accepted agreements we call laws. We have agreed to the 'arbitrary' rule about which side on the road to drive on -- the law. In the controversy about an accident, the testimony and established facts about the relative position of the vehicles involved should determine whether and which of the drivers 'violated' that rule (an agreement supposedly entered by the acquisition of a driver's license). The interesting aspect here is that these judgments can (and should) be governed by 'facts'

established by what we may loosely call the scientific method, and traditional logic. (It's not always 'fairly' done, if one driver is a member of a not-so-well regarded segment of the population...) That logic and thinking does not apply to design and planning arguments containing deontic premises -- premises about what ought to be. (What should the law be? Is this purposely kept vague to leave room for the apparent prevailing attitudes such as 'anything but what the 'current occupant' proposes'?) Those arguments are not deductively valid, at best 'inconclusive', from a formal logic point of view, and planning decisions rest not on the one 'clinging' argument the main body of logic has been focused upon, but on the whole set of pros and cons about the issue. While this is generally acknowledged and enshrined in leaders' sanctimonious promises to 'carefully weigh' the pros and cons, they can't explain just how they do this in a transparent and accountable way; I do not know of other efforts try to develop a more explicit approach for this like the one I have sketched. The aggregation of individual judgments about premises and arguments into overall judgments, individual or group, is an unresolved task in need of urgent work.

In other words, we can't count on help from the legal system until after we have reached the necessary agreements; the planning discourse is governed by slightly different rules than the legal one.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 5 at 11:42am



Helmut Leitner Thor, I basically agree with what you say about the legal system, but you concentrate one simple legal issues. Even then, simple facts of a simple legal case given, the judge has a range of options or punishments to choose from. If we move to the more dramatic and archaic case of dealing with "thou shalt not kill", then we immediately see that the act of killing a person is not directly connected to a certain outcome but depends of whether this killing is classified as murder, manslaughter, self-defense, killing in war, accidental killing, ... and so on, which is highly dependent on interpretation and argumentation. And so the outcome, ideally implementing the meta-pattern JUSTICE, of killing a person can be anything from going free to the maximum penalty.

This means, that the court decision is a creative act, an act of design, creating an exemplar of the pattern COURT DECISION or JUST COURT DECISION, that CAN be simple, but can also be arbitrarily complex and difficult. And, the process can fail. Even, given thousands of years of experience that went into our laws, even assuming best effort of all people involved, a court decision may be false.

I do not say that in defense or advocacy of our legal systems. I'm completely neutral to that. I just look at the legal system as an informal pattern system, with its strengths and weaknesses, its working and dysfunctional rules, its patterns and maybe anti-patterns.

I see the legal system as a system where design happens, and

were we can see in examples what we can achieve and what can't be achieved.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 6 at 3:49am · Edited



Helene Finidori Thor and Helmut, thanks for this discussion which I am just discovering now. It is very central to PLAST. The name of the project as well as its acronym were not the fruit of chance. It was deliberate to associate Pattern Language and Systemic Transformation (and thus systems and their behavior).

On the one hand, we are seeking to explore how systems thinking and systems theory can help inform the expression and design of patterns themselves and better form pattern languages. Patterns were defined originally by Alexander as a system of forces that needed to be resolved. They became a fixed problem solution proposal by extension later on which reduced their systemic 'quality', as you rightfully noted Thor. As an agnostic both in ST and in PL, it seemed to me that PL and ST had missed the opportunity to cross-pollinate. In this original definition of system of forces, patterns are much more prone to the inquiry/questioning that wicked problems require (a different form of step by step), and are a good 'format' for hermeneutical approaches that pattern languages may have left aside. The interest of using patterns in a systemic approach is that questioning and expression of points of view can occur at each association (taking into account the input from all involved parties). Not quite in the objective of reaching a synthesis of points of view, but rather to 'meta-stabilize' the account and recording of a variety of points of view. This is where the PLAST concept may differ from IBIS based models which are focused on merit of argumentation. IBIS and argumentation based approaches can also be subject to 'synthesis' and the imposition of a truth... just as Systems thinking may be...

The questioning of systemic effectiveness of Alexandrian patterns and the need for a systemic hermeneutical approach is something developed in several publications:

1/ in the PLAST concept written for the initial EU projet (https://www.academia.edu/.../The_PLAST_Project_-_Concept...)

2/ in the paper and slideshow on 4th generation pattern languages (of which PLAST is an operationalization), aimed at systemic orientation and evaluation (https://www.academia.edu/.../Towards_a_Fourth_Generation... and <http://www.slideshare.net/.../plast-presentationpurplsoc-v3>)

On the other hand, and as a result, we would like to explore how pattern language can help systemic assessment and systems design by providing building blocks for systems interpretation and systemic inquiry which are more 'usable' and combinable (because discrete) than system archetypes which are patterns, in their own way... and this because they allow questioning step by step at each stage, enabling the creation of new sequences each time. The pattern then can be seen more as a unit of interpretation, itself submitted to discussion, than as a rule or

'truth' in itself.

That's where the idea of plasticity (PLAST) comes into play. Allowing an adaptability to context.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 5 at 5:23pm



Jessie Henshaw Helene, You might look at the reference links page on the PLAST Files page. You'll find the place I left a "???" where I left the links to your work incomplete. You might fill in some PLAST reference links, with a line or two to identify both easy introduction links and ones people doing research might find useful.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 5 at 10:51pm



Helene Finidori As intepretative tool that can help make connections, the pattern in PLAST is somewhat broader than a design rule or model, and encompasses different stages in a perception to action process. Starting with a discovered or recognized configuration up to the recommended/adopted configuration (i.e. the model).

I think we can't talk of patterns without talking about reality and models of reality, and of the variety of models of the same reality. This is what PLAST is trying to bridge...

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 5 at 5:32pm · Edited



Jessie Henshaw Helene, there's also been some good discussion on a thread that **David** started with **M Ichael** on how to fit their systems thinking into the pattern language model. You might browse some of how this same subject is has been explored there. <https://www.facebook.com/.../permalink/854951047955456/> ...

I think it would be good if you and others reviewed the templates I set up, for moving toward doing actual pattern work, and suggest changes and start testing out the kinds of statements we'd use for pattern writing. I think brevity would be golden, Tweet length or shorter, using words to their fullest value, the way you do so nicely quite often. We'd also want to be clear in identifying important roles and real situations, to bring the elephant into the room to be looked at from all sides. Does that seem like a start?



David Braden [to](#) **PLAST - Pattern Languages for Systemic Transformation**

December 16, 2015 · Denver, CO ·

I am very interested in "Systemic Transformation" but I am having a little trouble finding my way around this group. My best guess is that I will be in this category of the "Work Process":

- Working individually or collaboratively in subgroups on specific topics (concept, semantic elements, orientation engine, pattern languages, domain specific applications).

The domain specific application that interests me is the power of the individual human being to influence the pattern of interactions in which they find themselves. What is required, I think, is a pattern of thought in which individuals explore the system as it is operating locally looking for opportunities to facilitate new interactions . . . thereby changing the pattern . . . transforming the system.

Just to share why I think this is important I ask if anyone here believes that the wicked problems we face will be solved from the top down? Will our governments come to an international agreement that ends poverty and heals nature? Will free market economics end up ending poverty and healing nature?

I think the answer is no. The pattern of interactions in which we find ourselves is a complex adaptive and self organizing system, a living system, that is built up from individual interactions among the living things that make it up. As such, change occurs at the level of the individual interaction.

I am searching for collaborators to help me build out and refine the concepts that make up this pattern of thought that might empower individuals to transform the system. I have learned a lot already participating here and I wish you all satisfying progress toward your goals.

Like · Reply · Remove Preview · January 5 at 10:37pm



Helene Finidori Jessie, the thread you refer to has 300 comments. What are the salient points in relation to this discussion? What are your take aways in relation to this discussions? Did you manage to test the assembl application with [Quentin Grimaud](#)?

I made some comments on the template some time last August. Suggested we examine the variables (in the logic of 'what am I missing) and questioned how to deal with problem solution vs system of forces.

Like · Reply · January 6 at 10:08am



Jessie Henshaw Helene I think my new method of extracting whole threads on nicely formatted PDF's with a table of contents... shows what [Quentin's](#) Assembl should produce as a first product. You'd archive the active threads that way periodically, the examples being what I put in the Files <https://lookaside.fbsbx.com/.../2015%20PLAST%20FB...>

I think that 300+ comment thread wanders a lot at first and warms up with more recent comments.

It starts with [David](#) saying it was hard to get into our language,

and my persistent urging that he and [M Ichael](#) should learn more about pattern language rather than interpret everything in their own languages, and start reading the resources doing "Pattern Work" with the templates I set up. That would seem the natural way to begin actually understanding what PL as a common language is about, and finding how to bring their own insights to it. In the end the concept of doing actual work has become something to chat about... and that MAY mark a stage in evolution toward actually DOING some work, but I don't know really.

Actually doing pattern work has yet to begin, though, as everyone is still chatting... wink emoticon

Like · Reply · January 6 at 10:29am



M Ichael Josefowicz Jessie Henshaw I've been using Google Docs for a different picture. I would love if [Quentin Grimaud](#) could get output that looks just like this. My team is looking at ways to manage transmedia conversations. I know this format would be invaluable for me.

<https://docs.google.com/.../17RES.../edit...>



David Braden Facebook Thread

David Braden December 16, 2015 at 5:59pm · Denver, CO I am very interested in "Systemic...

DOCS.GOOGLE.COM

Like · Reply · January 6 at 10:50am



M Ichael Josefowicz Jessie Henshaw Thank you for weaving the threads smile emoticon "relationship of pattern theory to established systems theories" is just what I was hoping to get involved in. After reading your "Guiding Patterns of Naturally Occurring Design: Elements" I am convinced that an approach to complex adaptive system thinking is consistent with the Pattern Language approach. I hesitate to say more as I am still learning the PLAST approach. A list of the three best things to read could be a great help.

Like · Reply · January 5 at 10:58pm



Jessie Henshaw [M Ichael](#), Well, before you go too far along that line, remember that *every* language loses quite a bit in translation, "encoding and decoding" to and from nature, and between languages as well.

You read the introduction to the paper too I assume. That's where I described what I felt was terminally missing from all systems theories, and why for discussing the world of natural

designs required the use of a "dual paradigm" view. We need one language for conceptual designs inside our minds and another for referring to material designs external to our thinking. That's something possible with pattern language, but definitely not possible with CAS or any other kind of systems thinking... wink emoticon

Design patterns are too inclusive to be systems, or to be models, kept from being "complete" by being collections of hopefully useful references to separate perspectives. The descriptions in a design pattern are then more like the slalom poles on a ski slope, only anticipating the skillful movement of the skier weaving through them.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 5 at 11:22pm



M Ichael Josefowicz [Jessie Henshaw](#) Quite so.smile emoticon Nemetics is not a model or a theory. It's merely a translation code. More than anything it is a stance and a way to see. From my colleague.. <http://bit.ly/1MNYAIG>

Winning Anywhere - the Power of 'See'

How much do you want to be a winner? How much do you yearn to resolve nagging problems in your work...

BOOKS.GOOGLE.COM

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 5 at 11:27pm



Thor Mann Helene,

I have discussed and written some things about the relationship (or lack of it) between (some) 'systems thinking' or systems modeling approaches and what Rittel called the 'Argumentative Model of Planning, and tried to find at least 'mapping' tools that will allow each of these perspectives to show and accommodate contributions of the other. I see possibilities for representations (maps) that accommodate arguments about system elements. Inevitably, the vocabularies of the different perspectives are getting in the way -- and each such attempt at 'preserving' the perspectives' vocabulary increased the language' problem that I have been going on about here as well: forcing potential participants to learn another language as a prerequisite for meaningful participation, which I perceive as an unnecessary and undesirable obstacle to a fruitful discourse. The pattern language at present (that is, in my present inadequate understanding) seems more impermeable to argumentation as part of the planning process, for reasons I have tried to touch upon in some of the above posts and the following responses to Helmut. I am currently leaning towards an interim 'solution': the development of a multi-language 'dictionary' that translates all the 'brand' jargon into everyday layperson conversational language, and each other.

I am not sure I understand the generation problem in the sequence of pattern languages: I see elements of all of them in all levels or generations.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 6 at 4:06pm



Thor Mann Helmut, I agree with many points in your comment, a few with some modification. Let me try to respond, first, to some of your claims that I am 'wrong' about. I cannot dispute the possibility, indeed probability that I am wrong about many things; one reason I am here is to try to remedy that if possible. But some of the things you state I am wrong about, I don't see myself claiming: how can I be wrong about something I'm not saying? Or even the opposite? So it must be that I have not made myself clear enough. Let me try to clear up what I see as a few misunderstandings. I am sorry if I can't do it as briefly as it should be; it may take several posts. The first one is about wicked problems (not 'wicked systems' -- though I agree there might be a few of those out there...) I will then address the issue about 'method', the one about decision modes ('voting' versus 'emerging' consensus?), the question about 'quality without a name', the views of design (game or war?) and finally the questions (implications?) that my suggestions about keeping the discourse as close to common conversational language (and thus questioning whether the Pattern Language is a 'new' language that participants need to 'learn' as a prerequisite for participation, and thereby becomes a barrier to participation) are an endorsement of some 'profit versus life' orientation of design.

1. Wicked Problems.

I am not sure the usefulness of the Wicked Problem concept has anything to do with its being a distinct species in a categorical system. Allow me to re-post a comment to an earlier discussion about this, I believe in a Systems Thinking forum some time ago, that may clarify why the features of such problems matter -- at least to me and others. It begins by recalling the understanding of 'problem' itself, as an IS/UGHT discrepancy perceived in a person's mind, rather than as some absolute 'objective' entity independent of people.

"The questions about the understanding of 'problem' and 'wicked problem' call for restatement of the original explanations which suggest that terms like 'Wicked Problem Solving' and claims of ST and other consulting approaches that claim to help people 'solve' WP's are based on inadequate understanding of the concept. Rittel, the originator of the term 'wicked problem' defined 'problem' as a discrepancy between somebody's perception of a state of affairs as it IS (or will be if nothing is done) and as it OUGHT to be (in that person's mind) -- for which there is no immediate remedy. He discussed difficulties of applying 'systems tools' to issues of design and planning. He was talking about 'first generation' systems techniques that required problems to be stated clearly and definitively, applying proper steps and operations to yield solutions that are 'correct' or 'true' or 'false' and can be tested for correctness. They have decisive 'stopping rules' that tell the problem-solver when he's done. Such problems can be difficult so solve (e.g. requiring calculations exceeding the capacity of large computers) but can be solved in principle. He called such problems 'tame' to distinguish them from the 'wicked' problems typically found in design and planning. These problems have specific properties, some of which are the following (the

Wikipedia account is not an adequate representation of Rittel's formulation!):

- There is no definitive formulation of a WP. Every statement about their 'definition' is a statement about one of many conceivable solution ideas (so the problem can't be definitively stated until a 'solution' has been adopted);
- Every WP can be considered to be a symptom of another problem.
- Every WP is essentially unique.
- There is no well-described set of permissible steps or operations to be brought to bear on WP's (as in the basic operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication etc. in mathematics): 'anything goes';
- The existence of a discrepancy representing a WP can be explained in numerous ways. The choice of explanation determines the nature of the problem's resolution.
- WP's have no stopping rule (such that the procedure tells problem-solvers when they are 'done'); any 'solution' can still be refined and improved, or there might still be other alternatives that could be investigated and examined;
- The information needed to solve WP's is not exclusively found in textbooks or experts' professional knowledge, but is typically 'distributed' in the population of people being affected by the problem or by proposed solutions (so that population changes with every different solution alternative considered...)
- WP's do not have an enumerable (or exhaustively describable) set of potential solutions. There may be many 'solutions' to the problem, or none at all;
- Solutions to WP's are not 'correct or 'false' -- they are judged 'good' or 'bad' -- and people tend to differ in their judgments about this (depending on whether they are getting the benefits of a solution or having to bear its costs...);
- There is no immediate and no ultimate test of a solution to a WP.
- Unlike 'tame problems' where you can try again if a first solution attempt has not worked out, WP solutions are typically 'one-shot' operations: any intervention effort consumes resources and creates new conditions that make it a different problem. There is no opportunity to learn by 'trial and error': every attempt counts significantly.
- Unlike 'tame problems' in science, where 'failed' attempts to confirm a hypothesis do have merit (contributing to our knowledge about what 'works and what doesn't, wicked problem-solvers have no 'right to be wrong' and are liable for the consequences of solutions or for the failure to provide a solution.

With WP's understood in this way, -- considering their properties, whatever the name (other labels have been suggested) -- consultants' claims that their approaches will 'solve' WP's should be regarded with suspicion."

You are of course entitled to 'fundamentally reject' the concept of wicked problems, but I think you might agree that some of these conditions / features will have significant implications for how they should be approached?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 6 at 4:23pm



Helmut Leitner Thor, as I said I reject "wicked problem" as a useful concept, but I admit that I wasn't clear either and apologize for that. To do this precisely may get lengthy, as can be seen in your posting.

A happy coincidence is that the corresponding Wikipedia article https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wicked_problem goes almost in parallel with your description of the wicked problem. Do you agree with that WP article?

If yes, I can quickly jump to a conclusion of that Wikipedia page: "A recurring theme in research and industry literature is the connection between wicked problems and design.[10][11] Design problems are typically wicked because they are often ill defined (no prescribed way forward), involve Stakeholders with different perspectives, and have no "right" or "optimal" solution.[12] Thus wicked problems cannot be solved by the application of standard (or known) methods; they demand creative solutions." If this holds, then practically all that pattern research deals with belongs to the realm of wicked problems.

It is hard to see why the creative design, e. g. the composition of some music, should become a "wicked problem" or "wicked" or a "problem". If "wicked problem" would just stand for "difficult design task", then we wouldn't discuss, I suppose. So, there must be some special attractivity that goes with the intense rhetoric that I feel in the "wicked problem" concept.

Any way, this large body of propositions calls out for examples of wicked problems, to check whether they can hold, and to look at how the propositions are interpreted in real cases. So please provide an example, maybe something you worked on.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 7 at 12:57pm · Edited



Thor Mann Helmut, As I indicated in my comment, the Wikipedia page does not represent Rittel's descriptions of wicked problems accurately -- I think my representation is closer to the original version in the 'Dilemmas...' article -- but I was also drawing on my lecture notes back then in my account. I had downloaded that article some time ago but lost it when my hard disk crashed last Spring, and gave my collection of hard copy books and papers to the University where it is currently in the process of being catalogued (I guess..) so I can't send you the original. I think it was posted by somebody in Academia.edu as well. But for your

examination of the concept, either one of the two versions you have -- Wikipedia and mine -- should be instructive enough. The world is full of wicked design problems -- the currently biggest ones being close enough to Graz as well, and comments abound in all the media to provide the multiple answers to the questions: explanations, definitions, proposed solutions, approaches (different 'systems' approaches alone are being proposed almost every day in this site alone and in the LI and FB systems thinking fora). A 'demonstration' of their wickedness -- that is, of the correspondence of the reactions to them to the listed 'properties' would be come fully apparent when all the different parties to the problem could bring their views and proposals into the discussion. A typical example was the discussion on LinkedIn about Helene's attempt to get the revered Systems Thinkers to respond constructively to Ban Ki-Moon's challenge at the 2011 World Economic Forum, for an 'economic model for survival' -- it produced almost 9000 posts but no agreement or even 'emerging' but not articulated model. See my article 'Towards a Model for Survival' on Academia.edu for a tentative account of that spectacle.

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Like · Reply · January 7 at 4:20pm



Helmut Leitner Thor, please don't make things more complicated than necessary. Do you expect me to study a 80 pages paper as a basis for further discussion of the "wicked problem"?

Like · Reply · January 7 at 5:40pm · Edited



Thor Mann Well, Helmut, you asked me for examples. I suggested that you pick any current problem of your choice to examine in view of the WP properties, and cited one I have 'worked on' or rather been peripherally involved in discussing (though I did make some suggestions). I don't have a problem with the concept that needs discussing or checking; but I'll be happy to give you my comments on specific questions you might have.

I might add that the distinction between WP's and problems for which there are 'proven' solutions and rules is not a wholesale yes/no one -- any 'solution' people might suggest for a WP will have many aspects for which there are precedents and thus applicable rules, heuristics, and if you like, 'patterns'.

Like · Reply · January 7 at 7:20pm · Edited



Helmut Leitner Thor, somehow, almost accidentally, we came to look at this paper of yours. You've put it on the table for discussion. Let's put aside the controversy.

If you just look at the paper, within the context of your decades of

work, within the context of this PLAST communication system, within the context of a global crises accumulation, we two sitting together ... what is your desire? what is the best possible outcome you imagine? Which course should our conversation take? What would you love to see happen?

Like · Reply · January 8 at 4:24am



Thor Mann Helmut: Detour question? Because I'd be surprised you really want to know, I don't think any expectations for me personally are the issue we should worry about. My friends are dying off around me. But no accident. And I think it's an important (general, global) issue, so I'll explain why I keep poking at it, hoping others will pick up something useful.

I had worked on the needed additions to Rittel's Argumentative Model of Planning -- the evaluation of planning arguments -- for some time as a sideline to my teaching (architecture, in a school that pursued other important missions but left little room in the curriculum for this esoteric pursuit). It initially looked like a quite academic and theoretic issue -- one for which I couldn't even get research support because the architecture departments in the silo-structured funding entities thought it was about logic, and the logic departments didn't think some architecture guy even had the credentials to mess with these arguments they hadn't paid attention to. Between all the chairs. In retirement, I continued to work with it, among other things like the time management for designers and art pastimes.

The first exploration was to look at systems, again. Of course I was familiar with the concept even from my earlier architecture days, developing building systems and space frame ideas, then information systems for design (IBIS) with Rittel, and studying with Churchman. Ackoff, Ashby etc. were on the reading lists. But at the time, computer tools both for modeling, computation, simulation, mapping etc. were not advanced and available enough: one school where I taught didn't even have access to computers, and I had to run a financial feasibility model for an office building students were designing on the first programmable calculator. Now, better tools were available, and the systems thinkers claims like Gene Bellinger's LI STW forum that systems thinking offered the 'best foundation' for developing tools to address the challenges we face, urged me to take another look.

Experiences like the big LI discussion Helene ran about Ban Ki-Moon's challenge made it clear that there were some problems. Not only were systems models devoid of argumentation -- as I deplored in several papers, and didn't get any support in trying to make connections between systems modeling and the Argumentative model. But a predominant trend of ST -- that is, for individual consultants to each develop their own 'brand' of systems-based approach (most suffering from the same problem of ignoring argumentation, critical questioning of model assumptions, resulting in a jungle of acronyms) and working competitively for companies whose interest likewise is competitive advantage -- led to the result that the many participants in that discussion devoted a lot of effort in promoting

this or that brand of approach to the problems but could not reach any semblance of agreement about a common direction let alone for a convincing 'model for survival'. This, while unearthing literally thousands of small, local alternative initiatives planned or already going on in many places -- by people who did not call themselves systems thinkers or used this or that brand of ST. Initiatives that often struggled against existing powers and infrastructure, lack of funding, and that did not seem to communicate well enough with others, so that their experiences - - about what works and what doesn't work -- were not shared and evaluated well enough.

My take from that experience was that a better platform for a constructive (but argumentative) discourse between such initiatives is needed. In the paper, I sketched what I felt was the overall structure of such a platform; I explored detail in other papers. An important part of that framework will be the 'translation' component -- not only between different natural languages, but between discipline 'jargons' (of each 'brand approach') and between these and natural language. The need for wide public participation in dealing with the challenges -- an essential implication of the 'wicked' nature of the problems -- suggests that translation into the most widely understood common conversational vocabulary is preferable to trying to get an agreement about which 'brand' of approach and its jargon to get (globally?) accepted. I saw Helene starting this PLAST effort - - as well as Nicolas Stampf aiming at a P2P platform, that I suspected / hoped would build on the same experience of the LI discussion, and joined this forum to try to better understand the translation issue and the relationship between tools for recurring problems (like pattern recommendations) and unprecedented challenges -- as I said, they are not mutually exclusive but complementary.

The ultimate 'best outcome' from this effort, in my view, would be to get somebody interested in supporting and developing the integrated software tools to adequately support the global planning/policy-making discourse, and helping to implement it. It will likely be an incremental process, and I have suggested to focus on projects for areas / realms where existing old systems and infrastructure has been destroyed or where such structures have not yet been developed -- to avoid the resistance from such established systems. 'Innovation zones'. But there are several important partial aspects -- new decision modes, better 'overview' tools for the discourse, better ways to control power -- that need attention and where some progress, perhaps helped by or stirred up in opposition to my ideas (as 'collateral benefits') would give me some satisfaction. I realize that these are ambitious expectations for which my understanding and expertise is woefully inadequate: I hope to still learn more about some things, but have to leave other tasks -- like the programming of the software, and the design of organizational provisions for implementing and running the platform -- to people who are better equipped than I am.

I hope this makes sense. The books -- 'The Fog Island Argument' (translated: 'Das Planungsargument', ebook in German) and the Rigatopia book try to sketch connections between these issues

into some overall perspectives. But they are even longer than 80 pages...

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 8 at 10:16am



Helmut Leitner Thor, thank you for providing these partial insights. I've taken a look into the article and was amazed that it describes maybe the most important root to the PLAST project, the history how it all came about. A part of history I wasn't aware of.

When the PLAST submissions strive for an IT platform, then your paper may be the first or one of the early incarnations of describing this (naming it a framework).

If I had the spare time, I would suggest to do a pattern analysis of the 7.500 (or 9.000) postings. But this is a work of months, and currently I'm in the mid of writing my next book, and need discipline with my time usage.

I also looked into your article about the formalization of argumentation and think that the method is near to Alexander's patterns and could be merged. In fact, your pro and con arguments perspective is also one that turns up in the design pattern praxis. Among the 64 concept cards that hold my analysis of pattern thinking, there is even a card named "Pro & Con" that expresses that perspective. Any "force" can also be expressed as a pro or a con. Many similarities. Strengths and weaknesses on both sides.

Still I wonder, looking at this paper and the community effort behind: what did the concept "wicked problem" help you in doing your work on this?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 9 at 5:35pm · Edited



Thor Mann Helmut,

The 'analysis' of the 8-9000 posts would be a main part of the work on the global framework. I had started an IBIS about this, trying to cook down the material to the essential content (proposals, rationale -- pros and cons -- etc.) . While that work it exceeded my time and energy in the end and forced me to focus on an abbreviated more conventional summary -- the article -- the effort would have been manageable by a relatively small team following the discourse continuously from the very start. For me, backtracking after deciding to do something with it after some 1000 or 2000 posts was the main obstacle. (By the way, the format structure of these discussions in this FB PLAST forum would have made that work entirely impossible -- it is so confusing that trying to keep an overview of what's going on in the different threads has me steaming with frustration by the time I get ready to respond, and I'm about ready to give up on this entirely here.) The effort to get the participants to work in a more focused, constructive manner was doomed by the lack of an integrated software platform -- about half a dozen different venues were tried out, which lost even the most dedicated people. I am quite sure that an effort to translate the material into

a different conceptual vocabulary like pattern would have just added to the difficulty -- even my mistake of putting the label of IBIS on the simple effort to just organize the material into basic questions and answers / arguments seemed to put some people off, especially if they were eager to have their own brand accepted for the effort. I still think that the question/answer framework is simple and general enough to accommodate any other vocabulary, but the demand to explain jargon terms in common language seems to be too much for many.

From a WP point of view, the fact that the global crises are dominated by the WP feature of 'distributed' information was a main factor in guiding my proposed design of the discourse platform and its acceptance of even contradictory points of view and perspectives but emphasis on 'translation'. So was acceptance of the premise that the platform cannot assume or insist on some 'right' or 'correct' answers or solutions -- which led to the insistence on supporting diverse and even contradictory 'local' initiatives and experiments. But you could go through the entire list of WP properties and find matching features in the individual issues discussed.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 10 at 10:30am



Thor Mann (Helmut, continued):2. Method

You seem to have misunderstood my comments about 'method': "I also disagree on your use of the word "method", as something that guarantees a certain outcome. What you name as method, I would name an "algorithm". An algorithm guarantees an outcome." The concept of 'method' has many definitions and interpretations. I did not intend to propose or endorse one specific interpretation here -- I was just referring to Alexander's claim that the Pattern Language 'frees you from all method' (The Timeless Way, p. 13; actually the complete quote is: "... what this method does is simply free us from all method" so by this and even the original greek understanding as 'a way through' you can understand the PL as a method. We can only speculate that what he (not I) meant by the second 'all method' were those programs, procedures, computer-oriented algorithms most folks in the 'systems' community were working on, at the time. My focus was on the implied promise that the use of the patterns would guarantee an outcome: in his case, an environmental design solution with the characteristics of timelessness, living quality, wholeness etc. which then did not require any discussion, evaluation (method) because it was guaranteed (good? valid?) by virtue of having followed the rules. My position on this is that this applies usefully to situations in which, as Alexander says, there are problem recurring over and over, and for which solution (patterns) have evolved and been proven valid over time. It does not, almost by definition, apply to situations/problem in which unprecedented features dominate (the features listed as properties of 'wicked problems') for which there are no proven solutions yet. For these, other 'methods' are needed.

3. Voting and other decision modes.

"Your assumption, that the inclusion of stakeholders into a co-creative process is connected to voting, is wrong." I wish I were. Don't you even suggest that very point with your comment "... that at some point of dealing with a design problem, a 80-90% consensus will emerge, including the leading designer, signalling the quality of a solution."? A majority vote is a majority vote even if it's an 80-90% majority and only 'emerging' in the facilitator's mind because the 20% minority have been discouraged from voicing their concerns... But I guess should have mentioned other 'decision modes' that are commonly used or invoked. The often invoked ideal of 'consensus', can be described either as a 'vote' with 100% approval (or less, as your reference to 80-90% consensus suggests) -- or a situation where a leader, designer or facilitator states a proposed solution (to be fair, one that may have been 'co-created' with the contributions of 'stakeholders') with a question such as 'Are we agreed now, are there any objections?'. Of course you may be thinking of a designer or a design team (as you next paragraph suggests) doing the work of integrating all the contributions of participants in the process -- with the best of intentions -- and then presenting the result as the co-created solution. Again, no further discussion?

Your claim that the 'consensus' will be 'emerging' -- and therefore does not even require an explicit vote? -- is at the very least open to question. 'Emerging' -- in whose view? Including the 10-20% minority? Has history not demonstrated enough cases in which the 'emerging' and shouting or even claimed 'silent majority' has been deplorably 'wrong'? Is there not a case (as I claim) for making sure that the arguments even of the minority have actually been voiced, stated, and evaluated more carefully? To make sure that they haven't been just shouted down in spite of having greater merit?

In many cases 'Diktatur des Sitzfleisches' -- having exhausted participants' sitting endurance to the point of just wanting to go home or have a beer -- (Gösser Märzen or Villacher, my preference... some time?) has been observed to play a part in decision. But I may be wrong in my attempt to understand your concern. Could you be more specific in telling me what other decision mode you have in mind for a situation of collective planning where some action or plan will have to be 'adopted'?

4. 'Quality without a name' and guarantees

I am not sure I agree that I assume that "quality without a name" would bypass any complexity, or guarantee something." I was not even mentioning 'complexity' in my reference to Alexander's claims about this -- which I don't agree with, and you seem to also disagree with? Does he not imply such claims with his 'free you for all method' quote? I readily agree that I may not understand Alexander's intentions properly, and they may have changed since I heard him and read his books decades ago.

5 Design Process

You state "I'd rather compare the design process with the situation in game or war. The nature of a chess game, or a war led, is that predictions are impossible, but design knowledge is possible, in the form of "strategic knowledge". It is possible to collect tools or weapons and the expertise how to use them in

certain situations. One can also build intuition by experience, maybe even wisdom."

There are certainly design and planning situations that can be understood as adversarial 'games', negotiations or 'fights' (I would like to restrict the use of 'war' to conflicts in which force is used to achieve submission or destruction of the opponent; 'fights' can do the same but it also applies to verbal 'combat'). In fact I have written a paper on such an 'adversarial' version of planning ("An exploration of the role of systems modeling in a (potentially adversarial) planning process."; in [Academia.edu](#)) which explores some interesting issues about the information needed and -- because not available: estimated -- by the participants in such situations. But there are also, I hope, planning situations in which the prevailing attitude is one of cooperation, in spite of different opinions about context, problem understanding and proposal effectiveness. I even suggest, perhaps naively, that the 'scaffold' or platform for collective planning and design processes should be framed on the initial assumption of cooperative attitude, with only 'plan B' provisions for emerging adversarial symptoms. The construction of a toolkit for cooperative planning and decision-making (that does not in the end rely on majority voting) is a main project I feel is needed.

6 "Maximizing profit rules over optimizing design."

"This is what "quality of living systems" or "quality without a name is about". This sets a new value function that replaces all other goals, especially profit. This can be formulated as "Design for life not profit". I am very much in favor of designing for quality of life. My paper on 'Built Environment Value as a Function of Occasion and Image' (that I posted on another question here somewhere, but also on [Academia.edu](#)) is precisely about trying to become more explicit about what we mean by quality and value, -- so that we can discuss it within a cooperative planning discourse. Just invoking, asserting 'quality without a name' on the authority of being a part of some theory or 'pattern remains somewhat unsatisfactory for me -- much as I appreciate the 'proven' patterns or recommendations for recurring problems in the Pattern Language'. I am not in a position, nor do find it useful, to pin some labels on Alexander's work such as 'post-modern'. Should his effort to aim for 'timeless' validity be honored as precisely an attempt to escape such temporary 'fad' categorization? But I also don't think that just being European in itself entitles one to claim greater insight into such issues.

A note about 'optimizing'. The term implies that some measurable entity (a measure of performance or goodness) can and is being measured, for any 'place' in the solution space for a task, and that we can find that place in the solut

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Like · Reply · January 6 at 4:25pm · Edited



18-Jan-16

Thor Mann Somehow the last paragraph has been cut off -- the comment on optimization should be: "A note about 'optimizing'. The term implies that some measurable entity (a measure of performance or goodness) can and is being measured, for any 'place' in the solution space for a task, and that we can find that place in the solution space with the highest value of that measure. Some even demand that we can 'prove' that the spot has the highest value ('global' optimum), not just a 'sub-optimum': some hilltop in the performance landscape but not the highest mountain. If we can't even 'name' the quality, nor begin to measure it, would it not be prudent to avoid the ambitious term? "

Like · Reply · January 7 at 9:42am · Edited



M Ichael Josefowicz Helmut Leitner "The problem I see with existing systems theory schools, the conflict potential, is that they hold up in different ways this natural science position of strict causality, and seek general laws and perspectives for systems, without looking at the systems in detail. " There are systems approaches that get past that problem.

I work in the social sciences. I consider Complexity Theory in the Social Sciences the State of the Art a seminal work
["http://www.amazon.com/Complexity-Theory.../dp/0415693683](http://www.amazon.com/Complexity-Theory.../dp/0415693683)

Complexity Theory and the Social Sciences: The state of the art

AMAZON.COM

Like · Reply · January 7 at 10:01am



Helmut Leitner Thor, excuse me that I start my answer with the end, the topics of optimization, and the question of "quality without a name".

Basically, I agree with what you write about optimization, but the "fine print" is important. To optimize, one doesn't need the ability to measure, although measurement makes a simple and clean solution. It is sufficient and less difficult, to be able to do a comparison of two states, one of them appearing as "higher value" than the other.

Note the difference between measurement and comparison: for the first I put a thing into your hand and you tell me the absolute weight. VERY difficult. For the second I give you two things into your two hands, and you tell me which is heavier. This is MUCH easier.

You are right that optimizations, especially technical ones based on mathematical algorithms, have problems to run into the local optimum of a value function, and miss a distant global optimum. Alexander's assumption is -- and this is really doubtful -- that in natural processes an optimum is found, even though all steps of development are small and do not probe the wider distance. This is something that needs more research. I have used systems of

technical optimization where small steps are the standard, but large steps are also stochastically probe the far distance – this works very well with technical systems.

The assumption that "quality without a name" is about a quality that can't be named is not valid. Of course, anything can be named. The best name in English is "quality of living systems", four words, rather impractical, but to the point. In German we have a single word *Lebendigkeit* of everyday language which is precisely what Alexander wants to express. Life=Leben; living=lebendig (in a trans-biological sense) wholeness/liveliness/aliveness/vibrancy/vitality/"livingness" = *Lebendigkeit*. There is a kind of gap or deficiency in the English language that must be closed sooner or later. But this doesn't mean that there is a unsolvable problem.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 7 at 10:28am · Edited



M Michael Josefowicz Thor Mann "If we can't even 'name' the quality, nor begin to measure it, would it not be prudent to avoid the ambitious term? "

One way it can be named and measured is by simple probes to measure the actor's in the system about "happiness" and "well being." Employee happiness and well being is a competitive advantage. [Jet.com's Strategy: Low Prices, Fast Delivery, Happy Workers](#) <http://nyti.ms/1R92gkO>

The question then becomes "Under what conditions does the probability of "happiness" increase or decreasing. With time series data it is possible to see even very small moves in the right or wrong direction. For anyone trying to move a complex system in a direction, small, slow, steady. Watch the slope of the trend line carefully. If it moves in the wrong direction, try to figure out why. If it moves in the right direction, try to figure out why. As you figure out why it will inform the next intervention. At some point the curve gets to a critical threshold that leads to a non linear state change.

There is no way to get around the fact that It takes time. No quick fixes. No magic bullets. It also requires setting expectations with a client who wants magic bullets. Persistence is absolutely necessary, although not sufficient. General methods are those similar to a doctor. Rule one: Do no harm.



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[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 7 at 10:34am



Thor Mann replied · 6 Replies



Thor Mann Helmut, You are right in pointing out that in most situations, the task is about deciding among two or a few alternatives: But wouldn't it be even easier, and less pretentious, to just call this task what it is, as you say: 'comparison'? Judging which of two items are 'better', or 'have more' of a specific feature or value, than the other? And reserving the 'optimal' claim for results that really are the results of a more thorough scrutiny -- 'hill-climbing' algorithms or analyzing differential equations if complete enumeration and evaluation/measurement of all possible solutions is not feasible?

I don't think I want to get into the issue whether a quality without a name can be named. This is something that you may want to take up with Alexander himself -- his discussion of this problem in the first chapter of the 'Timeless Way...' is worth re-reading. The problem with referring to it by the designation 'quality without a name' or '*Lebendigkeit*' / quality of living systems, or any other name is that if two people may disagree about whether a place or other entity 'has' it, or more or less of it, what are they going to do to explore the issue in more detail. Alexander's tendency to dismiss opposing opinions by saying things like: 'if you're not using the pattern, you're not solving (or addressing) the problem: an argument from authority in my opinion, evading the issue. He claims, plausibly enough, that we access the truth about this quality by intuition. The possibility that two people can come up with different judgments based on their precious intuition is not admissible: one of them (and guess which one?) must be wrong...

I do try to address the issue of value (a subjective, personal judgment, which is where I disagree with Alexander who claims that value is something objective and interpersonal) and how it depends on specific features in the environment (The article I mentioned) without referring to patterns. Which is why I guess it must be wrong.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 7 at 11:25am



Helmut Leitner Thor, we both talked about the concepts "local optimum" and "global optimum" in relation to mathematical methods of optimization, as a reference system. We both see the problem to be caught in a local optimum, while missing a global optimum. But this is mathemaics, not real work, not design.

When people in real world optimize, or try to optimize a design (for example writing the best possible constitution for a new state; or a teacher giving the best possible lecture to studends), an optimum is a very vage thing. But, to look for good solutions, and

the competency to see the difference between a certain solution and a better solution are not vague, whatever "better" means. Here the analogy to mathematics, to the "value function" comes in.

If you don't subscribe to "quality without a name" in the role of a value function, you may replace this concept technically by e. g. "sustainability" or something like that. The question is, whether you are then better off.

Few people, and few pattern researchers, are familiar with the technical issues of optimization, and understand that design is an optimization process. So, while we two may disagree on some points, this is incomparable to the differences that are possible about this. Most people would assume that good patterns in themselves guarantee some positive outcome, and don't see the crucial role of the value function. So, then this would come as a shock, that a pattern language can also be used with the value function of "costs" as a profit maximization method.

As you know German, it should be visible to you that the concepts "lebendig" and "Lebendigkeit" make all English language problems with QWAN disappear.

Like · Reply · January 9 at 2:31pm



M Ichael Josefowicz Thor Mann The way I name the "quality that cannot be named" depends on the context. in an organizational context it might be the condition where people they can make free choices in their proximate field of work. On a more abstract level, I might say it is a situation that allows smooth flow of information to focus on the task at hand. In another context I might say it as simply as "a context in which people are happy." Happy can fairly be called a "quality that cannot be named."

In the ecology nature context, I might say a diverse environment that creates the requirements for a new plants to grow.

In those senses, I think it is possible to create observables as surrogates for the "quality that cannot be named."

Once you map the patterns of the observables you can do analysis using the most appropriate tools.

Like · Reply · January 9 at 12:57pm

Nicolas Stampf January 8 at 3:09am
A physicist's ideas for why life exists



Jessie, does it connects with your work?

This physicist has a groundbreaking idea about why life exists

18-Jan-16

It could liberate biologists from relying too much on a Darwinian explanation.

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Comments



Nicolas Stampf Organization to better channel entropy? Sounds like two faces of the same coin, don't you think?

Like · Reply · January 8 at 3:19pm



Gerald Midgley There has been good work in the systems sciences on this, with life being seen as a negentropic force that paradoxically represents the most efficient means to create entropy.

Like · Reply · 2 · January 9 at 7:27am

Gerald Midgley January 8 at 10:10am
Scholarships to Hull B.School,



HULL UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL PHD SCHOLARSHIPS

The Business School at the University of Hull, UK, is pleased to offer 4 scholarships to PhD candidates who show exceptional promise in one of our internationally recognised research areas:

- Accounting & Accountability
- Economics
- Empirical Finance & Banking
- Ethics, Organization and Society
- Leadership and Organizational Change
- Logistics, Project Management, Supply Chains & Operations Management
- Marketing
- Regional and International Business
- Systems Thinking, Cybernetics, Complexity, Problem Structuring & Information Systems

Our four scholarships will be awarded on the basis of the best overall applications and research proposals submitted on topics that staff members are available to supervise.

The scholarships cover the full tuition fees, regardless of nationality, for a maximum of 3 years on a full-time PhD degree. In addition, UK/EU students will receive a stipend of £14,057 per year for a maximum of 3 years, and international students (from outside the EU) will receive a stipend of £5,809 per year for a maximum of 3 years (these are 2015 figures and we are expecting a

small upwards adjustment before the successful candidates start their studies).

The deadline for applications is 31 March 2016 for September 2016 entry.

Further details of these Business School PhD scholarships, and information on how to apply, can be found at http://www2.hull.ac.uk/.../research-degr.../phd_scholarship.aspx

In addition to the above, the University of Hull also has 60 scholarships (with a 29 February 2016 application deadline) to offer for pre-defined research topics across a broad range of disciplines. These include 8 to be supervised by Business School staff: 6 in "Resilience and Sustainability of Complex Socio-Ecological Systems" and 2 in "The Logistics and Humber Development Institute". Further details of the University scholarships can be found at <http://www2.hull.ac.uk/pgmi2/s.aspx>

LikeComment

Jessie Henshaw edited a doc. December 11, 2015
Pattern Lang. Intro & Links



Pattern Language intro & Reference links

Resources and References (PLAST community links at bottom)

Current Pattern Work Pages

Presentations:

- 2015 Oct. Jessie & Helmut's brief pattern study of "HOME" see:
[href="http://www.synapse9.com/_PLref/PLAST-II/"](http://www.synapse9.com/_PLref/PLAST-II/)

Draft Pattern Pages:

- Pattern Work Page
12/23/15 <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1uKXuNxe1D4gloCazTX58JE591DYfUdE9QICpt5i2V9s/edit#heading=h.2gazcsgmxkub>
- Pattern Work
Spreadsheet 12/2015" <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1JzTZO5pO6xkg0LcTCE4o2l0zb2CQJ0KwvDbx3XdHA4U/edit#gid=0>

General PL Introductions and PLAST References

18-Jan-16

1. **The Hillside Group** has the most general repository of pattern language work and sponsored the series of world PLoP conferences sponsored. It's an amazing community of people and record of 20 years of work hosting multiple conferences, representing a progressive wing of the even larger software pattern language community. The EuroPLoP website is one entry into it.

- Main site: <http://www.europlop.net/>
- Hillside Group Wiki <http://hillside.net/wiki>

2. **Pattern Language community** is the other major center of pattern thinking and network,

- Chistopher Alexander's community site <https://www.patternlanguage.com/>.

3. **Social Transformation pattern collections** of interest:

- Tom Henfrey's Transition Network** <http://www.patterns.transitionresearchnetwork.org/>
- Doug Schuler's Public Sphere**, work on educational patterns, "Liberating Voices" book, GroupWork Card Deck, and wonderful collection of 136 PublicSpherePatterns... from 75 authors

- **Short text only** list of 136 patterns:

<http://publicsphereproject.org/sites/default/files/all-patterns-short-verbiage-and-titles-only.pdf>

- **Long description**

Pattern pages <http://www.publicsphereproject.org/patterns/lv?page=1>

4. **Takashi Iba** Maybe the most prolific contributor of new content is whose department at, Keio University, Tokyo, Japan concentrates on teaching pattern language. During the last 10 years, 4000 students have passed pattern workshops, about 500 patterns have been written in 20 pattern languages, part of them published in English as books or card sets. As part of his work a pattern research field "Human Action" has been defined that doesn't focus on the creation of artifacts. Two workshop formats have been developed, one "Dialogue Workshop" format or the exchange of pattern experiences, one "Pattern Mining Workshop" for the development of pattern languages. In Japan, they have also started a project to translate all of Alexander's books to Japanese, as a collective work done mainly by

students. 2 are already available. Most of it has been presented at PLoP and recently PURPLSOC events. :

- **Designing Pattern Templates** http://www.hillside.net/plop/2014/papers/Social_Related/iba_2.pdf

- **A wonderful slide presentation intro** <http://de.slideshare.net/takashiiba>

5. **Helmut Lietner's** lectures and writings are another great introduction

- **PL ntro & crash course** on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q4R7dDtLYgU>
- A book "Pattern Research", available on Amazon

6. In 2015

- **Special issue of SPANDA edited by Helene - PURPLSOC conference papers*** in Krems Austria in July made valuable contributions.

Helene Finidori and Sayfan Borghini presented their model for a 4th Generation Pattern Language, while Helene presented her current Pattern Language for Systemic Transformation (*PLAST*). and Jessie Henshaw presented her new pattern language for naturally occurring designs and transformations, "Elements"

(*draft papers *not circulated, publication pending*)

- **PLoP writers workshops**** in Pittsburgh in Oct. offered valuable contributions too

Jessie Henshaw expanded her pattern language for naturally occurring design with "Mining Living Quality" and David West and Jenny Quillien presented their study of how pattern language has evolved with their "Undiscovered Patterns".

(**<http://www.hillside.net/plop/2015/index.php?nav=program#acceptedpapers>)

SPANDA Special issue on Systemic Change, edited by Helene.

Containing a great collection of essays by seminal thinkers.

- **Systemic Change.** http://www.spanda.org/SpandaJournal_VI,1.pdf

Jessie Henshaw - Guiding patterns of Naturally Occurring Design

18-Jan-16

- **"Elements":** http://synapse9.com/pub/2015_PURPLSOC%20JLH%20final%20pub.pdf
- **"Mining Living Quality":** http://synapse9.com/_PLref/@2015_PLoP-JLH%20final%20pub.pdf

Helene Finidori and **Sayfan Borghini** paper on Fourth Generation Pattern Language is based on their long collaboration on projects and their teaching of systems thinking and writing from a commons perspective. Helene's PLAST paper follows a year of work with organizing a collective to study and begin performing applications.

- **Fourth Generation Pattern Language** https://www.academia.edu/17543428/Towards_a_Fourth_Generation_Pattern_Language_Patterns_as_Epistemic_Threads_for_Systemic_Orientation
- **A Pattern Language for Systemic Transformation** https://www.academia.edu/9138366/A_Pattern_Language_for_Systemic_Transformation_PLAST_-_re_Generative_of_Commons

David West and Jenny Quillien have been working together, both anthropologists and critical thinkers on the leading edge, and at both PURPLSOC and PLoP presented detailed study of how PL originated in Alexander's study of natural patterns of design and then went other direction as it became more formalized as a theory.

- **The Mystery Case of Undiscovered Patterns** (conf. d

7. **Alexander's work:** So... there does seem to be a large variety of resources "out there", but it takes a bit of digging to find the threads of interest. Everyone has their favorites of Alexander's own writings, and it's very helpful to be familiar with the discussions of them.

One can find a good bit by web search. I think his two very earliest writings seem to contain lots of clues to the form of pattern language that seems to eventually have worked, and some of his later writings appears to omit... as an interesting twist. That's his **"A city is not a tree" and "Notes on the synthesis ofform"** from the early 60's... Amazon has inexpensive copies of the latter, and some of his more recent books too.

- http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_ss_c_0_21?url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=christopher+alexander

Helmut says, when one is studying original Alexander, it may be helpful to think in three phases, that have somewhat different orientation and terminology. (this means they are not quite consistent)

- (1) published
- (2) published 1968-1985 very pattern oriented, plus generative process, based on "A Pattern Language" and "The Timeless Way of Building", description of projects (I especially appreciate "The Production of Houses" which documents the Mexicali social housing project in a Mexican slum; the focus is on the enabling of people and participation). Add to this phase "The Battle for the Life and beauty of the earth" (which actually documents the Eishin campus Project and the conflicts around it)
- (3) published >2002; kind of post-pattern work. Basically "The Nature of Ordner" towards a science of living systems. TNoO existed 20+ years as an internal draft. (therefore Grabow was able to discuss this in 1983).
- (4) Stephen Grabow's book "Christopher Alexander: The Search for a New Paradigm in Architecture" (1983) may help to get an overall picture. Contains 80 pages of original Alexander texts (audio transcriptions) which you will find nowhere else

8. Liveliness Science:

Helmut with Franz Nahrada explores what they call Liveliness science

- <http://www.theoriekultur.at/wiki?Lebendigkeitwissenschaft>

Jessie's "physics of happening" and methods of pattern recognition for "happening" are closely related

- [The Physics of Continuity = ladders of change](#)
- <http://synapse9.com/signals/the-key-scientific-question/>
- Object oriented science discussion at end of 2015 PURPLSOC paper. http://synapse9.com/pub/2015_PURPLSOC%20JLH%20final%20pub.pdf

9. Other nice examples:

Sebastian Deneff's funded research on the patterns of front-line firefighting is one of the most beautiful pattern studies - accessed on ResearchGate

- http://www.researchgate.net/publication/254908258_A_Pattern_Language_of_Firefighting_Frontline_Practice_to_Inform_the_Design_of_Ubiquitous_Computing

William Isaacs original source book "Dialogue. The art of thinking together, continue with like NVC and World Cafe and the work of pioneers like Tom Atlee.

Helfrich & Boiller

One may count the Transition Towns movement in, with the 60 patterns (recently renamed "ingredients") they defined. And maybe the recent adoption of the Commons Movement to use the pattern methodology to create a shared language, see the book "Patterns of Commoning" by Helfrich & Bollier.

10. Plast Community pages

Facebook Group

- Discussion threads <https://www.facebook.com/groups/125513674232534/>
- Files <https://www.facebook.com/groups/125513674232534/files/>

Other Group pages

- Resources and documentation on GitHub <https://github.com/PLAST-Community/PLAST#resources-and-documentation>
- Debategraph Open source Pattern Language <http://debategraph.org/Details.aspx?nid=329727>
- Debategraph Introduction to Pattern Language, and References <http://debategraph.org/Details.aspx?nid=343998>
- Slack Site

<https://plastcommunity.slack.com/messages/tools/stars/>

LikeComment

Helmut Leitner, Yasuhiko Genku Kimura and Michelle James like this.

Comments



Yasuhiko Genku Kimura All great links!

Like · Reply · December 11, 2015 at 7:34pm



Helmut Leitner Another important thread of original pattern research comes from Takashi Iba, Keio University, Tokyo, Japan. During the last 10 years, 4000 students have passed pattern workshops, about 500 patterns have been written in 20 pattern languages, part of them published in English as books or card sets. A pattern research field "Human Action" has been defined, that doesn't focus on the creation of artifacts. Two workshop formats have been developed, one "Dialogue Workshop" format or the exchange of pattern experiences, one "Pattern Mining Workshop" for the development of pattern languages.

Most of it has been presented at PLoP and recently PURPLSOC events.

<http://de.slideshare.net/takashiiba>

In Japan, they have also started a project to translate all of Alexander's books to Japanese, as a collective work done mainly by students. 2 are already available.

Like · Reply · December 12, 2015 at 1:46am · Edited



Helmut Leitner Another source is a bit fragmented in the field of dialogue and civil society.

It started probably with William Isaacs book "Dialogue. The art of thinking together, continue with Doug Schulers "Liberating Voices" and the GroupWork Card Deck, modularizing the social technologies like NVC and World Cafe and the work of pioneers like Tom Atlee.

One may count the Transition Towns movement in, with the 60 patterns (recently renamed "ingredients") they defined. And maybe the recent adoption of the Commons Movement to use the pattern methodology to create a shared language, see the book "Patterns of Commoning" by Helfrich & Bollier.

Like · Reply · December 12, 2015 at 2:08am · Edited



Helmut Leitner When one is studying original Alexander, it may be helpful to think in three phases, that have somewhat different orientation and terminology. (this means they are not quite consistent)

(1) published <1966, basically "Notes on the Synthesis of Form", pre-pattern; strong orientation in mathematics and requirements analysis.

(2) published 1968-1985 very pattern oriented, plus generative process, based on "A Pattern Language" and "The Timeless Way of Building", description of projects (I especially appreciate "The Production of Houses" which documents the Mexicali social housing project in a Mexican slum; the focus is on the enabling of people and participation). Add to this phase "The Battle for the Life and beauty of the earth" (which actually documents the Eishin campus Project and the conflicts around it)

18-Jan-16

(3) published >2002; kind of post-pattern work. Basically "The Nature of Order" towards a science of living systems. TNOO existed 20+ years as an internal draft. (therefore Grabow was able to discuss this in 1983).

Stephen Grabow's book "Christopher Alexander: The Search for a New Paradigm in Architecture" (1983) may help to get an overall picture. Contains 80 pages of original Alexander texts (audio transcriptions) which you will find nowhere else.

Like · Reply · December 12, 2015 at 3:00am · Edited



Jessie Henshaw Thanks Helmut - I added yours and a few more of mine in our PLAST files collection "Pattern Language intro & Reference links"

Like · Reply · December 18, 2015 at 11:51am · Edited



Helene Finidori Lots of resources on Pattern Languages are available here:<http://debategraph.org/Details.aspx?nid=343998>



Details view: Introduction to Pattern Language - Definition, Design and...

DEBATEGRAPH.ORG

Like · Reply · January 5 at 5:45pm



Jessie Henshaw That's a great case in point. Perhaps more than on Debategraph page needs to be mentioned on the FB references page, along with a short description of what one would find there.

Like · Reply · January 5 at 10:56pm



Helene Finidori Jessie, here's the link to the 4th generation pattern language paper: https://www.academia.edu/.../Towards_a_Fourth_Generation...

There are also a couple of papers specifically on PLAST that could be listed under 'PLAST references'.

Helene Finidori January 3 at 6:19am
Nora Bateson – Abstraction and Practicality



This post by Nora Bateson discussing abstraction and practicality in the context of complexity. Lots of resonance, and a nice way to start the year and to lighten the path for PLAST [smile emoticon](#)

PS: I forgot where I opened this from, if it is from someone here, please identify yourself [smile emoticon](#)



Practicality In Complexity

How can we use knowledge of complexity in a practical way? I am often asked this question. I am confused by it. Practical at what level? By "practical" what is meant? Practical to offer quic...

NORABATESON.WORDPRESS.COM

LikeCommentShare

Yasuhiko Genku Kimura, David Braden and 5 others like this.

Comments



David Braden "Symmathesy . . . mutual learning between and within living contexts."

I prefer a word I can pronounce smile emoticon. I love the shift in point of view.

Like · Reply · 1 · January 3 at 9:41am



Bill Veltrop Helene, thanks ever-so-much for pointing me to Nora Bateson's post. It is beautifully clear and compelling — a wonderful start to this year of years. And — blessings to you and to your incredible work.

Like · Reply · 1 · January 3 at 11:38am



M Ichael Josefowicz Helene Finidori Thanks for a New Year gift. It is a great way to start. " if you look with eyes that search for continuum"

Like · Reply · January 3 at 12:39pm



Larry Victor How can I integrate Nora Bateson's mind into my already overly complex life. And so, so many other relevant minds knocking on my door daily. We surf, navigate and create complexity - and frequently deny it. There are many ways to comprehend and work with complexity. Complexity is but a name for an only partly delimited domain.

When students during my 23 years teaching "learning to survive/thrive college" masquerading as an Intro Psy Course, they encountered the first day, written large on the chalk board: EMBRACE COMPLEXITY, The Texture of Reality. LEARN NAVIGATION. Then I gave each an 80+ page manual to navigate a complex system of study, with many individualized paths where every student could truly EARN an A. All who engaged in the process EARNED As. A computerized "grade book" permitted me to keep track of their individual paths, and each student had access to their personal record.

To try imagining complex structures is futile as "reality" is more than structure. Cognitively we interweave processing-structures and structuring-processes. We alternatively engineer scaffolding and then flow intuitively within the scaffolding, sometimes creating new scaffolding. Creativity is involved in both processes.

The fluidity gained from adopting "complementarity of perspectives" frees me from encountering "the complicated"; I don't have to find logical consistency in all patterns. It is our maps that are complicated, as the "territory" is never as imagined.

The more I expand my unconscious context, I more I am at-ease in confronting specifics of each moment. I grok complex relationships without pressure to formalize them. Many alternative routes for action are available for consideration. which is the nature of reality. To demand easy solutions is misguided.

Like · Reply · 1 · January 3 at 5:57pm

Helmut Leitner December 30, 2015 at 12:16pm

A Patern Card Set for "A Pattern Language"



This is a first draft for a card set to represent the architectural patterns of Christopher Alexander's book "A Pattern Language".

Pattern cards may be one pattern description format that participants of the PLAST might choose to communicate their ideas/concepts/patterns.

Light on Two Sides APL#159




Photo: CC BY-NC-ND JPH/PA - iStock.com
Pattern origin: A Pattern Language by Christopher Alexander

This pattern determines, more than any other single pattern, the success or failure of a room. Windows on two sides are fundamental. A room lit on two sides feels more friendly. Objects can be seen better. People can understand each other better with their body language and the minute changes of their facial expressions. This improves the social quality of communications – and the life – in a room.

Photo and video professionals routinely optimize the usage of two light sources, a key light and a fill light, providing a better visual experience. Same principle.

related to: Wings of Light (107), Long Thin House (109), Corner Grocery (89), Pools of Light (252), The Family (75), etc.

LikeComment

Mark Frazier, David W Gray, Nicolas Stampf and 9 others like this.

Comments



Helmut Leitner I suggest A6 as a standard for the layout of pattern cards, because this aspect ratio scales well up and down, and is cheap to produce as "flyer" or "poster" in digital print factories.

Currently, most pattern card authors use idiosyncratic formats, or playing card formats that don't scale and that are not open for easy extension.

Like · Reply · December 30, 2015 at 12:25pm



Douglas Schuler A6 makes sense for countries that use this approach. We also strove for non-idiosyncratic format in the Liberating Voices project. Our approach was to put 4 cards on 8.5" x 11" paper, which is the standard in the US. We really should also produce cards that are easily used in Europe, etc.

Like · Reply · December 30, 2015 at 12:43pm



Helmut Leitner Douglas, it seems the world of printing isn't globalized. 4.25" x 5.5" (140x108) makes imho perfect sense in the US, and it is not far from the A6 (148x105 mm) format I suggest for Europe.

As a software developer, I can imagine to support automatic

conversion between these formats, based on the open .odp format of the free Open Office software suite. I have looked into similar issues, for "layout change for all cards", which isn't supported by Open Office.

The European print industry seems to be more flexible and cheaper too. If I compare, for example, flyeralarm(.com) (Europe) and printrunning(.com) (US), flyeralarm is much more flexible in paper thickness, print and quality options and cheaper than its US counterpart by about 50%. This is a lot. But maybe there are other US print providers that are more competitive.

The main points are price and ease of production, which basically go hand in hand.

Have you calculated the production of your cards? (assuming 1000 card stacks, I strive for a price of \$2-4.000, which is possible in A6/Europe, 250g/m3 paper, UV-coated)

Like · Reply · January 2 at 4:14am · Edited



Douglas Schuler I assume that the graphics in the original (APL) book are not available for use. (But we can paraphrase the patterns without copyright issues, I guess?) And what about the GroupWorks images and text? (I've added images from the random selection program... one each from APL, Groupworks, and Liberating Voices)



Like · Reply · January 2 at 9:55pm



Douglas Schuler Question for everybody: is there any potential problem with making cards for patterns that copyrighted or otherwise protected? Our cards are all in the public domain and hence people can mix and match, etc. I hate to open a can of worms here...

Like · Reply · December 30, 2015 at 12:44pm



Helmut Leitner Douglas, I'm not sure I understand your question. I know your cards are free PD), but I don't know how you manage this with your illustrations. I use CC licensed photos from the internet for my cards, and make them CC licensed accordingly.

A user could print both types of cards manually, and buy proprietary cards from other sources (e. g. Takashi Iba cards) and mix them. No copyright problem of course for the user because the user doesn't copy anything.

But the user's problem is that the formats don't fit together, so it's

difficult to use/mix cards from different sources. Add the GroupWorks cards that are different (big playing cards), and the Permaculture cards (small playing card format). To me, this is the can of worms.

Like · Reply · 1 · January 2 at 3:35am · Edited



Helene Finidori Hi Helmut and Douglas, and happy new year! Helmut, didn't Wolfgang Stark have a project of print on demand cards? Would that have 'harmonized' formats?

Like · Reply · January 2 at 9:49am



Helmut Leitner Helene, Wolfgang Stark is working on the German translation of the Liberating Voices (Doug's) card deck. As far as I know they want to use another new (unharmonized) format.

Like · Reply · January 2 at 12:04pm



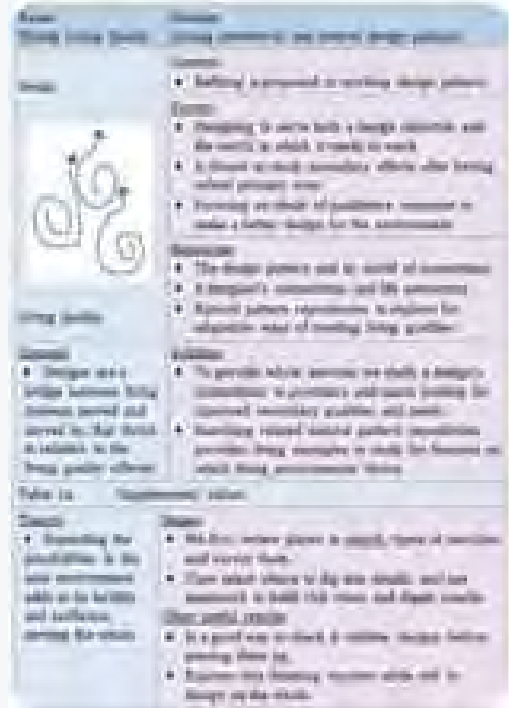
Douglas Schuler It's nice to see this momentum! Several thoughts... (1) I love the fact that the A6, A5, etc. proportions allow sheets to be quartered, doubled, etc. and they still retain the ratio! Not so with US legal, letter, etc. (2) ALL of the text and images on our cards are CC shareable! (3) GREAT to hear that Wolfgang is working on the translations!!! (I hope he'll share with us!!) Please send when available. PS. I have a pdf of the text for all cards if anybody needs a copy; (4) should be easy enough to translate between the two printing format ... I think!

Like · Reply · January 2 at 8:17pm



Jessie Henshaw What a designer actually needs could include these kinds of symbolic cards, to remind them of some widely applicable idea, but the complexity of interacting forces that need to be responded to is often much more involved. Examples would be the pattern we're waiting to get to work on here on "Healing troubled community" or maybe "Path finding" and things that people lost in a complex world in trouble really need.

The example I have to offer is one that is the subject of my last pattern research paper, you might imagine as the "fine print" on the back of the playing card, this one for "Mining living quality", summarizing the methodology presented in a pattern research paper:



Like · Reply · 3 · December 30, 2015 at 1:56pm



Helmut Leitner As I said, a card can't hold the complexity of a pattern, this is obvious from the beginning. But, a card can serve as a token in various contexts.

It's much less clear, how a "page format" like the one you posted here, limits the display of a pattern. Takashi Iba uses one-page pattern descriptions a lot.

Btw, I think that most of the fundamental patterns you have in mind, like "Home" or "Healing Community", also this "Mining Living Quality", need to be understood and analyzed as pattern languages too, because otherwise their complexity can't be understood and their design not managed. E. g. on a political level, "School" may be a pattern on the level of public discussion ("Do we need a SCHOOL in our village?") or as part of a pattern language of n educational system. But when are building the SCHOOL, a more fine-grained "pattern language for school architecture" is needed.

Like · Reply · January 2 at 4:15am · Edited



Jessie Henshaw I think the proper distinction may be between "pattern maps" and "pattern languages", the former being the lists and diagrams people make, and the later the patterns of working systems of the living systems that the use of the maps and a lot of attentive & responsive work sometimes coaxes into being.

Would it be worth linking some of the card styles and page styles of pattern writing you know of, in a section of the references page?

Like · Reply · 1 · January 2 at 8:53am



Helene Finidori This exchange reminds me of Ward Cunningham's paper on Wiki and pattern language. The form we had discussed for the PLAST project description for the EU was more of this type. The pattern as a 'research' object, with the various hermeneutical discussions and points of view associated to it kept as tracks. In this context, there could be various 'print' or take away / summarized forms...

http://www.hillside.net/.../Group6/plop13_preprint_51.pdf

Like · Reply · 1 · January 2 at 9:55am · Edited



Jessie Henshaw I was hoping that the setups on the: "PATTERN PAGES" or "PATTERN SPREADSHEETS" discussed under the "PATTERN WORK" topic as the work on them proceeds, would give us a better idea of what PLAST design patterns actually would need to be like. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/125513674232534/permalink/852265638223997/>



Jessie Henshaw to PLAST - Pattern Languages for Systemic Transformation December 11, 2015 ·

PATTERN WORK - How do we do Pattern Research Projects?

.... Basically we need a way to do pattern research projects.

Facebook is a problem given how discussion threads naturally wander and elicit lots of interest and effort but don't produce results... so we could start a group effort to learn how to focus effort on manageable pattern research projects.

My initial thought is that general discussion here be different if the heading of the thread is "PATTERN WORK", and 1) stay focused on exploring the current issues of the project, and 2) while accumulating results on a "work page". The finished product would be presented to the a larger group when ready. So to start that off someone would introduce a PATTERN WORK proposal and create Pattern Work pages, perhaps like these:

2015_12 PATTERN WORK PATTERN SPREADSHEET. ...

[Shttps://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1JzTZO5pO6xkg0LcTCE4o2i0zb2CQJ0KwvDbx3XdHA4U/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1JzTZO5pO6xkg0LcTCE4o2i0zb2CQJ0KwvDbx3XdHA4U/edit?usp=sharing)

2015_12 PATTERN WORK PATTERN PAGES

<https://docs.google.com/.../1uKxuNxe1D4gloCazTX58JE591D.../edit...>

PLAST pattern projects 12/2015 - Google Sheets

DOCS.GOOGLE.COM

Like · Reply · Remove Preview · December 30, 2015 at 2:12pm



Helmut Leitner *Jessie*, I very much appreciate your approach to reformulate a new PATTERN FORM (a structured outline) for pattern work. Pattern work will result in pattern descriptions many pages long, potentially unlimited in length. I see no contradiction between going in-depth following some pattern form, like e. g. yours, and using a light-weight card format to communicate results.

The long form of Alexander's patterns exist in the book "A Pattern Language", some 1100 pages. I know people who use the book in seminars, or in the field, but this is not easy, and this is rarely done. So, there should be place for other ways, too.

Or in other words, there is a difference between a PATTERN RESEARCH REPOSITORY, and the manifold pattern products - papers, books, cards - derived from it. This is like in economy: the separation of the mining for raw materials, and the production of consumer goods from these raw materials. These may be two separate stages in the value-creation-chain.

Like · Reply · 1 · December 30, 2015 at 3:00pm · Edited



Helene Finidori Yes (posted something in this line re Ward Cunningham's pattern as research object). There has been work on pattern lifecycle by people at Fraunhofer and Stuttgart University, with an identification and maturation process. We have written stuff on the PLAST description (Spanda Article) that could be brought in the discussion *Jessie*. Some existing work to build on. Even if it is to 'deconstruct' and reconstruct it smile emoticon

Like · Reply · January 2 at 10:01am



Jessie Henshaw well how do we put the models side by side to compare and merge or connect them? A second "Pattern Work" page and topic, devoted to "Pattern Comparison"? Or is this better done with two or three people doing a two page research papers to share and make a 5 min presentations each to the group. I tend to think that might work better for collecting and comparing the pattern writing methods. Helmut and I could present our little project of writing patterns for "home", at the same time.

Like · Reply · January 2 at 1:02pm



Jessie Henshaw Even with repeated patterns shown on cards I'd want a more complete reference to what they mean on the back, so that it can be used knowledgeably. I guess I'm also thinking of the common circumstance when dealing with the living

world that will often need you to take apart and recombine the parts of model patterns in order to invent a whole pattern suited to the situation.

That is of course influenced by my experience of being an architect and having designing buildings for real people and places. Generally it seem no model pattern would do, Then one needs to reinterpret the model patterns to create an original design with some repeated and some uniquely individual parts, shaped to bring living quality to the whole unique living circumstance.

For that process you start from what Kahn called "book zero", the raw forces and callings of the circumstance, and use the patterns you know where they fit, and inventing variations where they are needed. For example "Light on two sides" might become "Great opening opposed to small" where a dramatic room is needed. Often the new compositions take multiple attempts to get them right, and the richer the understanding of both the context and the patterns to be used is worth a lot.

In a way I think every implementation is like that. You may have a good standard "pattern map" for a college campus, but will always need to evolve it to become the integration of patterns for the school's way of living, the thing that heals in once built and I think is then what turns into the actual "pattern language" of the school.

[Like · Reply · December 30, 2015 at 10:47pm · Edited](#)



Helmut Leitner *Jessie*, I'd card make the minimum size of a card larger than put information on the back. It's notoriously difficult and error-prone to make front and back match when printing a card. And if you pin them to a wall, you need two sets of cards.

[Like · Reply · December 31, 2015 at 5:23am](#)



Jessie Henshaw *Helmut*, well sure, there's the problem of "scale" for descriptions, and the issue of how symbolic you can make them without losing all the pointers to more involved questions that need to be raised. We have two compact views, one simple and general and the other more complex and particular, i.e. general & specific, I was thinking you'd consider at different times. In the online version the simple and complex views would be "tabs" or toggle back and forth perhaps. My ideal would be to have the fields on each active, and editing window pop up by entering them, a little like the idea of a pattern desktop below.

My idea of using front&back cards came from imagining how people sitting around a table would discuss them, either in a learning or work process. People would first sort and talk about the more conceptual side of the cards, about the broad ideas as generalities. Then if the concept seemed to have a use in the pattern map being built, for example, you'd turn it over for discussing the details to better understand its needs and see

what else might be needed or adjusted to make the map work. How's that sound?



[Like · Reply · January 1 at 11:37am](#)



Helmut Leitner The PLAST project plans a shared pattern repository and workspace that should support such functions. PatternPedia may be the solution, or another system. The sorry fact is, that we currently don't have it. I read your illustration as a suggested layout for the user interface.

Cards could contain a shortened link to their corresponding internet repository page, so that users can access all the detail when they want or need them.

[Like · Reply · January 2 at 4:16am · Edited](#)



Jessie Henshaw Yes, that's essentially what I was saying too. I'm the one of those who has contributed requirements for the repository design. *Helene* says she has a plan to go forward, so we'll have to see if there are methodology discussions this time. As far as I can tell why "we don't have it" is because everyone works on their own separate ones... If there was a group of people repeatedly developing and presenting pattern sketches for it, sort of like you and I did with sketching "home" pattern sketches, we'd see rapid co-evolution. Using that "design studio" work process is proven method. Chat won't do that.

[Like · Reply · January 2 at 9:03am](#)



Helene Finidori Yes indeed, *Jessie*. You contributed these requirements that could be complemented by listing the types of variables that could help operationalize a template in a repository. Answering questions such as what else could come into play? What could we be missing? There was a specific thread on this a while ago. Maybe we could continue?

[Like · Reply · January 2 at 10:07am · Edited](#)



Helene Finidori As far as plans are concerned, indeed, we will go back for a round of EU financing. We need to find a clever way to integrate group participation beyond the 'rigid' or by definition 'closed circle' consortium structures of EU projects. Methodology will be discussed, and driven, both outside in a flexible form and within this 'rigid' context of 'planned deliverables'.

The idea is to create the conditions for the emergence of an ecosystem. So **Jessie**, setting methodology for the 'handling' of the various states / dimensions of a pattern's lifecycle) will be an iterative, joint exploration process, with tools and methodologies produced as an output.

So the way we would go if we manage this time to pass is probably to provide in the proposal a system to convene people involved for this joint exploration, at various levels of application. And in this perspective, any work that has been done so far could be brought in.

What we will be looking at at the research/consortium level is how various disciplines / field actors deal with bringing about social change and how the various tools and methodologies can be bridged and be made complementary. The tools and methodologies to help do that can be multiple. They will be used and refined, iterated to progress PLAST, and constitute the deliverable as well.

Like · Reply · January 2 at 10:24am



Jessie Henshaw Sure, It would be good if there were a way to get people to work constructively. But I can't get people to work on the work pages. It's just wandering chat. I think getting people to try describing and using pattern descriptions, is the only way it'll progress. We seem to need people to use the three work pages I set up:

- 1) using & adding references to Pattern Methods
<https://www.facebook.com/notes/plast-pattern-languages-for-systemic-transformation/pattern-language-intro-reference-links/852460014871226>
- 2) contributing to ongoing Pattern Work
<https://docs.google.com/.../1uKxuNxe1D4gloCazTX58.../edit...>

Kohl said it nicely in his PhD "practice and theory are much more intertwined than we often realize" and I can't get anyone to work on the "practice". Of course one can't expect it to be led by new comers, but at least to dabble, and I think even that won't happen till there are some experienced hands working in an accumulative way on advancing and comparing the methods they have available.

So... to create an environment, a "research/consortium level [where] various disciplines / [fields of actors], deal with bringing about social change ", I think we need to change from chatting to

working, starting with experienced hands collaborating on advancing the pattern methods, in a way that draws in people from other disciplines.



Jessie Henshaw edited a doc in the group: [PLAST - Pattern Languages for Systemic Transformation](#).

December 11, 2015 ·

Pattern Language intro & Reference links

Resources and References (PLAST community links at bottom)

Current Pattern Work Pages

Presentations:

- 2015 Oct. Jessie & Helmut's brief pattern study of "HOME" see:
[href="http://www.synapse9.com/_PLref/PLAST-II/"](http://www.synapse9.com/_PLref/PLAST-II/)

Draft Pattern Pages:

- Pattern Work Page 12/23/15
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1uKxuNxe1D4gloCazTX58JE591DYfUdE9QICpt5i2V9s/edit#heading=h.2gazcsgmxkub>
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<https://plastcommunity.slack.com/messages/tools/stars/>



Kevin Jones Cards on 3D honeycombs by Jeremiah Owyang in sets then online and printable as PDFs

Like · Reply · January 2 at 11:03am



Jessie Henshaw Would you be able to add a proper reference to that, creating a "Pattern Styles and Methods" section for it on the group's "Pattern Language Info & References" page? Helmut & Helene you might look at what's there and add to it as well.

Like · Reply · January 2 at 1:08pm



Douglas Schuler Here's a link to the pdf of the card verbiage for the 136 Liberating Voices patterns. Translations welcome! <http://publicsphereproject.org/.../all-patterns-short...>

Like · Reply · 2 · January 2 at 9:48pm



Jessie Henshaw Douglas, I already have the long form pages, and added the short form to our references page. You might expand or add other useful links. I don't have a section on the

attempts to create general access pattern libraries/wiki's yet, or on Pattern Writing as a discipline... <https://www.facebook.com/notes/plast-pattern-languages-for-systemic-transformation/pattern-language-intro-reference-links/852460014871226>

It would also be great if you helped get the ball rolling by contributing to one of the other work pages now linked from top of the references file too.



Jessie Henshaw edited a doc in the group: PLAST - Pattern Languages for Systemic Transformation.

December 11, 2015 ·

Pattern Language intro & Reference links

Resources and References (PLAST community links at bottom)

Current Pattern Work Pages

Presentations:

- 2015 Oct. Jessie & Helmut's brief pattern study of "HOME" see: [href="http://www.synapse9.com/_PLref/PLAST-II/"](http://www.synapse9.com/_PLref/PLAST-II/)

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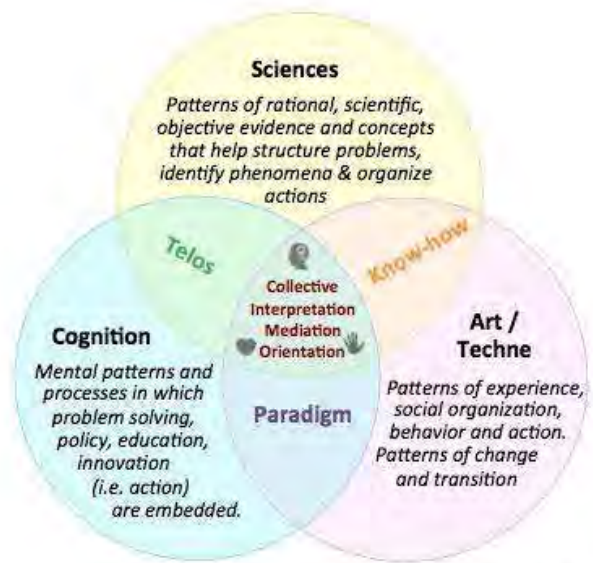
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Helene Finidori December 6, 2015
Connects Patterns of Knowledge, Practice and Cognition



Connecting patterns of knowledge, practice and cognition



Finidori - Dec 2015

LikeComment

Nicolas Stampf, David Braden and 14 others like this.

Comments



Douglas Schuler I like! Where would our Liberating Voices fit best? (in the middle? In Art / Techne?) www.publicsphereproject.org/patterns/lv

Patterns | Public Sphere Project

Civic Intelligence describes how well groups of people address civic ends through civic means. It asks the...

PUBLICSPHEREPROJECT.ORG

Like · Reply · 1 · December 6, 2015 at 4:18pm



Helene Finidori Hi Doug! I would say Art / Techné with a strong connection/overlap with the others, so wide presence in the center.

Like · Reply · December 7, 2015 at 5:38am



Jessie Henshaw It's a challenge to get people to coordinate their practices, especially as it seems to require coordinating professional paradigms. So if we can't find a practice of pattern description and application that people readily understood as "the ticket" and critical for all to learn and use to make collaborative work productive, we might face limitless communication problems I think...

Like · Reply · January 2 at 3:00pm



Helene Finidori Isn't that the goal of PLAST? To find a practice of pattern description and application linked to pattern lifecycle and multiple dimensions? A set of tools and methodologies to do so?

And I think there may be a potential contradiction here between the 'finding of a practice' in a joint exploration (meaning there is no 'ready response' and the important thing is the discovery journey), and the idea of something that is 'readily understood as the ticket, and critical for all to learn' implying something that is maybe 'discovered' at some stage, yes, but then imposed...

Wouldn't we, more than anything else, need exploration and interpretation cues?

Like · Reply · January 2 at 5:53pm · Edited



Jessie Henshaw Well yes of course. I was only adding the recognition that when people are still only talking about their separate approaches it scares anyone who would work collaboratively on a common language away... what happens when "blind seers" don't realize what they need to do to participate. It's been an enormous difficulty here, for example, to get anyone at all to contribute to Pattern Work, instead of engaging in free form chat, and that's a really a big problem.

Like · Reply · January 3 at 9:52am

Gerald Midgley December 22, 2015 at 11:35am
PhD Scholarships in the Centre for Systems Studies



6 PhD Scholarships in the Centre for Systems Studies, Hull University Business School!

The Centre for Systems Studies, based in the Business School at the University of Hull (UK), has a strong international reputation for its cutting edge work on the theory, methodology and practice of systems thinking. We have six scholarships for our Systems Science PhD program to offer to successful candidates wanting to start a PhD in September 2016, and the deadline for applications is 2...

[Continue Reading](#)

LikeComment

Comments



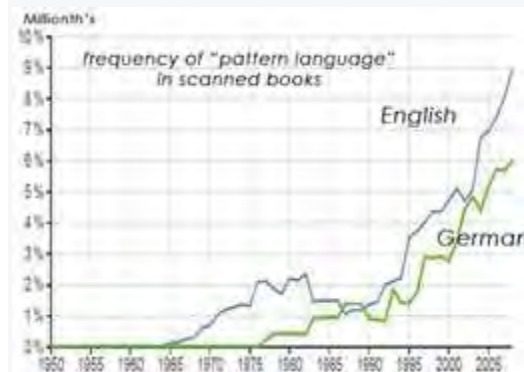
Jessie Henshaw Hello! **Gerald** - We chatted a bit by email a year of so ago. Nice to see you turn up here! I recall I was very tempted by your similar program announcements then. I'd still love to participate in your world in some way, like maybe on

some way to bring together the great currents of "action learning" and "pattern language" as two high level structured system design methods... with much too much in common to ignore.

I still recall some of your elegantly simple patterns of systems thinking for resolving in complex contexts. Being systematic in looking for just such patterns of unifying design is what pattern language seems to have been evolving toward. The figure illustrates the economic power of it, as a growing use of the term "pattern language" as it spread, first as a method for defining holistic design principles for architecture and then for software development. The curves show word frequency in books scanned by Google, as a "shape of emergence" that helped add to my recent new interest.

So that's what I turned to after my work at the UN (on the Post 2015 SDG's), and presenting my new papers in Krems, Austria for PURPLSOC and in Pittsburgh for PLoP. The way pattern language is spreading to other fields it might be considered a new common language of holistic design, and I found a way of applying it to documenting and working with naturally occurring holistic designs. That let me translate much of my prior work on recognizing natural system patterns of design. You can find them on my Academia.edusite, fyi.

<https://independent.academia.edu/JessieLydiaHenshaw>



Like · Reply · December 22, 2015 at 6:57pm



Gerald Midgley Thanks. Yes, I remember our discussions well. If you're still interested in doing a PhD part-time (on connecting across work in pattern language and systems thinking), and you can afford the fees, I would be happy to discuss opportunities.

Like · Reply · December 23, 2015 at 5:12am



Jessie Henshaw **Gerald**. If I had a sponsor that might be worth discussing. I was also thinking your program might have some seminar or colloquium on research and application methods that I could contribute to. I'm really most looking at this point for ways to leave a better record of my very substantial accumulated work.

Like · Reply · December 23, 2015 at 7:55am



Gerald Midgley Sponsorship for a PhD is possible at this end, as I have just received permission to advertise 4 open competition scholarships at Hull - in addition to the ones with topics already attached. These new ones will be £3,000 larger too. If this is of no interest, we do also have a seminar series for visitors to contribute to, but paying people to come from overseas is a problem - we only have enough money to cover UK travel.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · December 23, 2015 at 9:42am



Chad Thomas Green Gerald, how about setting up something akin to the Macy conferences (as attractor) to (a) recruit possible candidates for your program, (b) seek solidarity among the fragmented ST research communities (via [Derek's DSRP?](#)), and (c) expedite the sharing of preliminary findings across our ST networks? Our wicked problems are exponential in nature. To meet these challenges head on, we should develop rapid response studies and, at the same time, transform any systemic structures that hold up the speed of progress (i.e., mind-plus-environment solutions).

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · December 27, 2015 at 4:08pm · Edited



Gerald Midgley Very good idea. It's too late for the set of systems thinking scholarships, as the research projects they are connected to have already been formed, but really good thinking for the future. I have tagged [Derek Cabrera](#) for his reaction. Incidentally, the open competition scholarships cannot be linked to an initiative like this because Systems is only one of nine disciplines in the pot for them. I reckon a Macy-style conference in connection with the broader set of initiatives we're planning though will be a good idea.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · December 28, 2015 at 6:53am · Edited



Derek Cabrera I think a convening (Macy-style conference) is a great idea. We are putting together a Cornell University conference on systems thinking in November of 2016. Tentatively, we are working with a dual theme designed to split and lump (splump) two often split but rarely lumped concepts: "A Splumpers Conference: Universality and Pluralism in Theory and Practice." If you have ideas for seminal folks who should be invited let me know by email or messenger. It's time for ST to reconcile the imbalances in our thinking.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 2 · December 28, 2015 at 8:28am



Gerald Midgley [Derek Cabrera](#) Sounds a great idea! We should talk about possible invitees perhaps. Not sure of using the word 'splumpers' in the title, but the sub-title is very appealing.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 2 · December 28, 2015 at 8:31am



Chad Thomas Green I made the suggestion initially out of self-interest however in hindsight I now see that it will serve a higher purpose.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · December 31, 2015 at 2:41pm



Chad Thomas Green "The world is inseparable from the subject, but from a subject which is nothing but a project of the world, and the subject is inseparable from the world, but from a world which the subject itself projects." - Maurice Merleau-Ponty (Phenomenology of Perception)

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · December 31, 2015 at 2:45pm



Gerald Midgley If you like this quotation from Merleau-Ponty, you'll also like the trilogy of papers on systems philosophy by Ramses Fuenmayor in a 1991 special issue of 'Systems Practice'. These papers argue for a systemic 'onto-epistemology' based on this very paradox. These are really important papers, in my view, that have not received the attention they deserve. However, I argue in some of my own work (my 'Systemic Intervention' book from 2000) that the subject-world in paradoxical relationship is insufficient because there is a third participant - language. Thus, the world, language and subjects can all be seen as producing one another. Ultimately, however, there is only a paradox when we divorce these ideas from the context of action. It is within the flow of action that we ascribe the meaning of phenomena to either the world (a judgement of truth), ourselves as observing participants (a judgement of subjective construction) or that which is given in the medium of meaning production (a judgement of social construction using language). It is a mistake to generalize to all encompassing philosophical positions: realism (the world is prime), idealism (the subject is prime) or social constructionism (language is prime). These only *appear* prime, and even acceptance of all three together to create a three-way paradox is problematic. Once we say, instead, that we should treat ascriptions of truth, subjectivity and social construction merely as moments in inquiry, embedded in the flow of action, we can step away from all foundational philosophies and paradoxes like the above. This raises the possibility of a completely different approach to systems philosophy, where we understand both ourselves and the world as meaningful in multiple ways, not only *within* the flow of action, but the multiplicity of meanings actually *expands* the possibilities for action too. No space for more detail, but see Chapters 3 and 4 of 'Systemic Intervention' if you're interested.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 2 · December 31, 2015 at 3:13pm



Chad Thomas Green "If the for-itself, the revelation of self to self, is merely the hollow in which time is formed, and if the world 'in-itself' is simply the horizon of my present, then the problem is reduced to the form: How is it that a being which is still to come, and has passed by, also has a present—which means that the problem is eliminated, since the future, the past, and the present are linked together in the movement of temporalization." - Maurice Merleau-Ponty (Phenomenology of Perception)

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · December 31, 2015 at 11:06pm



Chad Thomas Green Thanks [Gerald](#). I'll take a look at what I can find online. Re: Merleau-Ponty's "subject as time" and [Derek's DSRP](#), my takeaway would be: Seize the P!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 1 at 1:44pm · Edited

 **Helene Finidori** Macy-style conference (I had to look the term up) is also the type of thing we were thinking of for PLAST.
 Like · Reply · 1 · January 2 at 11:34am


 **Chad Thomas**
Green Context:https://www.academia.edu/.../System_Scientists_call_to...



System Scientists call to action -- Governing in the Anthropocene

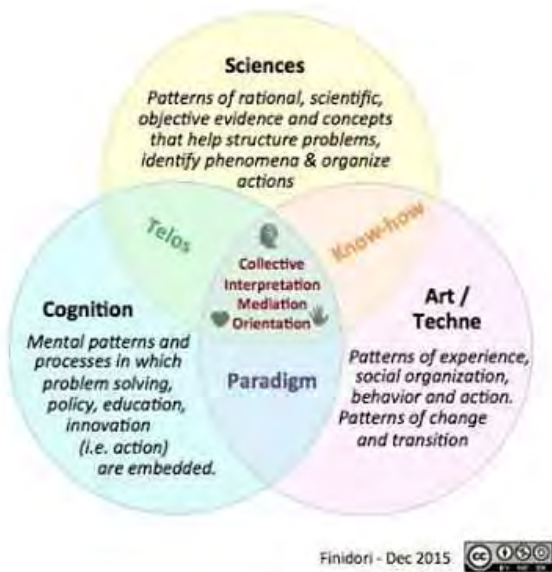
ACADEMIA.EDU

Like · Reply · December 27, 2015 at 4:21pm

 **Helene Finidori** Nice to find you in this group **Gerald**, and **Derek** too. I saw your post in the ST groups. Nice to see it here. We are trying with PLAST to build bridges between Systems Thinking, Design Thinking and Pattern Languages, and bridging the different approaches to social and systemic change along several dimensions. This is one:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10153407541218860&set=gm.849971048453456&type=1&theater>


I am considering a PhD related to the PLAST project... looking for a home for that...



Helene Finidori [to](#) **PLAST - Pattern Languages for Systemic Transformation**
 December 6, 2015 ·

Connecting patterns of knowledge, practice and cognition

Like · Reply · 1 · January 2 at 11:30am

 **Gerald Midgley** I would be interested in seeing a research proposal, if you want to private message me with it.
 Like · Reply · 1 · January 2 at 7:56pm

Nicolas Stampf December 21, 2015 at 10:09am
The Patterns that connect to breed emergence





What are the **#patterns** you see at play which allow people to **#connect** one to another and breed **#emergence** as a result?
 Like · Comment


Dmitry Sokolov and **Mark Dilley** like this.


Comments
 50 of 99
[View previous comments](#)

 **Dmitry Sokolov** **Nicolas Stampf**, how would you like to name this later topic we just discussed? smile emoticon
 Like · Reply · December 22, 2015 at 7:44am

 **Nicolas Stampf** Yes, because, as you said it is the "absolutely required element", I wanted to find when and WHAT causes that "building upon one another's contribution", in order to be able to deliberately spark it.
 Like · Reply · 1 · December 22, 2015 at 7:44am

 **Nicolas Stampf** it's already named after the question I asked at the beginning. It just sad that online interactions are not as efficient as physical ones.
 Like · Reply · December 22, 2015 at 7:45am

 **Nicolas Stampf** like delays in feedback loops, the output sometimes wanders far from the equilibrium and we have to correct later, with another delay... whereas it's quicker with less ample variations when interacting in physical presence...
 Like · Reply · December 22, 2015 at 7:46am

 **Dmitry Sokolov** That's not a big problem. There are tools freely available to real-time communication. Physical presence is still ideal. It may be difficult to translate specific atmosphere of different places, for example. However, the advantage of IVAN is in it's ability to work with highly fragmented resources: time, location, etc:
<http://confocal-manawatu.pbworks.com/.../Fragmentation...>

LikeInMind / Fragmentation Barriers to Self-Organising Projects

CONFOCAL-MANAWATU.PBWORKS.COM

Like · Reply · 1 · December 22, 2015 at 7:51am



Dmitry Sokolov Indeed, the most efficient knowledge transfer involves physical presence and one-to-one communication. My favourite method is "shadowing-reverse shadowing" which is best suited for expert - learner situation, to my understanding. In any case, there must be cohesion not only between equally qualified participants. Cohesion is critical especially for the interdisciplinary research and projects, like our, for example. smile emoticon

Like · Reply · 2 · December 22, 2015 at 7:58am



Dmitry Sokolov Another advantage of IVAN is it's comprehension and findability. The huge advantage of the physical presence is it's spontaneousness of the group work. I am not sure how it happens but it really works! Ideas are literally floating in the air. smile emoticon

Like · Reply · 1 · December 22, 2015 at 8:02am



Dmitry Sokolov "WHAT causes that "building upon one another's contribution", in order to be able to deliberately spark it."

It's trust, cohesion and ability to give what is required/asked, mutual support even at the expense of your own interests.

Like · Reply · 2 · December 22, 2015 at 8:13am



Dmitry Sokolov <http://confocal-manawatu.pbworks.com/.../PLAST%3A%20When...>



LikeInMind / PLAST: When Connection Occurs

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Like · Reply · 1 · December 22, 2015 at 8:15am



Nicolas Stampf eh:)See Translation

Like · Reply · December 22, 2015 at 8:37am



Dmitry Sokolov something wrong?

18-Jan-16

Like · Reply · December 22, 2015 at 8:39am



Nicolas Stampf no. just happily surprised our conversation's already wikifiedsmile emoticon

Like · Reply · 1 · December 22, 2015 at 8:44am



Nicolas Stampf Esteban: I think I agree with your content. I said I think because there's a lot of content. My only disagreement is that I don't think we can transfer knowledge, only send information. Whether the person at the other end point of communication builds the same knowledge as you in her head, you can never be sure.

Which brings me to my usual conclusion of being a radical constructivist (all I'm sure of is what's in my brain, but I can't be sure it's a correct representation of reality for this one is forever inaccessible to me. Only partly through my limited senses. This relates to Alfred Korzybski as well: general semantics). I also accept the social constructionist stance where reality is IN the conversation, BETWEEN people.

Very interesting stuff but we haven't advanced much on what patterns help connect and elicit emergence smile emoticon

Like · Reply · December 22, 2015 at 11:20am · Edited



Nicolas Stampf In fact I was on my phone and it wrongly changed person to prison. I corrected it but thought the coincidence to be interesting. Glad you noticed it too smile emoticon

As for being RC, it just that I find the rationale being it convincing. Everything is possibly wrong, including the RC belief!

Like · Reply · December 22, 2015 at 2:20pm



Helmut Leitner Nicolas, from the view of a constructivist, patterns have a lot offer, because everything designed appears as contingent artifacts, and this of course includes the pattern abstractions themselves. In fact, you can find this in the card stack, the attitude card "A4 Artifacts!", which means that we should become aware, to which high extent the created world, most of human culture, is not necessarily the way it is, but has developed in a field of contingencies, which means that the current reality could be quite different, had history take one of millions other possible courses. This also means, we can change these patterns. To see changeability is an necessary basis for the acts of designing.

Even ideas that seem probably inevitable for normal people, like PRIVATE PROPERTY, appear in pattern thinking as constructions that exist because people intended to solve a

problem, or they developed unintentionally by historic trial and error and were kept. Physical nature doesn't enforce such ideas, but only allows them.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 2 · December 25, 2015 at 3:40am · Edited



Nicolas Stampf A4 card artifact? Sorry I'm lost...

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · December 23, 2015 at 4:32pm



Helmut Leitner Nicolas, I posted recently in this thread the link to the "64 Concepts of Pattern Theory" card stack. The cards have IDs: B1..B12, S1..S16, P1..P12, D1..D13, A1..A11. So there is a card A4, should be about page 57 of the pdf. The title of this card is "Artifacts!". It is in group A (design Attitudes), therefore I wrote "attitude card".

https://www.dropbox.com/.../AlexandrianEn_Vs70_rounded...



AlexandrianEn_Vs70_rounded.pdf

Shared with Dropbox

DROPBOX.COM

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · December 23, 2015 at 5:04pm · Edited



Dmitry Sokolov Esteban, thank you for your comments. I will summarise them for better visibility:

- every statement in the language can be either proved or disproved
- any formal system that is interesting enough to formulate its own consistency can prove its own consistency if it is inconsistent

... compared to the Incompleteness Theorem highlighted here:

<http://confocal-manawatu.pbworks.com/.../Incompleteness...>

- complete and consistent set of axioms for all mathematics is impossible,
- no consistent system of axioms is capable of proving all truths. There will always be statements about the natural numbers that are true, but that are unprovable within the system. Such a system cannot demonstrate its own consistency

Sorry, I cannot see how your statements correspond to the Theorem.

Sorry again, I am not able to comment your "True-Wrong" writing about for the reason proposed by the Systems-Thought-Acting Methodology: co-emergence of ideas (mental images), concepts (words) and experience (practice). That can also be seen here:

<http://confocal-manawatu.pbworks.com/.../Objects%20...>

What is true for one situation can be wrong for another. Every case must be considered individually. No judgement can be done a priori. Discussion of abstract ideas and theorising without practical application is destructive.

"KN actually resides within individuals". You probably refer to memory that helps us being "energy efficient" by following behavioural patterns remembered as working at similar situations in past. Our brain has another interesting feature: it must be flexible enough to reflect the dynamic nature of the World. "Like is known by like."

And here we come to the interesting observation: memory is also a dynamic process. No event or image can be restored from memory identically.

We come here to idea that what we have is an associative network between mental images, concepts, etc. "surrounded" by chaotic flow of signals from our sensory system, flow of mental images and constructs, either "random" or related to what is built from the sensory signals. The links between mental "objects" are either being reinforced, or "degraded" to "correspond" to the "current" World View of the individual. Memory and cognition (and knowledge as the result) are dynamic processes, not things that can be "stored" or "transferred". "Knowledge transfer" can be seen only as an act of co-experience of the subject of studies. Knowledge managers are still trying to come to the definition of knowledge. Many of them use knowledge and information interchangeably. So do I.

The terms I used to work are:

- associative networks residing in our minds, roughly correspond to the "Ideas", above
- knowledge networks connect relevant concepts ("Signs") "extracted" from our minds and fixed in space and time in the form of words. Other kinds of signs include images, sounds and "movement" corresponding to visual, auditory and kinaesthetic "channels" of perception and representation of information. LikelnMind is one of the working examples of the knowledge networks.

Associative networks require constant flow of activities, mostly synchronous, for their support and development. Only current, actual and relevant information is being "stored" and "transferred" through time.

Knowledge networks require participation, either synchronous, or asynchronous, for it's development. However, it "keeps" "temporal layers" of understanding for each given moment of time. Similarly to books and other media, KN is a "permanent" memory for each given moment of time. However, it is also dynamic due to the ongoing contribution of participants. Many terms here are surrounded by the quotation marks. That's only because I am not sure how well those used words transfer the ideas. I can only hope that the sense I observe "in my head" will resonate with your experience, with your associative networks.

According the the Incompleteness Theorem, my point of view on the problem is neither "right", nor "wrong". It just may belong to a cluster of similar points of view by other individuals. Your point of view can be different. Which of those points of view are

applicable to every particular situation can be verified only by experiment. At planning the experiment, we may refer to the set of similar experiments and use their results as our expectation.

LikeInMind / Incompleteness Theorem

Gödel's incompleteness theorems are two theorems of mathematical logic that establish inherent limitations of all but the most trivial axiomatic systems capable of doing arithmetic. The theorems, proven by Kurt Gödel in 1931, are important both in mathematical logic and in the philosophy of mathematics...

CONFOCAL-MANAWATU.PBWORKS.COM

Like · Reply · December 24, 2015 at 12:25am



Dmitry Sokolov Esteban, thank you for your agreement to try working in KN format.

Here is the "Knowledge Transfer" node: <http://confocal-manawatu.pbworks.com/.../Knowledge...>

I would appreciate your experience added as a network of your original topics. The existing topics are open for editing/modifying. However, registration with PBWorks is required: <http://confocal-manawatu.pbworks.com/.../Registration...>

Please use Topic Search for direct access to specific topics and Full Text Search bar for conventional search by keywords: <http://confocal-manawatu.pbworks.com/.../LikeInMind...>

Thank you.

LikeInMind / Knowledge Transfer

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Like · Reply · December 24, 2015 at 1:40am



Dmitry Sokolov Esteban, "idea that phenomenon CAN be described completely by self-confirming axiom may well be a better approach..." - probably! However, our discussion would not be possible if your axiom is true. What we are trying to do is to consider a problem and create its model adequate to its application. BTW, what would be the application to this axiom? My experience of working in KN format shows presence of conflicting and sometimes contradicting data and opinions. I am looking forward to sharing my experience and eliminate the subject of this particular topic by systematically including all emerging points of view.

Like · Reply · December 24, 2015 at 1:47am



Dmitry Sokolov Esteban Trev, thank you for the detailed explanation of your point of view. There is one problem: STA Methodology makes no conclusions a priori, without consideration of a particular case. So do I.

Our points of view are recorded here: <http://confocal-manawatu.pbworks.com/.../Existence%20of...>

"There are two opinions exists on this point, presented by Dmitry Sokolov and Esteban Trev that illustrate the fact that complete

description of object or process is impossible without conflicting, or contradictory statements (Incompleteness Theorem). According to STA Methodology principles, selection of either of suggested models, or generation of a new, more adequate model, is to be defined by a problem solver during his process of Thinking-Acting."

LikeInMind / Existence of Identical Copies of Objects, Signs and Ideas

There are two opinions exists on this point, presented by Dmitry Sokolov and Esteban Trev that illustrate the fact that complete description of object or process is impossible without conflicting, or contradictory statements (Incompleteness Theorem).

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Like · Reply · December 25, 2015 at 3:37am



Dmitry Sokolov Esteban Trev, I believe, we are talking about similar things. It's just a conceptual mismatch that will be probably eliminated with time.

"I would be worried if someone told me that I was right..."

You do not have to worry. Some people may have a broad understanding and vision of a problem/situation. From their point of view, a number of contradictory points of view could be right, only because they represent different projects of the same "thing":

<http://confocal-manawatu.pbworks.com/.../True%20vs%20Truth>



LikeInMind / True vs Truth

I used to define the truth as The Truth perceived. The image is a great illustration of multiple perceptions...

CONFOCAL-MANAWATU.PBWORKS.COM

Like · Reply · December 25, 2015 at 3:50am



Dmitry Sokolov Esteban, I accidentally commented on your post addressed to other person and then deleted as irrelevant. Sorry for that.

"statements do not make sense", "we make sense of statements" - like discussions are fruitless because they are aiming not understanding of the meaning of the message but "finding the truth".

The communication skill (which is not only ability of translation of knowledge but also the ability of understanding its meaning) is better developed at practical work. I am developing a Skill Matcher project as well as the Knowledge Network where all relevant information is collected for exchange and reuse. Would you be interested in participating? In which role?

The list of vacancies is here:

<http://confocal-manawatu.pbworks.com/.../Skill%20Matcher...>

LikeInMind / Skill Matcher Vacancies

CONFOCAL-MANAWATU.PBWORKS.COM

Like · Reply · December 25, 2015 at 1:01pm



Dmitry Sokolov Hi Esteban, you probably mean following illustrated by the image:

<http://confocal-manawatu.pbworks.com/.../Objects%20...>

LikeInMind / Objects - Signs - Ideas

We would like to introduce some ideas, derived from the philosophy or the way of thinking that is usually called 'Pragmatism', that we think can help to address these issues in an integrated way. In a pragmatic perspective, the theory of knowledge, or epistemology, is incorporated within a generativ...

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Like · Reply · December 25, 2015 at 8:11pm



Helmut Leitner Esteban, I agree with you, that our discussion would become unmanageable for us, if we would start to include larger bodies of external content. Let's stay within the confinements of our thoughts and arguments.

My reference to Buddhist logic was not intended to include a certain logic into the discussion, but rather to show that LOGIC is not something singular, the one-and-only binary logic (or Aristotelian logic) but that there can be quite different kinds of logic, Buddhist 4-way logic just being one example. I add another example, modal logic as introduced by Saul Kripke, which deals with the thinkable, the possible and the necessary.

So, the point is that we may agree that LOGIC exists, as something we need, that we can observe in the world, that fills a purpose – a problem-solution-pattern we could say. But, looking deeper, we might extend that structure of explanation, governed by the idea that if there is a solution to a problem, this rather indicated than excludes that there may be alternatives to a problem-solution. If we suspect that, we may extend the singleton structure

LOGIC

to an open set structure

LOGIC = { ARISTOTELIAN LOGIC, BUDDHIST LOGIC, MODAL LOGIC, ... }

and understand that any pattern given or suggested, hints at the possible existence of other alternative patterns. So, this is one operation of PATTERN LOGIC, to "take into account the possibilities of alternatives, and to think about and search for them actively" (in short ALTERNATIVES). There are about a dozen operations of pattern logic. I just give examples, useful in the following: for a problem-solution patterns it must be possible

to give EXAMPLES. When we see the solution of a problem as the main effect of a pattern, alternative effects must be taken into account, say SIDE-EFFECTS. Having effect and side-effects, we have any pattern connected to a PRO-AND-CON thinking, that can only be resolved in the CONCRETE SITUATION (example: morphine may be a terrible drug banned by law, but with a cancer patient near death it may be the only helpful medicine).

Returning to your main topic of the last posting, the question of whether good and bad are two sides of a coin or not, I can try to apply pattern thinking.

This means to identify a recurring pattern of thinking, let's say "good and bad as two inseparable sides of a coin", in short maybe name it GOOD-BAD-DUALITY. (even in naming patterns we have ALTERNATIVES, referring to something is the problem; to give a name is the solution; we can name this pattern NAME).

If we identify this as a pattern that people use, we may use modal logic and ask whether it is possible to use this GOOD-BAD-DUALITY pattern, and we may ask whether it is necessary to use the GOOD-BAD-DUALITY pattern. With pattern thinking or logic, I would forward your concept of GOOD-WITHOUT-BAD as an alternative model of thinking about this. We could now give examples for your preferred model, which shouldn't be difficult. We could then look at the pro-and-cons of these patterns, and all the aspects of rationality behind them.

My personal model of the good is that it represents group interest, disguised as something absolute. So I would throw such a model, let's say the GROUP RELATIVE GOOD, into the discussion. This would have the advantage (pro), that it's easy to explain why different groups argue that different things "are good", and why there is a tendency to claim the authority to define what good and bad may be (because this serves their interest).

Like · Reply · December 30, 2015 at 3:00am · Edited



Helmut Leitner Esteban, please complete your thoughts related to the question "good and bad", because even if my posting was lengthy, my point was to react to your putting forward of this question, which seemed your main point of the previous posting.

Like · Reply · December 30, 2015 at 3:13pm · Edited



Helmut Leitner Esteban, when I named your position GOOD-WITHOUT-BAD I was well aware that you probably wouldn't accept this name (I see changing this name, finding a better one, as a routine act).

But a name is better than no name, and at least I showed respect for your position and did not turn it down immediately. Would you name your position GOOD (without any qualification), you would immediately create much more problems for yourself, because you assume the authority to re(de)fine a concept that everyone has and uses, and that is covered by many world views in many

different ways. In the end no useful name is given, and discussion partners may end in having an implicate ESTEBAN'S IDEA OF GOOD in their mind, which is the worst thing that can happen.

It is generally not a practical idea, to use everyday words for theoretical concepts, at least if one lacks definiton power, because this leads into endloss debates and misunderstanding. Even the use of the word "pattern" in the pattern movement is an example for this. Words become battle-fields, and everyone defends his own habitual use.

The way to go is to open a space for alternatives: GOOD = { GOOD-BAD-DUALITY, CHRISTIAN GOOD; KANT'S IDEA OF GOOD, UTILISTIC GOOD; ... } and when the discussion about alternatives is established, any model can be promoted and discussed for its merits and deficiencies, together with the ideas or methods that may allow such judgements.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · January 2 at 7:26am · Edited

[Write a comment...](#)

Jessie Henshaw December 22, 2015 at 7:22pm
PATTERN WORK Healing Troubled Community



Another PATTERN WORK idea we might mull over and experiment with.

I was thinking of how to bring together our vision and our situation, standing as we are at the threshold, hesitating as we think about taking on enormous challenges, uncertain how to proceed but drawn by the felt urgency to "do something" shared truly around the world at the moment. We still lack a way to clearly state what kind of problems we and our world face, how to keep them separate, now to put them together. The image is fairly self-explanatory, and fairly incomplete. I insert the text here too, in case that's useful as a place to start too.

DESIGN PATTERN NAME
Healing Troubled Community
IMAGE - [The angel of grief]
CONTEXT, PROBLEM

- Anywhere communities adopt paths of change that becomes alien to their surroundings and neighbors, all becoming desperate for relief.
- Where "the situation becomes fluid".
- Where "cooperation is breaking up".
- FORCES
- Designs as bridges between serving and served parts of their environments.
- Dependency of some things of the outmoded designs of other things.
- Our ability to acknowledge core obligations, the worth and needs of others.
- Time can only move forward.
- DESIGN, SOLUTION
- Sliding the right pieces of the puzzle to nature's side of

18-Jan-16

the table, tempting her superb way of putting things together. •

ACTIONS & RESULTS

- Read what nature is calling out for.
- Know the world so well hidden resources jump out to ask to be used.
- SUBJECT
- Systemic Transformations
- Related Subjects
- Communication•

LikeComment

[Helmut Leitner](#), [David Braden](#) and [Chad Thomas Green](#) like this.

Comments



Helmut Leitner Jessie, I see this pattern strongly related to one of Christopher Alexander's process principles, HEALING STEP, which I have put into the "64 Concepts of Pattern Theory" card stack. The existence of this principle emphasizes this PATTERN CANDIDATE (usually we start with something that undergoes many iterations) and offers some general thoughts to apply.

64 Concepts of Pattern

Theory:https://www.dropbox.com/.../AlexandrianEn_Vs70_round ed...

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · December 23, 2015 at 3:56am · Edited



Helmut Leitner But, on the other hand, it is not entirely clear to me whether this is a pattern, or whether the pattern is clear. Most pattern research communities, like for example the software pattern community require a minimum of three application examples for a pattern, showing how a suggested solution to a problem works, before a pattern candidate is accepted as a pattern. So these questions are unavoidable: What exactly means HEALING TROUBLED COMMUNITY? What is the solution part of the pattern? Which examples give evidence that we have found something reusable? (but it may be too early in the inquiry process to push these issues forward; an important pattern of dialogue/Isaacs/NVC is DEFER JUDGEMENT)

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · December 23, 2015 at 4:11am · Edited




Jessie Henshaw Yes, that's my strategy, to leave out some of those essentials, hoping to start us on a process of collaborative work on them.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · December 23, 2015 at 9:58am



Jessie Henshaw You might add compact notes in the pattern workspace on this.<https://docs.google.com/.../1uKXuNxe1D4gloCazTX58.../edit>.

..

<p>Design Pattern Name Healing Troubled Community</p>	<p>Context, Problem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anywhere communities adopt paths of change that becomes alien to their surroundings and neighbors, all becoming desperate for relief. Where "the situation becomes fluid" or "cooperation is breaking up"
<p>Image</p>  <p>The angel of grief</p>	<p>Forces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designs as bridges between serving and served parts of their environments Dependency of some things of the outmoded designs of other things Our ability to acknowledge core obligations, the worth and needs of others Time can only move forward <p><i>WHAT MIGHT YOU ADD?</i></p>
<p>Subject</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systemic Transformations <p><i>WHAT MIGHT YOU ADD?</i></p>	<p>Design, Solution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sliding the right pieces of the puzzle to nature's side of the table, tempting her superb way of putting things together <p><i>WHAT MIGHT YOU ADD?</i></p>
<p>Related Subjects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication 	<p>Actions & Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read what nature is calling out for Know the world so well the hidden resources jump out to ask to be used <p><i>WHAT MIGHT YOU ADD?</i></p>



David Braden "the software pattern community require a minimum of three application examples for a pattern, showing how a suggested solution to a problem works"

I can see how this requirement can apply in the context of something like designing software. I also like the cards. In the case of solutions to poverty and environmental degradation (healing troubled community) the whole on which we focus contains all the interactions (relationships) within a space. The system has no defined boundaries because, no matter how big we draw the boundary, the things outside still affect the things inside.

I would change the context/problem:

"Anywhere communities adopt paths of change that becomes alien to their surroundings and neighbors, all becoming desperate for relief."

to reflect that the "community" of our focus consists of all the living things in a locality.

Like · Reply · December 23, 2015 at 9:47am



Jessie Henshaw David, part of the task though, is given a need to examine those differences, is how to proceed to complete a design. Here the generality of the pattern idea may well require defining some boundaries for it, for example, on the way to combining the insights of expert observers to make something useful.

Why not try to add compact and statements on these issues of "context and problem" to the template, and footnote any resources or brief discussion on how to respond to them in a section below the table. <https://docs.google.com/.../1uKxuNxe1D4gloCazTX58.../ed it...>

The author and contributors to this discussion believe I began intentionally incomplete. To build a case of "the good" about the same thing, and are not obligated to do this should challenge to overcome the "beginning" of thinking long!

Project proposal

Healing Troubled Community begun 12/24/15 Subject A design pattern for "the growing..."

DOCS.GOOGLE.COM

Like · Reply · Remove Preview · December 23, 2015 at 10:02am



Write a reply...

Helmut Leitner Note that William Isaacs, in his excellent book "Dialogue. and the Art of Thinking Together" notes that a dialogue to yield results needs four fundamental positions/patterns held by the participants in one way or other: he names them MOVE (to put forward some idea), OPPOSE, SUPPORT, and STAND-BY (a neutral, observing and commenting perspective). These role can be held by certain persons, but in principle one persons can also switch between the roles.

Like · Reply · December 23, 2015 at 4:51am · Edited



Jessie Henshaw That is curiously "missing things" isn't it? The usual "action learning" process is like a design studio process, where "work" is followed by multifaceted "critique" in preparation for the next stage of "work". In a week I'll have a copy and can look.

Like · Reply · December 23, 2015 at 10:07am

subjects" field. I tried to import it to the PLAST Files directory, but it can't open within
 FB.<https://docs.google.com/.../1uKxuNxe1D4gloCazTX58.../edit..>

Perhaps you could look it over and see if there's anything you might add at present. ...No rush. Lets just feel out whether this can be a practical way to do group PATTERN WORK. The work plan here is to add compact statements and footnotes for them in the table of properties, and add discussion sections to raise questions or to amplify on them.

What I'm testing is whether presenting incomplete but provocative pattern idea can motivate people to contribute, and offer their own original thinking, working constructively toward completing the pattern.

This feature and other comments to the main discussion boards began spontaneously. To build a sense of the about their critical observations from all sides, offering more than a search to find things, and not just responses to the above challenge to examine the "open disease" of thinking (or?)

to, and need to respond to the whole circumstance. In order to their needs to be responded to, you may find the same to be a and then find a way to adapt it with a bit of great intention to the community, generally, not necessarily to the complete, whole than the other parts. (Don't get the benefits in reading another comments and discussion about the name, initials and so forth to your related work.

Project proposal

Healing Troubled Community begun 12/24/15 Subject A design pattern for "the growing troubles" of our local...

DOCS.GOOGLE.COM

Like · Reply · Remove Preview · December 23, 2015 at 9:55am

Hide 11 Replies



Helmut Leitner Jessie, thank YOU for this initiative. I think it very necessary for the PLAST community to experience being productive together. Such project may be the key to it.

Like · Reply · December 24, 2015 at 6:37am



Jessie Henshaw Thanks! Yes but we don't want the work pages to just get overwhelmed with conversation. I'm wondering, would a comment on the work page such as the following help the newbies understand what PL is for?

[I think the key to understanding why designers use Alexander's form of "pattern language" is that it strongly orients you working with real things in the real world, in all their complexity, using a standard format to keep things straight and set the stage. At becomes a way of being explicit about the requirements for providing holistic "services" in real life circumstances, using a structured language to keep straight what is being talked about.]

[So the "patterns" developed amount to "ideal principles of design" to use where someone has identified some "ideal opportunity" for it, Those are generally discovered as recurrent patterns frequently found in diverse real circumstances. A simplistic example would be "when you have a 'nail'" then "you might use a hammer". A more advanced pattern concept would be "everything needs a home" and "is that what your loose parts

need?"]

[The "design pattern" is the match between the ideal circumstance and an ideal way of responding to it. So they're intended as guides to what a given recurrent complex circumstance might ideally call for.]

Like · Reply · December 24, 2015 at 8:42am



Helmut Leitner Jessie, FB is conversation. That's the price we have to pay for low barrier social media.

The only way I see, to counter the disadvantages of conversations, is what **Dmitry Sokolov** shows with his separate information system (wiki), where he collects the bits of information which are interesting to him, using a formalism that fits his thinking. I have done and supported similar dual systems many times.

I think that different people need different "right words" to become interested or motivated to look into the new pattern method. Any of your examples may work with some people, and not work with others.

Like · Reply · 1 · December 25, 2015 at 3:43am · Edited



Jessie Henshaw Oh, yes, my spending so much time trying to do something essentially "unnatural" with FB depends on attracting people interested in working together and able to distinguish it from chat. It really is unnatural for FB I guess. If we wanted to use it for work, we wouldn't spend the time chatting, though, but get some work done.

Like · Reply · 1 · December 24, 2015 at 10:54am



Dmitry Sokolov Dear **Helmut Leitner**, thank you for your kind words!

Currently, knowledge arrangement at LikeInMind is mostly "using a formalism that fits his (**Dmitry Sokolov's**) thinking". However, the methodology of non-conflicting publishing is already in place:<http://confocal-manawatu.pbworks.com/.../Concept%20of...> All and every contribution to LikeInMind from any participant is registered, found in seconds for immediate reuse.

The P2P Knowledge Sharing platform/software will contain features of advanced filtering of knowledge based on personal preferences:

- My (Personal) Knowledge First
- My Field of Knowledge First (knowledge rated by "liking" of experts in this particular field)
- Most Common Knowledge First,
- and other features: <http://confocal-manawatu.pbworks.com/w/page/16346998/AIMS>

LikeInMind / Concept of Lossless Participation

Following the Agile Principles and applying the best practices of Wiki Surveys, even minor contribution to development of

projects/activities should be appreciated (Copyright Protection), accepted and registered for future (re-)use.

CONFOCAL-MANAWATU.PBWORKS.COM

Like · Reply · December 25, 2015 at 2:20am



Dmitry Sokolov Jessie Henshaw, what Helmut Leitner says ("I think that different people need different "right words" to become interested or motivated to look into the new pattern method. Any of your examples may work with some people, and not work with others.")

I read as a support of your and our activity to disseminate the knowledge (PLAST method in our case). In Knowledge Management, KM platform maturity is defined by abundance of links either referring to the sources of information, or directed to the collaboration spaces like the spreadsheets you are developing, thank you for your work!

- FB is good for Knowledge Dissemination and Generation / Collection of New Knowledge and Ideas, for "recruiting" those who is willing to collaborate.

- The actual collaboration (Knowledge Generation, Accumulation and Processing) should be done somewhere else.

Both Knowledge Dissemination and Collaboration are vital for a project.

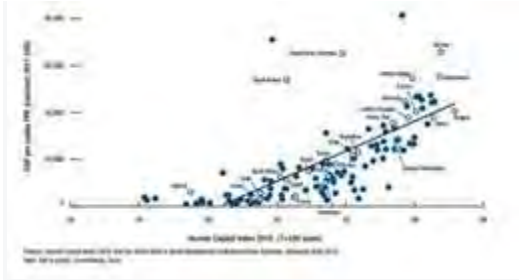
Like · Reply · December 25, 2015 at 2:30am



Jessie Henshaw Dmitry, Helmut, The apparent premise held throughout the world community of social transformation organizations is that change can be brought about by people working together in social networks. I don't find that happening, though. It seems the "room full of blind seers" problem (a.k.a. "six blind men and the elephant") seems to confound every effort. People end up being unable to work together, or even engage in "constructive work" at all. I had a 25 year career working as an architect, and loved the refined group collaboration efforts that designers use, but they only work when there's something to work on, and in social groups it seems always to be to work on one or another person's picture of the elephant.

So that's what I'm trying to find a way around, either to understand the problem or find something that people would agree to work on together.

A hilarious example turned up on Twitter today, in the form of a global study of "human capital" by the World Economic Forum. They, curiously, seem particularly pleased with having proven so conclusively that organizing the best and brightest of mankind to consume the earth at ever faster is the most *intelligent* thing to do!! wink emoticon The nations with the highest human capital potential, basically "IQ", do indeed strongly tend to be those with largest and fastest growing GDP per capita, what consumes the earth. (see figure 14 in the 2015 report <http://reports.weforum.org/human.../the-human-capital-index/>)



Like · Reply · December 25, 2015 at 9:11am



Jessie Henshaw Wish I could erase all the responses having nothing to do with the work proposed...

Like · Reply · December 25, 2015 at 9:37am



Dmitry Sokolov Thank you Jessie, excellent observation! <http://confocal-manawatu.pbworks.com/.../People%20Working...> I have same experience with organising online projects. Now I am trying working in my locality and if successful, share that knowledge and experience with similar communities. I still hope that I am doing something wrong and hope to learn how to organise online projects properly. smile emoticon

LikeInMind / People Working Together in Social Networks is a...

CONFOCAL-MANAWATU.PBWORKS.COM

Like · Reply · December 25, 2015 at 6:39pm



Dmitry Sokolov Jessie, I am not sure how to organise work better at PLAST. However, if you find it interesting and applicable, I could show you how to organise information in Knowledge Network, similar to recently created with your help, above.

Like · Reply · December 25, 2015 at 6:43pm



Jessie Henshaw It's Alexander's pattern language on which a world standard common vernacular for system designer is being based on though.

Like · Reply · December 26, 2015 at 10:30am

Finn Jackson December 10, 2015

What I would like to know



Hi,
I have just been added to this group and it looks really interesting.

(Thanks Salimeh *smile emoticon*)

First thing I want to do is to get a more precise feel / understanding for what the group is about, but having read the Overview and clicked some of the links and

then gone to Google I am not finding what I am looking for.

What I would like to know is:

- what is a pattern language?
- what do first, second and third generations look like?
- what would fourth generation look like and what would be its benefits if we could generate it? How would we know when we had got there?

Can anybody point me at these answers please?
 Sorry for being dense if they are 'hidden in plain view'.
 Thanks
 Finn

LikeComment

2 people like this.

Comments



Jessie Henshaw Finn - "Pattern language" is a language for describing high level design concepts used in numerous professions. It originated in architecture as simple way to use common language in being explicit in defining wonderful holistic designs. You might think of them as something like "wheel and axle" or "home" as quintessential design concepts that resolve complex "forces" in an elegantly simple way, producing great "emergent properties" in the process. Discussion of that here has gone in almost any other direction ... however. wink emoticon If you're interested in links you can find several in a recent comment.

<https://www.facebook.com/.../permalink/836066386510589/...>

Like · Reply · 2 · December 11, 2015 at 5:42pm



Jessie Henshaw What would also help are more general references to pattern language as on our FB pages too:
<https://www.facebook.com/notes/plast-pattern-languages-for-systemic-transformation/pattern-language-intro-reference-links/852460014871226>

Like · Reply · 2 · December 11, 2015 at 6:48pm · Edited



Finn Jackson Many thanks Jessie, I will look at these later.

Like · Reply · December 12, 2015 at 1:17am



Helene Finidori Hi Finn, welcome to the group. Here is a paper on the fourth generation pattern language:
https://www.academia.edu/.../Towards_a_Fourth_Generation... it should provide some answers and references if you want to dig further.



Towards a Fourth Generation Pattern Language: Patterns as Epistemic...

ACADEMIA.EDU

Like · Reply · 2 · December 12, 2015 at 3:27am



Finn Jackson Brilliant, thank you Helene.

:

This whole project all seems very interesting and right up my street.

(I'd frame it as "creating a language that sees and describes reality more clearly")

I have a busy weekend ahead of me but will catch up on all of this as soon as I can.

Thanks again to you and Jessie. (And Salimeh)

Like · Reply · 1 · December 12, 2015 at 3:35am



Helene Finidori ...and also helping 'mediate' between the various views of reality . I would be interested to know more about your street smile emoticon. Don't hesitate when you have more time.

Like · Reply · 1 · December 12, 2015 at 3:40am



Finn Jackson Thanks for these links, which were all useful. As a newcomer I found the paper on Academia, "Towards a Fourth Generation Pattern Language" very useful.

Reading it I have come to the conclusion that I have created a Fourth Generation Pattern Language for Leadership. (Thank you **Salimeh** if you had already spotted that when you introduced me to this group.)

Why do I think it qualifies? Because it is a set of tools (How) that enables leaders to become aware of what is most important to them (at a psychological/spiritual level, so far as they are aware to that level), which is 'Why', and then shows What to do to partly manifest that in the world, as well as How to do so. It is a multi-layered, self-organising, holistic and systemic approach to leadership. It can be repeated multiple times to deepen the user's self-understanding and connection. And because it is grounded in psychological /spiritual connection with oneself, plus action, I believe it will "support the interlaced metanetwork of social action".

And it is all "hidden in plain view."

For me this confirms the power, cogency and potential impact of what I have written. (It is in the form of a just-published book.)

If this is something that is of interest to you I would be happy to discuss/explain it further.

In the meantime, in case it is useful and for further detail, I include here the notes I made as I read through the paper.

Many thanks agin, [Salimeh](#), [Jessie](#), and [Helene](#) .

-
My notes on reading the paper "Towards a Fourth Generation Pattern Language"

I like the opening description of the origins as a way of describing what makes something indescribable (architecture) more or less life-enhancing.

My interest in this area comes mainly via Bateson, and I suppose also Jung, Wittgenstein, and Taoism.

My subject matter expertise is in businesses and organisations, specifically strategy, process and organisation change.

My aim is to create a generative world.

I recognise that our current languages (English, French, etc) restrict us in some ways from achieving that, because those languages contain invisible pre-judgments about the way the world works. (They form a collective unconscious, for example in the way languages such as English reify concepts (such as 'love'), and 'violent communication' (as opposed to Non Violent Communication.)

So, what I assumed was that a 'pattern language' would be a more accurate way of describing the world, and that in seeing it more clearly we would be able to come up with clearer ways of acting in it to get the results we want.

To me this is the same as "holistic...instruments for sense-making and purposive design... to support self-generated societal thriving".

I am familiar with object oriented programming as an example. Also the Transition movement and permaculture. But not the other 30000 examples.

So, I assume that an example of a first generation would be 'brick', second generation, OOP (Object Oriented Programming) language, third generation, a repeated permaculture pattern such as "now, soon, later" as a way of constructing to do lists/action plans.

So, 1) Why , 2) What, 3) How. Process.

4th generation combines all these..." as tools in social change processes that self evaluate, in ongoing fashion, in relation to a set of common underlying goals"

OK. I think I have just written a pattern language for leadership.

Why does it classify as third generation? Because it contains tools & processes for achieving (inspirational) leadership. This is 'how'.

Some of those tools are about identifying what is important to the leader, which then becomes their 'Why' in the later steps.

Other steps are about identifying what to do in order to manifest that 'why' in the world.

For example, a leader uses the tool (how) to identify their purpose and values. These are Why (and how) they act in the

world. Other tools show them how to find the opportunities in any situation they might face, and then choose the one that is best for them, which is What to do. And then a later step is again about How to achieve that, How to make it happen.

So there is a repeating cycle of how, what, why, how, all mutually-embedded.

And the underlying why (of the Leadership 'language') is about connecting people with themselves, and showing them what is important to them, and how to achieve that. Which for me aligns with the initial "Holistic ... instruments for sense-making and purposive design... to support self-generated societal thriving".

Further I would say that this approach will "support the interlaced metanetwork of social action" because it connects people deeply with what matters most to them, and gives them the tools to implement it. What else is 'social action' but people acting in line with what matters most to them on a psycho-spiritual level?

"A generating system is not a view of a single thing. It is a kit of parts, with rules about the way these parts may be combined." This is what I have produced for 'leadership', meaning leadership of self and then of others.

Then it quotes Alexander (1968) "Almost every 'system as a whole' is generated by a 'generative system'. If we wish to make things which function as wholes we shall have to invent generating systems to create them." This is what I have done (I think).

Ditto: "Generative patterns can be understood to work indirectly; they work on the underlying structure of a problem (which may not be manifest in the problem) rather than attacking the problem directly." In my case I would say that we are facing multiple issues in the world. They all seem different, but the fact that there are so many of them, all surfacing at once, points to a common underlying cause. I would say that cause is "the way we take decisions" or our model of leadership. It is our model of leadership that has caused us to take the decisions we have, which has led to the situations we face today. A different (generative) approach to leadership would have led to a different (generative) set of outcomes in the world.


The model/language I have created explicitly (and implicitly) sets out to achieve that.

"A ... 'meta' language, used to encode and decode systemic directionality, emergent behaviour and evolution of design objects... in plain view."


For me this confirms the importance and cogency of what I have created. If it sounds interesting to you I would be happy to discuss it further.

Thanks [Salimeh](#) for the introduction.

[Unlike](#) · [Reply](#) · 2 · December 14, 2015 at 2:56pm

 **Salimeh Pour Mohammad** Your welcome Finn. smile emoticon

Like · Reply · 1 · December 14, 2015 at 3:28pm

 **Jessie Henshaw Finn** - I didn't get to read your very interesting comments till this afternoon, having printed them out to take with me. There certainly seems to be a great deal of commonality of intent and strategy between your thinking about this with both Helene's and my ways of thinking about it. That said, I'd say she and I differ somewhat on emphasizing the grand conceptions versus the means and methods of cooking it up from the bottom. Your approach, though I've seen no details, seems to be somewhere between, so maybe just right for productive conversation. She may offer her own thoughts on it, but from my view our views seem very aligned. One difference my paying more attention to how the parts of systems behave independently, have open space between them, even when interacting, and retain their individuality as a rule. As I've said to illustrate sometimes "that's why people kiss rather than graft"... wink emoticon

That shift in view changes the verbs I use, so though I might agree on the intent, instead of saying as in you comment "connecting people with themselves, and showing them what is important to them"

I would find a way to say much the same thing but as: "introducing learning methods that people can use to succeed in finding their own directions/ or something like that. I focus more on how individual systems navigate a complex world on their own, a more "do it yourself" sort of view of nature than a "phase space" kind of systems world.

It was my physics that led me to that, really, noticing the individual bursts of energy that every new system emergence seemed to begin with. So my thinking focuses more on the individual bursts of innovative growth and development that occur when a seed or an egg cell germinates, or similarly on larger scales, as a business start-up, or a new social movement, emerges from their own generative wombs. They all have the characteristics of explosions of lasting change. You see it in the experience of people move from grade to grade in school too, that at the start of the next year you go from having to catch on to taking off with a rush of mind expanding experiences, to arrive with elation at reaching the next level. It's a "pattern", yet to be adequately described.

So as I see it, culture change follows that same pattern. It emerges from some generative womb, rather hidden from view generally, and needs to become a contagious thing. As one can observe in the take-off period of social movements, it would naturally need to develop from individuals taking off in their own unprecedented directions, very much taking hints from others but developing them very much on their own. So I'd interpret it as implying that "leading others" is more about feeding them than guiding them, both a sharing of visions of early adopters and pointing to tools others can pick up for themselves for finding

their own directions.

So, If I read you right, what pattern language promises seems to be just what you're looking for. For systemic change it is still somewhat inspirational rather than practical, projecting from a number of people recognizing how revolutionary Alexanders idea really is, making the ancient principles of holistic design explicit enough to be widely shared. The past decade saw a lot of work on it from people like Helmut, Tom Henfrey and Doug Schuler, Takashi Iba and quite a number of others, with a big push from the Hillside Group software community, sponsoring several PLoP conferences a year around the world, exploring the limits of extending the idea of patterns of intentional design.

What I see Helene and I as proposing is going the next step from intentional design to developing pattern language for people learning how to work with each other and nature. It's the practical work of fitting the general model to the new problem that still needs a good bit of work as I see it, not yet offering something to show that really works. I kind of thought a next step would be experimentation with the ways I presented for identifying patterns of naturally occurring design, trying out ways of explicitly describing them with pattern language. It may well be, just as there are natural pauses between phases of other kinds of change, at least some remix seems needed until the right combination of things comes together for it. So I see a lot of potential along the lines you describe, but nothing that needs to hurry. smile emoticon

Like · Reply · December 15, 2015 at 8:33pm



Finn Jackson Hello Jessie, Thanks for your reply.

In haste, I am glad you found what I wrote useful and that there is commonality / overlap.

I agree that your wording ("introducing learning methods that people can use to find their own directions") is more precise language than mine ("connecting people with themselves, and showing them what is important to them"). It also describes more accurately what I meant. Thank you for understanding me. smile emoticon

I broadly agree with what you say about culture change. For me the unit of culture change is the individual. And (as an example of culture change) Revolution definitely depends on both inspiration and practical implementation!

It sounds as if a useful next step would be for me to describe what I have done in slightly more detail. Then you can see more clearly whether it fits with what you are doing or not.

What I have done is create a set of tools that enables any individual (the unit of culture change) to create their own mini-'revolution', and then inspire others to join it.

It combines practical steps and inspiration in equal measure.

Step 1 is a set of tools/learning methods for people to steady and ground themselves if they are experiencing any inner (emotional) churning.

Step 2 is a set of tools/learning methods for making emotional sense of the situation: Is their interpretation being clouded by cognitive misinterpretations? What other explanations are also possible? Can accessing their intuition in a structured way help them see things more clearly?

Step 3 is a set of tools/learning methods for identifying the 10 types of opportunity that reside even in the deepest 'crisis'.

Step 4 is a set of tools for choosing the opportunity that suits them best.

Step 5 provides tools/learning methods to identify the person's Values and Purpose in Life and then check their chosen way forward against these.

Step 6 is to create an Inspiring Vision.

Step 7 is to prepare for the journey towards that vision (in the same way that you would prepare to climb Mt Everest etc).

(A second book will deal with the practical steps of implementation.)

From what I have read, I interpret this to *be* an example of a pattern language:

- it is driven from a Why (purpose and values)
- it defines What will be done, and
- it offers 2 levels of How: How to carry out the process, and How to implement the output of the process.
- it is also self-directed and learning, since the process/pattern can be repeated ad infinitum, leading to deeper levels of understanding and action each time.

I'd be interested to hear whether you agree this is what you mean by a pattern language.

I'd also be interested to know whether this is an "Oh, that's interesting to know" for you (and [Helene](#)) or whether there are further actions we might take to support each other.

(For example, might it be a way to create a vision that inspires people to use your pattern language to learn how to work with each other and nature?)

Best, smile emoticon

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · December 16, 2015 at 12:57pm



Helene Finidori Hi Finn, I saw recently your two pings. I'm in the middle of packing my house. Will get back to the network very soon!!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · December 16, 2015 at 1:08pm



Jessie Henshaw I prefer not to use "pattern language" to refer to individual ways of working with patterns in their work, and also avoid using it for natural systems that appear to have dense centers of organizational patterns of design. That use carries a presumption of complexly detailed content that can be communicated, but without a way to expose or communicate it.

18-Jan-16

So it applies a very loose vernacular interpretation to the name of a very disciplined practice of exposing the origins and applications of explicit holistic designs, called "pattern language", and... people being as we are, the loose vernacular usage seems to be taking over, and the disciplined practice being lost, as we drift into just selling vaporware... wink emoticon

Maybe we should refer to our own holistic ways of describing useful patterns as our design or pattern "methods" or "models" as generic terms, and reserve "pattern language" for the careful expert practice for finding, recording and communicating widely useful holistic design principles.

That said, I'd love to see what you do. Please suggest a good place in your writings to start. My use of a pattern language vernacular to discuss natural patterns is quite recent, having had 30 years of using a more natural science vernacular before. You could browse my older work by look at my research journal Reading Nature's Signals (RNS). To see how I identify natural patterns of design to discuss with a pattern language approach, see my two papers this year,

RNS - <http://synapse9.com/signals/>

PURPLSOC -

http://synapse9.com/.../2015_PURPLSOC%20JLH%20final%20p ub...

PLoP - http://www.synapse9.com/_PLref/2015_PLoP-draft.pdf

RNS Journal ... | New 'object oriented science' for living and working with...

SYNAPSE9.COM

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [Remove Preview](#) · December 16, 2015 at 9:50pm



Finn Jackson Hello again Jessie,

I can well imagine that I might have misinterpreted the terminology, so thanks for bearing with me. I agree precise language is helpful, but often not adhered to.

(For example, one of my pet 'peeves' is the way the tech world uses the word "latency" to mean "delay" when actually it means "hiddenness". But I can't change it so I let it go. smile emoticon)

You asked about where to start with my work.

If you go to www.thechurning.net and then mouseover 'Inner Leadership' you will see a drop down for the seven chapters of the book.

If you click on any of them it will take you to a reasonably detailed description of what the that step is, why it matters, and how the book addresses it.

If you find you are still interested you can click through to the full Introduction of any chapter.

And if you still want to know more then you can buy any of the chapters with all its tools for less than the price of a cup of coffee (\$1.99) And you can buy the whole book under the tab 'Buy the Book'.

(Please note 'Outer Leadership', which deals with strategy and implementation is not yet published, only Inner Leadership which is about creating Inspiration in ourselves and others.)

Please do let me know how you get on and whether/how you think this might be useful to you.

Many thanks

(I now go to look at the RNS)



The Churning

Tools for inner and outer leadership in times of change

THECHURNING.NET

Like · Reply · December 17, 2015 at 2:45pm



Jessie Henshaw Honestly I think misuse of the language by software people is a big enough problem it might need writing about it. I ran into several curious examples at a conference this year, using natural terms for meanings quite unrelated to their meanings... mixing natural and technical meanings with no indication of doing so. Language is fairly resilient, but abuse doesn't help!

The oddest one was the apparent common use in the software world of "coherency" to mean "applicability", and when called on it reacting if they didn't know the difference. I'd never guess that mix-up would become established. I know techies don't study language much they're also supposed to be language experts, and certainly have a lot of influence.

Thanks for the link to the book. My initial browsing of chapter introductions found rather general language, so if you have something more detailed I think I'd get more out of that. You certainly write in a nice clear way, though. I think it would be a great exercise for you to see if your models could be described as pattern language designs, as a growing common world language of professional design.

If you wanted a slightly different way of introducing the use of a "pattern template" such as I describe in both my papers this year, you could look at a paper by [Takashi Iba](#) from last year for a related but somewhat different approach: http://www.hillside.net/.../papers/Social_Related/iba_2.pdf

The basic requirement is to succinctly describe all the "forces"

that some objective requires you to deal with, and then the unifying way of responding to them all together.

Like · Reply · December 17, 2015 at 5:22pm



Finn Jackson Laughing at "apparent common use in the software world of "coherency" to mean "applicability"" smile emoticon <shakes head> (And I used to be a systems analyst...)

You ask for "something more detailed" on my work. The only thing more detailed is the book itself.

If you don't want to buy the whole thing, you could pick the chapter that best represents a change you want to make in your life and risk a cup of coffee on that?

Alternatively, if what you have read indicates that there isn't value for you then no worries smile emoticon But if you think there might be then I recommend it. I spent 18 months writing it. It's quality stuff.

I have your three papers from yesterday (plus this new one) opened as tabs in my browser, skimmed, and ready to read over Christmas. Thank you smile emoticon

Like · Reply · December 18, 2015 at 2:16am



Finn Jackson Oh, and PS the thought comes to me (2 hours later) that there is a reason the language in the chapter introductions is "rather general": the specificity has to come from you, the reader. It is you the reader who takes the tools and makes them specifically relevant to your life, your situation, your leadership of yourself, in the way that is right for you.

smile emoticon

Like · Reply · 1 · December 18, 2015 at 4:36am



Jessie Henshaw Finn, yes that's rather common, with learning tools especially. It's using them that leads to the learning, and the discovery of why they were so strangely designed in the first place. Maybe you could use my problem and explain what your approach would recommend.

With trying to get people to use 'pattern language' as a learning tool I keep failing over and over. Its all in using the process, not just using the labels. Still I keep finding I'm unable to keep people from thinking that [arranging their own explanations, for their own theory using the typical headings for pattern research "1.context, 2.forces, 3.solutions, 4.actions, 5.results"] is equivalent to doing actual pattern research: [crafting a holistic response to their world by "1.searching their context, 2.to find the complex of forces to respond to, 3.discover the unifying solution that brings them into balance, 4.to guide your actions, 5.toward expected results].

I can repeat myself, talk about how successful PL sometimes is as a common world language of holistic design, I can invite people to actually start in small ways, look at examples to discuss, point to all the ways it could make a big difference for working with others, again and again, and not get any response. It still ends up when talking to people who seem to be brilliant designers but struggling to find a common language for their

designs, that trying a quite proven common language for holistic design would be a very odd way for them to sell their theory, and get the world work as it is supposed to.

Do you have any strategies for that problem?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · December 21, 2015 at 4:50pm



Finn Jackson So, allow me to think out loud....

The Churning (volume 1) is all about creating Inspiration. It is about Inner Leadership, of self and others, not problem solving per se (fishbone diagrams, root cause analysis and the rest of that...)

So in a way it's the wrong tool.

But in a way, perhaps the reason that you "keep failing over and over" is that you are not creating an inspiring vision of why people should use PL?

This answer would say that the solution would be to build your equivalent of "If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea."

Does that work?

The tools for how to do that are contained in Chapter 6.

Otherwise... <thinks again and rereads what you have written> OK, from my own point of view, I think I understand how to do the first approach you suggest (because it fits with the way I have been taught to think about the world) but I don't understand how to do the second approach, which is the one you want me to take. I don't understand what 'finished' would look like.

I need an example. Can you provide an example (not necessarily to me, but to your target audience) of applying your approach to some (simple) problem area they all understand. Then they could see how your approach works, and how the results are better.

Ah, but you say you have looked at examples.

Finally then, if Describing an Inspiring Vision and giving worked examples don't work, then "Brilliant designers struggling to find a common language for their designs" is the heart of the problem. To solve that I'd need to understand more detail about design, and language, and I don't. But ironically, the issue is about communication when your solution is a [pattern] language. So does putting the problem through your own lens/process allow you to solve it?

In summary, I can't solve this. And The Churning (volume 1) wouldn't be able to either.

But what I hear you saying is that the designers you talk to don't have a clear understanding of why they should care, or what the benefits would be, or how they would go about implementing it. And those are three elements of an inspiring vision, which is what The Churning is about getting leaders to be able to articulate, first for themselves, and then for others.

Chapter 6 is the one that covers that (if that is what you think you need). And the other chapters each contribute more detail on how to create the building blocks.

This may be well off the mark, but that's as close as I can get with the information you've given me.

Hope it helps.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · December 21, 2015 at 5:27pm



Jessie Henshaw Yes, "longing for the endless immensity of the sea" is more the nature of the problem. I keep wanting to be encouraging, but unable to steer these sorts of brilliant minds to experiment with things they haven't tried before. I think I wouldn't be able to understand what you refer by chapter number, too, as I don't know what strategies in your chapters are referred to by chapter number or just general intent.

I'm not sure what you mean when referring to "the first approach you suggest (because it fits with the way I have been taught to think about the world) but I don't understand how to do the second approach, which is the one you want me to take". The reader might need to know that pattern language has a long history of being applied to architecture and software development, and other fields more recently, but never to the study of naturally occurring designs before. So the main reason for the work was to introduce that... to people who generally know something about pattern language.

I'm sure I could do better at many of the normal things you mention. What I can't really explain is the lack of curiosity about how nature works without human explanation of design of any kind. I need some way to make that "intriguing" to people who have demonstrated considerable curiosity about how to explain how nature works.. For navigating you need both, as if only curious about explaining things you normally just hit the iceberg and the ship sinks, is the usual drawback... wink emoticon

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · December 21, 2015 at 6:51pm



Finn Jackson Hi,
Sorry for being unclear.

On the two approaches, I also find it easy to understand "arrange my own explanations, for my own theory using the typical headings for pattern research "1.context, 2.forces, 3.solutions, 4.actions, 5.results""

I find it less easy to understand what it takes to" craft a holistic response to my world by "1.searching my context, 2.to find the complex of forces to respond to, 3.discover the unifying solution that brings them into balance, 4.to guide my actions, 5.toward expected results]."

I am still missing the example that makes it obvious to me what that actually means.

I'll post a second comment.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · December 21, 2015 at 11:17pm



Finn Jackson Second comment.

The best way I know how to inspire people to long for the endless immensity of the sea is contained in this chapter:

http://thechurning.net/?page_id=4066



6. Create an Inspiring Vision

When everything is changing, people can often feel uncertain and afraid. When people are...

THECHURNING.NET

Like · Reply · December 21, 2015 at 11:36pm · Edited



Finn Jackson And finally I am pondering "can't really explain is the lack of curiosity about how nature works without human explanation of design of any kind. I need some way to make that "intriguing" to people who have demonstrated considerable curiosity about how to explain how nature works.."

I don't understand how on the one hand these people have "a lack of curiosity about how nature works without human explanation of design of any kind" and yet also "have demonstrated considerable curiosity about how to explain how nature works."

I don't understand what that means, and it seems slightly contradictory (to me).

I wonder whether unravelling that, making it clearer, would take you into seeing the world through their eyes, and hence being able to articulate to them in their language what PL is, why it matters to them etc.

This is one of the building blocks of Chapter 6.

Like · Reply · December 21, 2015 at 11:35pm · Edited



Jessie Henshaw The difference is related to our normal mental confusion about "what we see" being very different from "what we are looking at". What we're looking at is the visible parts of the reality that nature defines, but what we see in our minds is the artificial reality our minds generate as our mental "map", they're hard to tell apart.

So the people trying to find how to change the world in a more healthy way very often think of the task as getting everyone else to believe their explanation, rather than to find ways to compare our separate mental worlds and validate the parts that are consistent with nature's reality...

I "have a plan" to suggest our "longing for the endless immensity of the sea", in the form of an incomplete "pattern" for "Healing Troubled Community" that includes "• Sliding the right pieces of the puzzle to nature's side of the table, tempting her superb way of putting things together"

Sound good?

Like · Reply · December 22, 2015 at 6:00pm · Edited



Finn Jackson Hi Jessie,

Ah, ok, yes. There's the way the world is, there's the subset of that that we see, and there's the way we interpret / understand what we (think we) have seen.

I then understand and agree your paragraph that begins, "So the people trying to find how to change the world..." Bateson puts it this way: "All the major problems of the world are caused by a difference between the way the world works and the way we think."

Two of the seven chapters of The Churning address this directly. One provides tools to confront and remove the 8 common ways in which we blur our interpretations of reality (Ch2). And one teaches us how to find 10 types of opportunity in each of the 'problems' we imagine we face (Ch 3).

Your 'cunning plan' to create longing for the endless immensity of the ocean sounds reasonably good to me. I only say 'reasonably' because I am only seeing my interpretation of your reality, not reality. But I hear your enthusiasm in what you describe, which leads me to think it will likely work. Personally I might have tried something more 'everyday' that everyone would understand and relate to, like "How to go to the supermarket". I wonder whether some of your audience might not be interested in "Healing Troubled Community"? But if you are interested and enthusiastic then that is probably the 'right' think to do, so go for it! smile emoticon

I don't know if you saw my other two comments yesterday. The first, "Sorry for being unclear" explains an answer to one of your previous questions, and the second explains how the best way I know how to inspire people to long for the endless immensity of the sea is in Chapter 6 of The Churning. There are seven building blocks.

Best of luck. Please do let me know your Healing Troubled Community example, and have a great Christmas! smile emoticon

Like · Reply · December 23, 2015 at 2:24am



Finn Jackson Thoughts / responses to the four papers you shared with me, Jessie (earlier than I thought):

1) Pattern Language for Object-Oriented Science
The meta-structure (I think) is: model 'the real world' using OOP; gain new insights; design and then; implement actions in the world.

What would it be like if we were able to insert the pattern language directly into the human 'objects' so that they autonomously took the actions we would have liked them to? (I may be wrong, but I think this is what my book does.)

2) Guiding Patterns of Natural Design: Mining Living Quality, A

Pattern Language Approach

"Pattern language is built around... "patterns" intended to identify a "simplifying ideal" for solving a recurrent problem"
Same as my book.

"This paper discusses ways of learning from naturally occurring designs with those properties, by discovering needs of their external relationships. "

Similar to my book, but it works to discover/reveal and make clear the *internal* relationships of a person, with themselves. And once the person has internal clarity then taking external action becomes much easier.

3) Guiding Patterns of Naturally Occurring Designs

No comment, except to say that my book also uses "recurrence of natural process...from small beginnings" as an easy way to create useful new 'forms'.

4) A Journey on the Way to Pattern Writing

Reminds me of Permaculture approaches, and also something called "Critical Path Analysis" which I have used in business. My book is again similar, this time with the inner issue of "How do we lead ourselves" rather than the outer issue of "how do we fix external 'problems'"

Many thanks for sharing these four.

I'll wait now to see what you come back with next smile emoticon

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · December 18, 2015 at 5:23am



Jessie Henshaw The fields for which pattern language seems best suited seem to be those that require people to be designers, needing them to interact with worlds of unknown 'forces' (systemic 'opportunities' & 'challenges' with 'risks') starting from not really knowing what they'll need to learn in order to bring about the results they initially think they want.

So they go through a "design process", within their limited resources, elaborating on their initial idea to find how they can respond to their world as as they steer toward something practical. It seems the most successful attempts are from projects call for a great enough achievement and bring together people who are highly observant searchers, reaching for the ideal of "making things whole". That seems to free them and point them to how to respond to the forces they need to work with holistically.

So in those two papers I may be sort of assuming that people trying to do that are the audience I'm writing for. It's really for designers pushing the limits of what they can put together, or those who aspiring to be at some point. That's who needs to explore the kinds of "pattern search" that the natural world of design patterns offers. It's also for the beginner too, but in a different way, for inspiration from having glimpses of the mysteriously successful "pattern matching" that nature does, as an audacious vision of what they might aspire to as well.

It does occur to me I might not have put those clarifications of intent in the writing, writing of any kind is such a challenge... The one essential, as I mentioned in the other comment today, is getting the reader to respond to the materiality of the relationship one develops when you graduate from contemplation and realize you need to study the patterns of nature you need to work with to get anything done. Wish I knew how to make that clear.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · December 21, 2015 at 6:27pm



Finn Jackson As I say elsewhere, I think worked examples and chapter 6 answer ms are what I need / am missing.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · December 21, 2015 at 11:33pm



Salimeh Pour Mohammad **Finn Jackson**, I think your area of expertise and the book can beautifully match with and even advance our contemporary knowledge and views on Complex Adaptive Systems and also more specifically with Viable System Model as a diagnostic tool and then VSM's meta languages with combination of soft systems approach as a methodology. smile emoticon

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · December 18, 2015 at 5:24am



Finn Jackson I am glad, **Salimeh**. I have just posted brief notes in response to the four papers Jessie shared with me. (I especially liked comments/insights 1 and 2.)

Do please let me know how I can be of the further use you describe.

For now, though, I am turning off my computer and driving to Yorkshire. Have a great weekend.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · December 18, 2015 at 5:31am



Salimeh Pour Mohammad Welcome to Yorkshire then smile emoticon Although I am a little bit busy till mid Jan but I have a project plan for what I mentioned. I will include you in the circle and we will go from there if you felt intersted. You have a great weekend too. smile emoticon

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · December 18, 2015 at 5:40am



Jessie Henshaw **Finn** & **Salimeh**, That sounds like a reight gud collaboration work then..., between practitioners with their own models having a lot in common with each other. Both of you also seem to have a lot in common with a pattern language approach to creating and finding, recording expert designs.

PL could help open up your work to a larger audience and attract more collaboration as a common world language and practice. It also has key features no individual model can ever have, such as being a shared language for creating and recording expert models that are "open source". Pattern research also generally starts with searching for what to model or exploring what my be missing from a model.

So maybe the two of you could expand you formats by jointly working on how to draft a 'pattern' for some interest. It would

probably expand both your insights into your own work. It would also make your work more easily communicated and contributed to, made available to others in the wide PL community using the same general language. That's sort of what I did, in writing my papers this year. I haven't stopped thinking of my own work on natural system recognition and transformational change, but it certainly gave me a much larger audience and more useful collaboration.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 2 · December 18, 2015 at 8:52am · Edited



Jessie Henshaw Finn, there was someplace you seemed to ask just the right question, that FB is unable to locate for me at the moment, saying on 12/21, ... :

[I find it less easy to understand what it takes to craft a holistic response to my world by "1. searching my context, 2. to find the complex of forces to respond to, 3. discover the unifying solution that brings them into balance, 4. to guide my actions, 5. toward expected results" ... I am still missing the example that makes it obvious to me what that actually means.]

Understood. It's usually experience with a new tool that reveals what it's really for. I'm wondering if the following might work better?

[I think the key to understanding why designers like using Alexander's "pattern language" is how it works to keep your attention on working with real things in the real world, open to *all* their complexity. The standard format helps keep things straight and sets the stage for asking inclusive questions about the whole. It then lets you become explicit about what providing holistic "services" in real life circumstances really requires, again with using a structured language to keep straight what is being talked about.]

[So the "patterns" developed tend to amount to "ideal principles of design" one might use where some "ideal opportunity" for them might be found, so often for "recurrent problems" frequently found in diverse real circumstances. A simplistic example would be "when you have a 'nail' " then "you might use a hammer". A more advanced pattern concept would be "everything needs a home" then "is that what your loose parts need to stick together?"]

[The "design pattern" is the match between the ideal circumstance and an ideal way of responding to it. So they're intended as guides to what a given recurrent circumstance might ideally call for.]

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · December 24, 2015 at 9:10am



Jessie Henshaw Finn, I also liked your comment (also somewhere FB can't find at the moment!):

[Your 'cunning plan' to create longing for the endless immensity of the ocean sounds reasonably good to me. I only say 'reasonably' because I am only seeing my interpretation of your reality, not reality. But I hear your enthusiasm in what you describe, which leads me to think it will likely work. Personally I might have tried something more 'everyday' that everyone would

18-Jan-16

understand and relate to, like "How to go to the supermarket".]

I think I'm "fishing around" for what will work. I tend to be favor the "core" approach to introducing things, finding ways to do it with advanced examples, like making a souffle to introduce cooking. Then the humdrum of simple things recalls the real possibilities too. How would you do that with the supermarket, though, have to think of it, learning to order a roast perhaps. Having the "vastness of the sea" open up between the cold cuts and the dairy case would perhaps not be quite right though! wink emoticon

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · December 24, 2015 at 9:27am



Finn Jackson Hi,

Your explanation "I think the key to understanding why designers like using Alexander's "pattern language" is ..." begins to enable me to understand more clearly/deeply what Pattern Language about, yes. But I still need an 'intermediate' (non-trivial) case study. One that says, "OK, so if you apply this to designing a house, a Room, an office space, a garden... then the difference that PL makes is..."

On your second comment, just posted, a trip to the supermarket can be dull. So you create a vision of what will result from the trip: either the meal or the evening spent with friends... And how that will be better if I've used pattern language than the approach I currently use. (Tell me that and then I'll care and then I'll want to know *how* to achieve it. Until I know that I don't care how PL works, the same way I don't care how my car or computer works. It's the results that matter to me.)

There are seven building blocks of an inspiring vision, which are described in Chapter 6.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · December 24, 2015 at 9:41am



Jessie Henshaw The starting point for learning is always with the learner, isn't it, not the teacher? The references are chock full of them. Everyone also discerns design patterns in the circumstances of daily life, and responds appropriately to them, as a matter of course. Noticing that's how you use familiar patterns to guide your next response is then a matter of slowing down the way we normally think. If you approach a door that's not fully closed you recall situations a bit like it and think of the responses you may have had before, before forming a new response as best you can. It's absolutely constant in how people navigate, unconsciously. Pattern language just a way to spell it out a bit, with professionals focusing on documenting things, like the classic expert designs that would be a shame to have die with the people who developed them.

Learning is still first a matter of "diving in" I think, though, as you never know even what the right questions are at first. The question in a group like this is what would make people hearing an unfamiliar term look at the references provided them or use Google to find their own and read up on what it's used for?

It seems the answer is that people in work groups do that as a

matter of course and people in chat groups can't be persuaded no matter how you try. So first I think I need to somehow transform the group from a chatting group to a working group. Sound familiar? wink emoticon

Like · Reply · December 24, 2015 at 10:29am

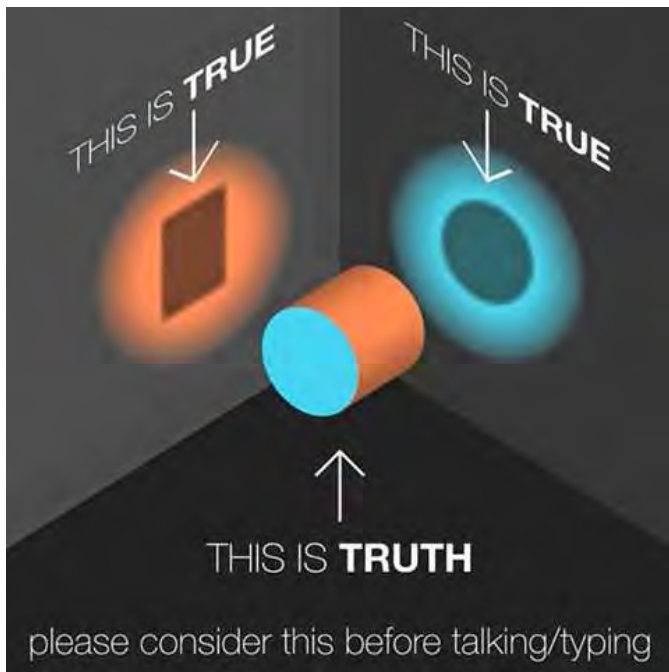
Helene Finidori shared Join the Coffee Party Movement's photo. December 14, 2015

What's the pattern that relates to these truths?



So what's the pattern that relates these two truths? Should I have written 'what's the reality that relates these two truths'? Should I have used the plural?

First seen in one of Derek Cabrera's blogs.



Join the Coffee Party Movement Like Page

July 22, 2015

This totally explains how our perspective determines what we see as "true." Here's to understanding that what is true for me and what is true for you are not different realities, but an opportunity for us to have a conversation and explore where we are both human. -DM

Like Comment

Dmitry Sokolov, Nicolas Stampf and 6 others like this.

Comments

3 of 54

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Chad Thomas Green "And yet the timeless way is not complete, and will not fully generate the quality without a name, until we leave the gate behind." - Christopher Alexander (The Timeless Way of Building)

Like · Reply · 1 · December 18, 2015 at 2:56pm



Jessie Henshaw That seems too abstract and indecisive to be a good guide then, and so it more describes "a quest" for good guides then, maybe? I think the good guides are "hidden in sight", found in the sources of aliveness found throughout the natural world external to our own invented worlds of concept. That's a source where all the qualities nature allows are found, which pattern language naturally pushes you to study, in searching for how to respond to them. We also seem to have natural skills in empathic study of many kinds, though maybe in neglect often enough I guess.

Why Alexander didn't make it explicit that one needs to study how the living world responds to one's designs is unclear to me. It seems a very natural orientation to take when doing designs for holistically serving and responding to the needs of living things. That does seem to be what pattern language is all about, I think, so that's a puzzle. So the main task of pattern language as turning your attention to discovering and making note on what, in some context, needs to be allowed for and responded to, could then possibly be both the source of its practical as well as perhaps its spiritual content as well, couldn't it?

Like · Reply · December 20, 2015 at 11:18am



Chad Thomas Green To my mind he's simply saying that home is where the heart is. What patterns stir the heart? Perhaps it depends on where you are on your quest. Not too long ago I related to The Void, for example. Today it's Not-Separateness. What property is at work here:[http://www.spring.org.uk/.../duckrabbit-illusion-provides... ?](http://www.spring.org.uk/.../duckrabbit-illusion-provides...)

Like · Reply · 1 · December 20, 2015 at 1:03pm · Edited

Jessie Henshaw December 18, 2015

Uploaded 2015 PLAST FB threads Nov Dec



2015 PLAST FB threads Nov-Dec 2015.pdf

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Michael Josefowicz wow. Thank you for putting in the team. It's worth a slow read and should be very helpful for getting from here to where we want to get to.

Like · Reply · December 18, 2015 at 6:45pm



Helmut Leitner Wow. Great to have this. Thank you.

Like · Reply · December 19, 2015 at 6:02am



Jessie Henshaw More than welcome. Each time I tried it I got easier, happy to explain what I did. I'd send it in the Word.docx format should anyone want. Basically in FB I searched for and clicked all the "see more" or "view preceding" type links, to make sure all the "hidden comments" are showing. Then one copy/past put all the text and images into a reused two column format file in Word, with no struggle. Then I located the top of each thread, and that's where I put a title for the thread in "style" "Heading 2" in that case, to create the table of contents. That was made easier by the "style" of the contributor's name at the top of each thread, located on the "navigation pane".

Like · Reply · December 20, 2015 at 10:50am

Jessie Henshaw December 10, 2015

A pattern for Blind Seers



A discussion between [Jessie Henshaw](#), [M Ichael Josefowicz](#) & [David Braden](#) found us making statements to each other from our abstract theories, which left us as "blind seers" each describing "the elephant" as our own point of view, and so I thought we might see if actually working with a pattern language approach as intended by [Helene Finidori](#) might help. So, here's the comment proposing that:

Jessie Henshaw: David - Helene's PLAST process is specifically indented to get people to build mutual understandings and over come the "six blind men" dilemma we are facing here, in discussing how economies work. ref:

[[https://www.facebook.com/.../permalink/567445973412751/...](https://www.facebook.com/.../permalink/567445973412751/)]

For example, I seem to share a lot of common values and perceptions with you, but don't see how to respond to statements like your principles no.5 and no.6 above. I see them as philosophical statements, relating to a model you construct mentally, I guess intending to satisfy in your own mind some of the values we share. Still, I don't know what common basis for understanding we'd have since you seem to be using words as symbols in your mental picture of things, and speaking conceptually about your model rather than about the things of the natural world we could both independently relate to, so it's confusing for me.

Of course it goes both ways, that when I refer to things of the natural world, I'm thinking we should all be able to independently recognize and be able to resolve our

differences of interpretation. I face much the same barrier that you can't tell where I'm coming from, though. Sometimes I'm using words to call upon popular common understandings and sometimes to expose popular but common misunderstandings. It's based on a scientific approach to interpreting observations, though, a process of reasoning I developed over time. Most readers would not share that approach and can't understand where I'm coming from, especially when differing with popular ideas they see no reason to question.

One of the values of using a "pattern language" approach is that while building a common understanding you are never working with a closed theory or model. You always retain a commonly shared "open model" that everyone is working on together. So people are not selling their "answers" for their theory but refining and looking for how to connect their "questions". It actually never gets to being a closed model for how the world works. What you end up with is just an improved guide to learning how to work with the nature of circumstances and their recurrent need. That's done mostly by defining the "pattern" as a way of "unifying response" to the "forces" present, looking for ideal design principles for bringing them into balance.

If you don't mind, we could move this discussion back to the PLAST thread, by copying my comment there, and changing our focus to working out "design patterns" instead of discussing our separate conceptualizations.

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2 people like this.

Comments

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Jessie Henshaw M Ichael and David, Locating systems by following their boundaries is one of the subjects I go into in depth in the PURPLSOC paper. In my 2011 paper on System Energy Assessment (SEA) I show how to do energy accounting for whole systems with traceable boundaries. Generally the boundaries we define for models of nesting and hierarchies are highly simplified ideas of what the real boundaries of natural systems are. That's the reason for turning your attention back and forth, to help you learn to recognize how and why natural designs differ so much from conceptual designs.

The most stark difference one only slowly appreciates is that in natural designs the working parts generally work independently, not contingently. The parts of living systems do not directly connect at all, except through open mediums of collective (not individual) exchange. When I write I don't tell you what meaning for my words to have, as you can only make up your own. It's the

same for receiving money, you can spend it on anything at all that the economy is able to produce. It's the same in ecologies and in how our bodies work, and in society. Very reliable large scale systems arise from many individually behaving parts, loosely connected by collective "mediums of exchange". Theories require fixed definitions, though, and just don't work with undefined relationships and independently behaving parts. So I pays to closely watch for why that matters so much.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 2 · December 18, 2015 at 11:03am



David Braden Jessie you say: "Very reliable large scale systems arise from many individually behaving parts." Agreed.

When I say: "4) APPLY SELF REGULATION AND ACCEPT FEEDBACK

Hold open an offer to participate and learn from acceptance and rejection."

We are talking about each element of the system operating according to relatively simple rules based on its genetic make up and niche and the system. It is the flock of birds appearing to have intention by really made up of the choices of individuals. Our goal is to influence new interactions based on the needs of the proposed participants. We want to create a place to connect . . . as in your snowflake.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · December 18, 2015 at 11:25am



Michael Josefowicz Jessie Henshaw

"natural designs the working parts generally work independently, not contingently"

The output of any one node (Sphere) changes the overall environment and can be the input of another node. (Sphere.)

The shape of any sphere above the middle level constrains the choices available to the independent work work at the middle level. There is still free choice, but only within the range of choices available.

I would say the system is most resilient when the working parts have a loose connection to other working parts. A loose connection is like a shock absorber when something goes wrong in another system. If working groups are redundant with multiple loose connections the defined sphere of the system is more resilient.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1 · December 18, 2015 at 6:56pm · Edited

Jessie Henshaw uploaded a file. December 18, 2015
Uploaded 2015 Sep-Nov Conversation Threads



2015 PLAST FB threads Sept, Oct, Nov 2015.pdf
18-Jan-16

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Jessie Henshaw December 18, 2015

Holiday break



I think we've had a wonderful conversation on how to move toward using pattern language, with a large group contributing great things the last month or so, a great long run. Maybe it's a good time to take a break for family, holidays (and all the work we haven't been getting done)... *wink emoticon* I'll check in every few days, but I certainly need some time! We can see what new directions are suggested after thinking it all over for a while. Do think about using the "PLAST pattern projects" page, or designing your own. I think we definitely need to find a way to do accumulative work to move forward.

PLAST pattern projects 12/2015 - Google Sheets

DOCS.GOOGLE.COM

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2 people like this.

Jessie Henshaw December 11, 2015

How do we do Pattern Reseach



PATTERN WORK - How do we do Pattern Research Projects?

.... Basically we need a way to do pattern research projects.

Facebook is a problem given how discussion threads naturally wander and elicit lots of interest and effort but don't produce results... so we could start a group effort to learn how to focus effort on manageable pattern research projects.

My initial thought is that general discussion here be different if the heading of the thread is "PATTERN WORK", and 1) stay focused on exploring the current issues of the project, and 2) while accumulating results on a "work page". The finished product would be presented to the a larger group when ready. So to start that off someone would introduce a PATTERN WORK proposal and create Pattern Work pages, perhaps like these:

2015_12 PATTERN WORK PATTERN SPREADSHEET. ...

Shttps://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1JzTZO5pO6

xkg0LcTCE4o2I0zb2CQJ0KwvDxb3XdHA4U/edit?usp=sharing

2015_12 PATTERN WORK PATTERN PAGES
<https://docs.google.com/.../1uKxuNxe1D4gloCazTX58JE591D.../edit...>


PLAST pattern projects 12/2015 - Google Sheets

DOCS.GOOGLE.COM


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M Ichael Josefowicz and 2 others like this.


Comments

 **M Ichael Josefowicz** **Jessie Henshaw** I don't know if this is appropriate or if it helps. I am a mentor to a start up publishing NGO based in Kolkata and New York. It's a longer story which I would be very happy to share. I don't know if pattern language can help, but I do know we can use all the help we can get.


Like · Reply · December 11, 2015 at 4:27pm · Edited

 **David Braden** I am trying to understand what you are looking for in the Spread Sheet **Jessie**. Would I enter what I see as aspects of My Big Pattern Project and My Manageable Pattern Project?

Like · Reply · December 12, 2015 at 1:20pm

 **Jessie Henshaw** No, its for pattern language work. I'll just wait till someone interested in that and wants to add input on how for doing it..

Like · Reply · December 14, 2015 at 11:26am · Edited

 **Jessie Henshaw** Well, here is an image of a complex design pattern from my paper for PLoP in October that was very well received. It's potentially of general interest as very purposeful pattern for how to integrate artificial systems with living systems.

So we might talk about writing design patterns using that general format on the "PATTERN WORK" thread I started, maybe using the spreadsheet I set up so we could rough things out. I think we need something like that to get our bearings on how to work on design pattern concepts with a group. To do "work" of course, one needs to be "constructive" (rather than digressive) as a process of building something, and discussion organizing as a design process of choosing what next to add. So the discussion would be a bit like SCRUM or my "Pattern Cycle" learning to result in the process of discussion for finding the next piece to add.

Model Pattern

Cyclehttp://synapse9.com/_PLCycles/JLH_PatternCycle1pl.pdf


Pattern Work discussion page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/125513674232534/permalink/852265638223997/>


The way **Helmut** and I proceeded in jointly working on design patterns for "Home" was sort of as you suggest, first discussing the subject and then, in that case, work independently to quickly produce advanced presentations of our own approaches. <http://synapse9.com/.../Skype18Oct15-Helmut&Jessie.pdf>



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 **M Ichael Josefowicz** **Jessie Henshaw** I need a clarification. Is your intent that the end result of a collaboration will be a presentation or a paper... or something else?

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 **Jessie Henshaw** I think it's important for "work" to produce "results". People working closely might do short or long joint papers, yes. For a discussion group I think the kind of collaboration that is probably easier would be like what **Helmut** & I did, each using our own methods to try describing the general pattern of "home". We first discussed it for a while and then agreed to produce short presentations using our own methods. After we made them we presented them to each other on SKYPE (see the link). To present them to others we were waiting for a group meeting, maybe to have half the meeting devoted to brief presentations of such results if there were any.<http://synapse9.com/.../Skype18Oct15-Helmut&Jessie.pdf>

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Jessie Henshaw Well, pattern language work generally doesn't start with finding answers, but finding the problems you'd have to respond to. Look at the test Helmut and I did for each of us writing a design pattern for "home". Each of us in our own way first collected a list of the problems "home" solves, and then for what addresses them as a whole. <http://synapse9.com/.../Skype18Oct15-Helmut&Jessie.pdf>

So you could invent your own method of doing that. You might start a list of interesting problems or solutions to investigate this way, like on the spreadsheet for that I set up, and encourage others, to then select one to work together with others on. So it could be a project for creating any kind of design, but a bit more like resolving the 'program' than implementing it. Whether it's a program for developing a theory, a policy, a building, or changing social relationships, the main work would be in exploring the environment for what needs to be responded to and finding the concepts for addressing several things at once and bring all the forces into balance. <https://docs.google.com/.../1JzTZO5pO6xkg0LcTCE4o.../edit...>

So, yes, the project and the work group, how it works together or individually on their own designs, their schedule and kind of output would all be open and get resolved at the point a

discussion results in picking something to do. So that would in all, mimic the kind of project Helene's PLAST grant might have funded, but for no funding... wink emoticon

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David Braden David Holmgren's 7th principle of permaculture is to design from pattern to detail. Extending that principle to community design I describe it this way:

"The "pattern" we work with is the pattern of interactions among the living things around us (including all humans and their organizations). Within that pattern there are unmet needs and unused resources. The "detail" we work with is finding instances where we can utilize an existing unused resource to satisfy an existing unmet need and thereby increase the participation (diversity, complexity, stability and productivity) within the pattern."

I realize that is a different usage of the term pattern. Each time we successfully increase participation, we create more places to "connect" within the pattern allowing it to grow in complexity the way that Jessie describes the growth of a snow flake in her paper.

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