

Pattern get into detail
on how it



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Pattern language.

When those words come to mind I start to think different layouts, how can I arrange things and line of symmetry. One of the most popular places to go for things like these is in India. I went to India to study Dhal ni Pol's houses but lead me to discover different things like those I mentioned above.

Looking at Alexander's book ' A pattern language' gave me an insight of various pattern languages that can be used and how people have used it.

What I want to involve in my essay is, firstly how Dhal Ni Pol's pattern language is assembled and get into detail on how it works. Secondly, I want to involve Alexander's book and see how Dhal Ni Pol's houses and surroundings link to the book. I want to give my opinions if I agree or disagree on how the pattern relate to the Pol. Dhal Ni Pol.

You would probably know them for their big gates, protecting them from the riots they had back in 1738. The overcrowded city called Ahmedabad, we find these small and secured areas called the ' Pol' which means clustered houses. Every Pol had two gates or more and even hidden openings, but only a few people know where the hidden openings are. As you enter the Pol there's a weird flow to it, that's why they've called it ' Dhal' which means sloping. Visiting such a populated area in India (Dhal Ni Pol) means, congested areas but however, some parts may be quite at times. For example, when I went to the Pol it was busy at the front gates. The entrance was narrow at the start but happen to expand, then was narrow again, it had a weird flow to it.

The buildings were really close which had some sort of comfort, it felt like everyone knew each other. The roads were able to fit a car going through one way and out the other way. The Pol is a small residential area that mainly has a road going through the whole pol.

Once it starts to get crowded it starts to feel like a maze to get through and it also feels like little neighbourhoods as the road becomes a dead end as you keep turning in. The houses in the pol are very close to each other meaning the roads are not going to be big which then creates traffic, but seeing how the pol is made they've placed something called the 'chabutra' which gives people some space to breathe. It is placed there so people can feed the bulls when it's time to, not really used at this time. Buildings tend to be made like storeys which makes it feel like someone is looking over you. It's a small and compacted area therefore there are a lot of families sleeping in one room and because it is dense, everyone seems to know everyone.

Open spaces mean a lot to the residents in the Pol because giving them spaces like the 'Otla' they can communicate which makes them come together. Mini stalls are set up everywhere in the Pol, it's a point where everyone can have a chat & drink tea. It's kind of a repeated pattern as every 20 houses down you'll see a stall that either has tea or they're selling fruits and veg. Looking around these houses in the Pol makes me think that it has some sort of symmetry because as you look ahead of the roads nearly every house has a balcony caved in they kind of looked like Tetris how every building was a different height and shape. Reading Alexander's book 'Pattern Language' gave a lot of patterns that could relate to the Pol. Reading some of the patterns, I have gathered that Alexander is interested in how the

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buildings and the people relate and how they use and make space. Coming to pattern '53 Main Gateways' Alexandra's has a good point here, he talks about an area having a gate and knowing that it is going to be a different part of the area you're stepping into.

" Any part of a town- large or small- which is to be identified by its inhabitants as a prescient of some kind, will be reinforced, helped in its distinctness, marked, and made more vivid, if the paths which enter it are marked by gateways where they cross the boundary" meaning putting a gate at the entrance will make the area more noticeable. I personally agree with this because linking this pattern to the Pol, the entrances to the Pol have big main gates. By putting these gates here means it's easier to recognise the area by just looking at the gate. It also made me feel that I'm stepping into another area in a way because the gate separates it from the high street.

Dhal Ni Pol main entrances

Going through

the patterns I came across one pattern that really associates itself with the pol.

Alexandra was interested in towns and cities to form houses around an open space and then for them to use all the space that's available. This pattern is called ' House Cluster' he says " Arrange houses to form very rough but identifiable clusters of 8 to 12 households around some common land and paths. Arrange the clusters so that anyone can walk through them, without feeling like a trespasser." The pol has many places where you go into and it's a dead end but forms that shape that Alexandra talks about. I agree that houses formed like this give the owners more space and does not make the people around the space feel like one has more space than the other. The

buildings forming this space helps communal activities between them because it shaped in a way that everyone can see each other.

In the pol, this occurs many times because the way the pol is formed, it is like a maze and each dead end has this curved shaped formed. The tree you see in the picture has its own space, that brings out life in people because it is like the only tree there. Linking this to what Alexandra said, " When trees are planted or pruned without regard for the special places they can create, they are as good as dead for the people who need them.

" this means by putting the tree in the area everyone will take advantage of it because it's the only one. That what exactly happens in the Pol. We can link this with another pattern called ' small public squares' he makes an interesting point here by saying " a town needs public squares; they are largest... But when they are too large, they look and feel deserted." This indicated that having an area that is too big, people will not use as much of the land. Alexandra gives some measurements of how big it should be, '15 to 20 metres and 20 to 30 metres in the other directions'.

I can Relate this to the Pol because like I said every dead end has this pattern, and the Pol itself is small which then leads to children and adults to use up all the space. if it was bigger than usual then people won't abuse the space as much. Because the pol is a small area there isn't a place where people don't use so it won't feel isolated. Spaces formed around the area The pattern that Alexandra thinks ' is almost automatically solved' is called ' The Long Thin House'.

This pattern specifies how space should be created and how buildings should be made to give us more space. One of the statements Alexandra makes is that “ The shape of a building has a great effect on the relative degrees of a privacy and overcrowding in it, and this in turn has a critical effect on people comfort and well being.” Alexandra makes a point that shaping a building in a way influences peoples living comfortably, he believes that shaping a building in a rectangular way is better than shaping it into a square. You can get natural lighting coming in from both ways which will improve how comfortable a person is. Alexandra thinks also having a rectangular shaped building means more space for a family outside because the base is not flat in width and it’s not dead in the centre. A rectangular building will take up less space because it’s narrower and it will have the same space as the squared building, but it will be on different floors.

Linking this pattern with the pols matches what Alexandra’s working out. The pols are full of houses that are built in a rectangular way for two reasons. Firstly, because every house has at least 3 families in there and having a rectangular house means each family can have a floor, on the other hand, if they had a squared house it will take up a lot of room in the pol. Flat houses mean more of the land will be filled up and not enough people will be able to live there. The second reason is by building a house like a tower means more space for the families to go outside and around the building and socialise in a better way. Alexandra’s sketches links with photograph.

As I went through all the patterns I have realised that all the patterns link with each other in terms of spacing and how comfortable people live and how to make it easier for people to do and notice things. Patterns like ‘ Small
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Public Squares', ' Long Thin Houses' and House Cluster' have a lot in common in terms of spacing and how people should live. 253 patterns and most of them can relate to the Pol. Alexandra's book has a strong understanding of how buildings should be placed and how to make people's lives easier for them to live.

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Dhal Ni Pol main entrances, (photograph), (Hussein Chehab own private collection) Chehab. H., 5th December 2017. Spaces formed around the area, (photograph), (Hussein Chehab own private collection) Chehab. H., 5th December 2017. Alexandra's sketches links with photograph., (photograph), (Hussein Chehab own private collection)