

« Back to blog

# EMERGENT CITIES

BuilderShips · ImagineNations



Sébastien Paquet

On Twitter:

<http://twitter.com/sebpaquet>

On Pinterest:

<http://pinterest.com/sebpaquet/>

Seb's research blog:

<http://openresearch.sebpaquet.net>

Subscribe via RSS

## Patterns of Emergent Cities: 1. The Founder



This is the first in a series of posts describing **patterns** that help **understand the experience of building something really new, together**. These pattern descriptions are chiefly informed by my observations of social dynamics in all kinds of creative initiatives.

The patterns are meant to be used as templates to guide anyone who is going down the path of getting something like an emergent city up and going. Internalizing the patterns - making them yours - will enable you to see how and when they map to your particular situation, and make them manifest in your projects.

Read this while thinking of a project close to your heart, something that deserves to exist, and gently let yourself slip into the pattern. Just try it on for size...

\*\*\*

*"If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people together to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea"*

*Antoine de Saint-Exupéry*



### - Social Imagination -

Where others saw nothing but forests and streams, Founders of yore saw building materials, energy sources, and waterways.

Where others see nothing but people, and things, you, the Founder, see possibility.

Some things must be seen to be believed; but the emergent City is one of those things that must be believed to be seen.

And the great thing is that, somehow, you are able to make the Pioneer see it, too.

Together the two of you are able to believe in it.

You see the people in it. They are many. They love the City, too. They inhabit it, and it inhabits them. The magic of the City gets you excited. You wish you could live it, too.

What you are seeing, in fact, is an imagined nation; social imagination is the instrument that lets you gaze at it.

**- Cats -**

You attract, and are attracted to, independent-minded people. The Pioneers you need, and get, are Cats.

Notice I said Cats, not copycats. You are not looking to start a cult of personality. You are a cultural innovator; you need culture creators.

You cannot, and neither do you wish to, mold the Pioneers into clones of yourself. You deeply appreciate diversity and interplay of strengths: it is the only way the whole will be greater than the sum of its parts. You are completing a puzzle of which each piece is different and will have a unique place.

Now, Cats wouldn't be caught dead in a group. Yet, you are pulling off the feat of bringing them together. How?

By giving them a worthy and meaningful challenge that none of them could accomplish on their own: bringing the City into existence.

**- The Tease -**

As the Founder, you are of necessity a salesperson, but you deal in ideas. He is what you are selling the Pioneer:

- **A departure: an escape route** from the old and tired into an open space with few constraints;
- A sense of **possibility** - the promise of a new freedom he has had a glimpse of, but has not yet experienced;
- **Mystery, adventure, and challenge** - an *experience*; danger, even!
- **An opportunity to contribute his unique talents** towards creating something meaningful that, in his eyes, deserves to exist;
- And finally, the **chance to design a new 'home'**, a new life for himself and others.

**- Connection -**

You grow a personal bond with each Pioneer. You find the song in him: that deep-seated fire in his belly which is sometimes hidden, sometimes neglected, but never extinguished.

You connect to his *obligation to meaning*. His drive, his desire to *do something*.

You do so by opening up, by telling a story, by revealing your dream, bit by bit. You help the Pioneer connect his *own* dream to yours.

Together you find where he fits in your dream, and where you fit in his.

**- Guiding Lights -**

You know full well that you are not the leader. You are simply lending your voice to something that doesn't yet have a voice. The *vision* of that living, thriving City - something that works, something that is beautiful, something that will itself be full of possibility and draw people in - is the actual leader and guide.

The City already exists in the Pioneers' minds; each one of you knows that all that is left to do now is to make it manifest.

**Next pattern: 2. The Fellowship.**

\*\*\*

*This post was inspired in no small part by my encounters with the one and only Vincent Olivier.*

*Image: Future city landscape by ~truehorror666 on deviantART*

Posted 1 year ago | Viewed 22118 times

Filed under: [attraction](#) [challenges](#) [dreams](#) [founders](#) [foundership](#) [pioneers](#) [social imagination](#) [social patterns](#) [vision](#)**6 responses**[Like](#)[Comment](#)almost 2 years ago [Jay Standish](#) responded:

Awesome stuff as usual, Seb! Let me know if you're ever interested in putting these into card form. Would be cool if your deck could interoperate with the Symbionomics deck.

almost 2 years ago [Sébastien Paquet](#) responded:

Thanks Jay! Yes, making cards would be awesome. If you have ideas for symbols/logos that fit the patterns, please send 'em my way.

almost 2 years ago [Philippe Verstichel](#) responded:

Bonjour Sébastien,

Très belle introduction en matière. On sent le 'connectivisme' à l'oeuvre mais en y ajoutant l'indicible beauté de l'être (je n'ai pas dit légèreté) qui nous pousse à vouloir rendre signifiant même l'insignifiant, c'est à dire ce qui n'existe pas encore. C'est presque comme la construction d'un poème. Un esprit chaotique dans une forme très rationnelle.

Bien sûr, plein de références pour que chacun se retrouve dans son projet, pour que l'un puisse construire avec l'autres, sa "soci(e)ty" (sorry pour le néologisme). Swift, Tolkien, Moore, ... Après l'utopie et la dystopie, tu nous pousses à imaginer de nouveaux mondes un peu comme François Schuiten.

Mais avant tout, essayons de comprendre ce phénomène qui se rapproche si fort de l'inspiration artistique. Tes propositions sont sensées et surtout humaines.

L'homme ne crée jamais autant que lorsqu'il se sent menacé ou lorsqu'il a peur. Et quoi de plus phobique que ... l'inconnu ... qu'il soit un 'autre- être' ou un 'autre-lieu'.

Philippe

almost 2 years ago [Sébastien Paquet](#) responded:

Merci Philippe, quelle belle critique! En bon émule de Christopher Alexander, je m'efforce effectivement de synthétiser le poétique et le rationnel, en poussant de la création vers la cocréation...

almost 2 years ago [Cherlynn Beck](#) responded:

I LOVE this. Sebatien, I want to know you. Can we skype some time?

almost 2 years ago [Sébastien Paquet](#) responded:

I'd love to learn more about you. Are you online somewhere?

Leave a Comment

Name:

Leave this field

blank to comment.

Email:

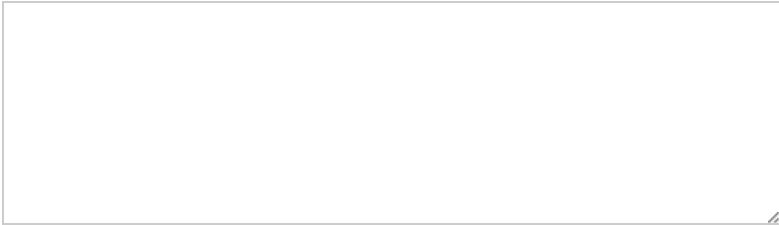
Homepage:

Want to skip this stuff?

Login with any of the following:

[Register or login to Posterous](#)

Comment:



Post this Comment

Posterous theme by Cory Watilo