Preface

Culture at once drives, and is driven by, the formation of societies as people within that society interact and connect with one another and the environments in which they exist. From these interactions, a notion of culture emerges, manifesting in both tangible and intangible dimensions such as language, religion, values, customs, literature, technology, and art.

Each society reflects a different manifestation of culture’s many dimensions as various nuances of that society shape how these dimensions emerge. Does a given society place great value on art? If so, how is “art” defined and how is it valued by the society? The society’s history, geography, political setting, ethnic composition, economics, and family norms are among the countless factors that would ultimately determine how this society valued art.

Conversely, and yet at the same time, culture influences how a society’s identity develops and matures. Cultural norms and traditions, for example, play an explicit role in establishing many aspects of a society, including work life, education systems, and governance. One of the areas of society in which the influences of culture are most apparent is in architecture. A society’s culture is not only influential in the formation of architectural products, but it also defines other key aspects of the environments in which people live and interact. This book examines the impact of culture on architecture, from the planning to the production stage of architectural products.

Chapter 1 examines the potential influence of cultural indoctrination (CI) on architectural style worldwide. Based on an encompassing literature review, this chapter focuses on the mediator of religion among the seven factors which are included in the established conceptual framework for CI; namely, Child Development, Cultural Institutionalization, Cultural Intelligence, Social Learning Theory, Religion, Social Capital, and Values Orientation Theory (VOT). The conceptual framework is presented for potential future application in architectural style and practice.
Chapter 2 investigates the evolution of construction systems by exploring the cultural effects on traditional structures and their reflection on modern building construction. The history of structural systems in architecture is as old as human history. Even early humans attempted to make a shelter to ensure their safety and to live in more comfortable conditions. The first examples of shelters were simple structures such as caves, tents, and houses constructed from stone or wooden logs, adobe blocks, and so forth where the basic materials were local ones and formation of the shelter was based on cultural traditions. Even though materials used were similar for different geographies and were materials that could be found locally and easily such as natural creations (caves), wood, stone, mud, straw, leaves and so forth, the aesthetic part like ornaments, paintings, colors used, and compositions were quite different, a fact which led to unique architectural creations.

Chapter 3 covers the important role of space in communication. Design scholars have long recognized the importance of context, but few have gone further than to acknowledge that space has a communicative dimension. While design research has investigated certain aspects of communication (especially some symbolic properties) in organizations, it has not examined the full spectrum of symbolic and physical properties of space which affect interpersonal, group, and organizational communication needs. The physical setting communicates messages through its symbolic properties. Just as importantly, it supports or impedes our ability to use visual, auditory, tactile/haptic, and olfactory cues through its physical properties which help convey and interpret messages in social interaction. Design solutions which effectively use symbolic and physical properties of space to accommodate interpersonal, group, and organizational communication needs support organizational strategies to maximize worker opportunity to perform in today’s workplace.

Chapter 4 inspects the human figure as a cultural mediator in architectural drawings. In architectural drawings, human figures are conventionally used to visually express the use of space and the size of architectural components, but in the context of architecture design their presence can be interpreted in many ways, depending on the design level, the scale of reduction, and the objectives of the representation itself. Their presence in architecture designs is supposed to be a symptom of a particular sensibility toward human scale and needs, but during centuries, they have been playing a number of roles not only according to the kinds of representation but to the different idea about man.

Chapter 5 probes two unique protected sites with a modern heritage in the historical peninsula of Istanbul, Turkey. Despite the numerous earthquakes and fires suffered in the past, Istanbul managed to maintain its original architectural identity until the 19th century. However, its urban structure was rapidly changed in the last
century; thus, it has become a city that is exposed to constant change regarding the avenues, boulevards, and modernist architecture. Deterioration in the organic street pattern formed by wooden houses with bay windows has occurred in Istanbul through the reshaping processes by western norms and urbanism which started in the 1930s. The city attempted to be reshaped under planning incompatible with its multi-layered socio-cultural identity. Within the scope of modernization acts, many architects and urban planners from Europe were invited to Istanbul by the government. In this study, a section of the process of converting the old Istanbul with its strong culture and history into dynamic new Istanbul will be analyzed through the old and new neighborhood textures, how these two have been thrown away from each other during this process, and how efforts are made to compensate this alienation with life complexes that are suitable for the city.

Chapter 6 analyzes flânerie as a source for living the physical space. The flâneur is the urban vagabond in search of experiences and inspirations from serendipitously exploring a city environment. This construct is put beside post-modern stances about the suburban areas built and populated after the Second World War industrialization, along with considerations about ecological psychology, cultural materialism, and sound theory. The main concept is to provide those places with a communication level that would be pleasant to discover while wandering without a destination. Therefore, it is desirable to conceive a meta-design tool able to incorporate creativity, ownership, and conviviality.

Chapter 7 probes so-called “bridges” and “gaps” on maps of multicultural cities via the South Russian agglomeration. Examining the present striving for a unified living standard, we assume that it leads to unification of the cities throughout the world. At the same time, a rocketing diversity of a society is reflected on the city map in number of symbolic gaps and attempts to build bridges with intention to connect distinct districts. It becomes even more urgent in the context of agglomeration process, which is considered as a result of urbanized economic development. The idea relies on the concept of clustering economies and network effects. The ultimate benefit of agglomeration lies in the city growing and, as a circumstance, economic efficiency, while cities are becoming large. The obvious disadvantage of agglomeration is the gaps dividing the city landscape into different parts poorly interconnected.

Chapter 8 scrutinizes the values and benefits of nature-based architecture or biophilia. Biophilia is the deep-seated need of humans to connect with nature. It helps explain why crackling fires and crashing waves captivate us, why a view of nature can enhance our creativity, why shadows and heights instill fascination and fear, and why gardening and strolling through a park have restorative healing ef-
fects. Biophilia, as a hypothesis, may also help explain why some urban parks and buildings are preferred over others. Research scientists and design practitioners have been working for decades to define aspects of nature that most impact our satisfaction with the built environment. Furthermore, as new evidence emerges, the relationships between nature, science, and the built environment are becoming easier to understand traditional wisdom and new opportunities.

Chapter 9 delves into the dimensions of cultural identity founded by the Dutch social psychologist Geert Hofstede and their effects on organizational psychology. In the world of architecture, the field of architecture is of an island with estranged connection with engineering, (material) science, geology, art, and culture. In the world of organizational psychology, the field of organizational psychology is a by-product of business (organizational behavior and management), psychology [clinical and industrial and organizational psychology (I/O)], and culture. The one common paramount connection between architecture and organizational psychology in the world of globalization is culture. Hence, the purpose of this chapter is the examination of organizational psychology with an emphasis on culture: specifically, Hofstede’s dimensions of cultural (corporate and organizational) identity, and how culture influences architecture and business in globalization. Thus, this chapter covers identity and architectural heritage, globalization and architecture, and Hofstede’s dimensions of culture.

Chapter 10 rounds out the book via a discussion on the fundamentals of social capital (SC) which has received substantive attention from scholars across a variety of disciplines. SC covers different characteristics such as social networks, social participation, social support, and trust, and is recognized as a combination of social and economic perspectives. SC has the value of social relationships to generate positive outcomes, both for the key parties involved and for wider society. Its connection with the subject of this book lies in the fact that SC can drive cultural changes which, in turn, can ultimately affect architectural style.

We trust this publication effort will spur further research into the connection between culture and architecture on a global basis. As the world continues to evolve rapidly due to the effects of contemporary globalism, architectural style continues to evolve as well as can easily be seen by the rapid changes in city architecture worldwide. This book attempts to assist in that effort by asking the following questions:

1. What can we understand about a society by examining its buildings and physical environment?
2. What can we understand about buildings and environment by examining the society in which they exist?
Qualified answers to both of these inquiries should contribute to asthetically pleasing and progressive architecture that is suitable to the demands and changes of 21st century civilization.

Gülşah Koç
Yıldız Technical University, Turkey

Marie-Therese Claes
Louvain School of Management, Belgium

Bryan Christiansen
PryMarke, LLC, USA