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# The Architecture Student Culture: An Archaeology of the Everyday Life in the Design Studio

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# **THE ARCHITECTURE STUDENT CULTURE**

**AN ARCHEOLOGY OF EVERYDAY LIFE IN THE DESIGN STUDIO**

**Lubomir Popov**

Bowling Green State University

Publications in Architecture and Urban Planning  
Center for Architecture and Urban Planning Research  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

September, 2003

**THE ARCHITECTURE STUDENT CULTURE**

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Lubomir Popov

## ABSTRACT

This text is created in pursuit of several major goals, both diverse in their nature and focused by common purpose. The study follows the interpretative principles of Symbolic Interactionism and utilizes the Grounded Theory methodology. The first goal is to better understand the culture of architecture students and particularly the fascinating everyday life in the design studio. The second goal is to better understand architecture students as users of school buildings. The third goal is to explore the opportunities offered by Grounded Theory for the study of user culture and needs in regard to facility programming.

The narrative highlights a number of important traits of the architecture student culture and focuses mostly on the daily routines beyond the formal class time, the processes of professional socialization "after hours," and the special air that surrounds architecture students. An important part of the study is the interpretation of the studio life and student personalities in order to construe the major forces that shape the architecture student culture.

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## PREFACE

This publication presents a study with several major goals, both diverse in their nature and focused by common purpose. The first goal is to better understand the culture of architecture students and particularly the fascinating everyday life in the design studio. The second goal is to better understand architecture students both as a specific subculture and as a group of users of school buildings. This aspect of the study is directly related to the field of facility programming. In this regard, the text illustrates the contributions of cultural studies to the area of user needs research and programming in general. The third goal is to explore the opportunities offered by the Grounded Theory for the study of user culture and needs in regard to facility programming. This side of the methodological aspect is not explicated, but it had an important motivational role in devising the study. These three goals and functions of the



ishing that an environment so familiar to architectural designers is treated with almost distant indifference in regard to student needs and behavior patterns.

Facility programs and the design requirements and guidelines that constitute them are, or at least they should be, a codification of user needs, patterns of behavior, and space utilization. Knowledge about building users is essential for reconstructing the use of space and formulating design objectives. The professionals who develop design requirements employ different methods, ranging from prototype studies to mass surveys and standardized interviews to observation and in-depth interviews. The most common methods are chosen with consideration of quick results, staffing, and economic feasibility. Programmers and designers often resort to surveys and interviews with standardized questionnaires and shy away from time-consuming in-depth interviews and observations. While this approach can work in situations where the users are well known and have been researched for previous projects, the results may prove superficial when studying the users of non-traditional or lesser-known settings. "Cookie-cutter" approaches that aim for quick data collection can be misleading even in fairly common and familiar situations. In such cases the development of user-needs programs and design considerations is served best by methodologies that facilitate the understanding of users and their social world.

An important function of this study is to explore the

study are presented in more detail in the paragraphs that follow.

The text depicts the culture of architecture students based on analysis of studio life. The study highlights a number of important traits of this culture and focuses mostly on the daily routines, the processes of professional socialization, and the special air that surrounds architecture students. An important part of the study is the interpretation of studio life and student personalities in order to reconstruct the major forces that shape the architecture student culture.

In respect to facility programming, the object of study selected for this inquiry – the architectural studio – is very interesting methodologically because, on the one hand, it is familiar to architectural designers and on the other hand, it is often taken for granted and overlooked. This situation provides us with the opportunity to demonstrate how a particular programming information collection strategy and research approach will work and produce information that in conventional and unsystematic studies is either overlooked or not reflected upon sufficiently. The architectural school is often designed in a way that doesn't differ much from a school of education or a traditional academic facility. The studio spaces are just big classrooms, and the school spatial structure is designed to accommodate the circulation of large groups of people rather than to meet the unique needs of architecture students. It is aston-

advantages and the limitations of the Grounded Theory approach to researching social reality and the sociospatial relations in regard to facility programming (Glaser, 1994, 1995, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glassner & Hertz, 1999; Lofland & Lofland, 2003; Strauss, 1984, 1985, 1987a, 1987b, 2001; Strauss & Corbin, 1997, 1998; Young, 2002). The approach can be particularly useful in the study of activity settings and building types that are not well known to the architects. The more unusual and unfamiliar the building type, the more esoteric behavior patterns and sociospatial needs will be unveiled, and the greater benefits this method will bring. The Grounded Theory approach can be used for the study of non-traditional settings such as hospices (Corless, Germino, & Pittman, 1994; Dickenson & Johnson, 1993; Glaser and Strauss, 1965, 1968; Golubow, 2002), home-like birthing centers (Lerman, 1991; Turkel, 1995), facilities for the elderly (Corbin & Strauss, 1988; Hyman & Corbin, 2001; Rubin, 1999), correctional facilities of any type (Flanagan, Marquart & Adams, 1998), hospitals (Fagerhaugh & Strauss, 1977), and schools for children with special needs (Ricaurte, 1998; Speece & Keogh, 1996). Its contributions will be even greater to architects working for the first time in a specific building type or those who have had little exposure to the users, and little time and few resources to engage in such detailed and profound explorations.

This text can be of interest to several diverse

groups: scholars (and students) in cultural studies, facility programmers (consultants who intend to enter the programming business, active programmers, educators, and students), and methodologists (both in academic research and facility programming).

For scholars in cultural studies we hope this will be an interesting publication on a particular understudied sub-population. We believe that the world of architecture students can be as interesting as hip-hop, teenyboppers, and gothic bodies.

Facility programmers might be interested to see how an extensive cultural studies component can be incorporated into the programming process. They can see the informational potential of such intervention and the benefits of using social science approaches in programming research.

Professionals and students in architecture and in facility programming can see the application of one methodology, which, although not new to the research community, is rarely utilized in architectural research or in programming in particular. A review of a number of course syllabi indicates that although architectural research courses inform about some qualitative approaches, the major focus is still on traditional positivist quantitative methods.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank a number of people and organizations that made this publication possible. My warmest thanks are extended to the unnamed students and faculty who allowed me to spend many dozens of hours in their studio, who invited me to parties and happy hours in their favorite pub, and who were kind enough to sit for interviews and share their own experience in a frank and candid manner. I regret I cannot mention their names because of a pledge for privacy.

I would like to thank Dr. Dale Jaffe, Professor of Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, for his encouragement, inspirations, and insightful suggestions.

And last, but not least, I want to thank the staff of the Center for Architectural and Urban Planning Research, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the staff of the UWM publishing house for assisting with the publication of this text.

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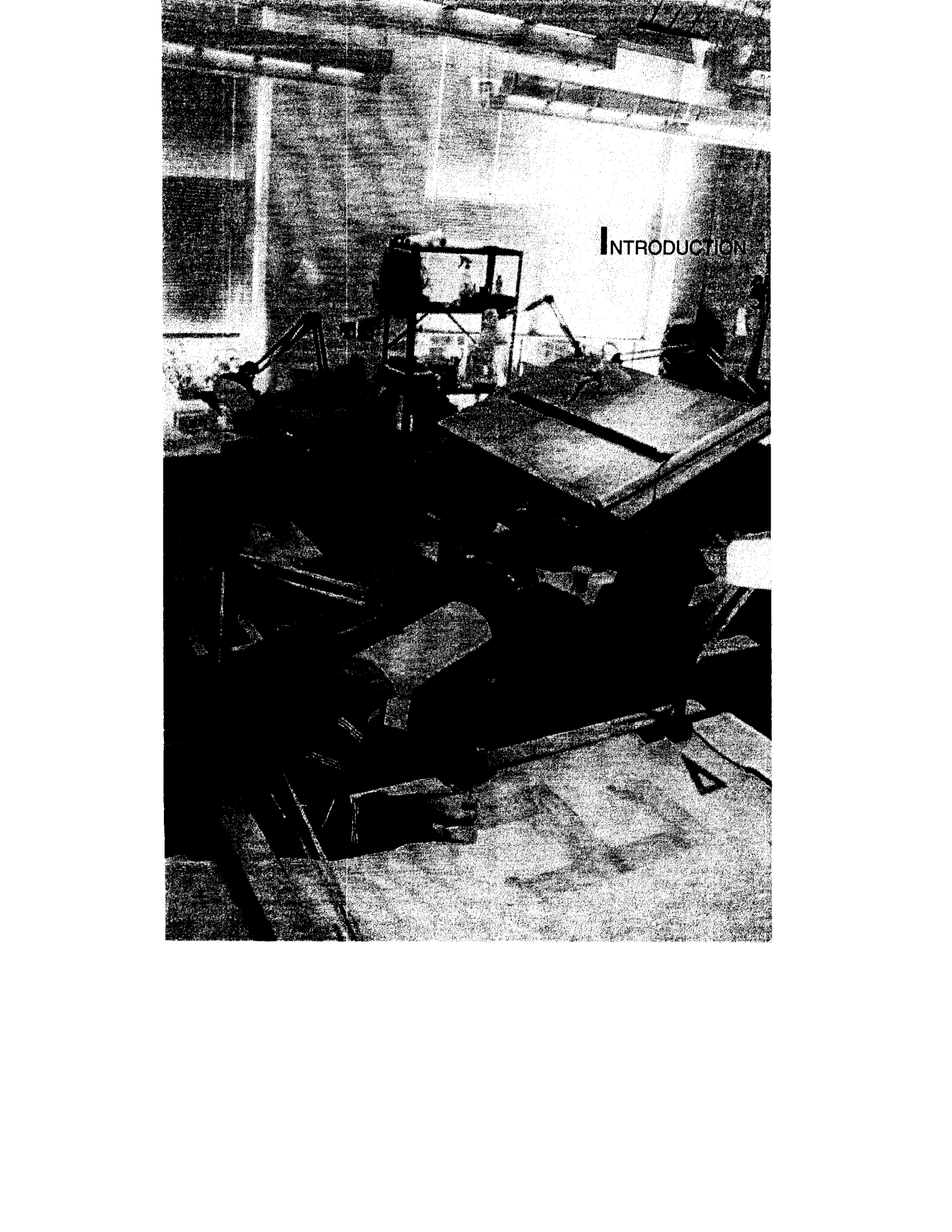
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## INTRODUCTION

# INTRODUCTION

## The subject matter and its context

Architecture students represent a colorful cultural phenomenon and stimulate a genuine interest in outside observers. This is in partly due to the “air” surrounding their profession and the delicate balance they maintain in their lives between their emotional sensitivity and artistic attitude on the one hand, and their disciplined organization of time and work on the other. When observed more closely, it appears that these young people display distinctive patterns of spatial use and surprising daily cycles. If I had any doubts about the real existence of a distinctive architecture student culture, they were greatly diminished after I read an announcement of a photo competition about life in an *architectural studio*. Its subject matter was the poetics of everyday life in a studio: how architecture students organized and “trimmed” their environ-



ment, engaged in late night work, and conducted overall life in school.

The studio is a basic form of implementing the educational program in architecture. It is the major structure for gaining knowledge, skills, and experience in the field of design. In studio teaching, emphasis is placed on "hands-on" experience: studying by doing, learning by problem-solving, and active participation. From an organizational point of view, the studio can be defined as a room housing several students (7-15) who are supervised by one instructor and one teaching assistant. The studio members form a temporary social group existing in a well-defined physical setting. A studio's duration is one semester; in the next semester, only a small percentage of the same group of students will continue to work together. The design studio is the core of the curriculum and the most important part of the learning process for architecture students. It is the way architecture is taught. Its major principle is hands-on experience. The studio is the vehicle through which students acquire their most valuable professional knowledge, skills, and experience. Students understand very well that their future as architects is shaped in the studio classes.

From an environmental design research perspective, architecture students can be viewed as schoolhouse users who deserve close attention and should be provided with spatial resources that best support their goals and behavior. The domain of the present study is delineated by

the traits that are pertinent to the utilization of space in the architectural studio: everyday strategy decisions, adaptation of behavior patterns, values shaping both strategy and choice of patterns, and models of negotiating the use of space.

My initial literature search reflected that research on architecture students usually focuses on educational issues, minorities, and gender relations. The issue of appropriation of space is rarely mentioned. This makes a case for initiating a study that will partially fill the void. Furthermore, it also presupposes that there are not enough knowledge and conceptual models to design a quantitative study, and that the most appropriate approach to the research situation is a qualitative one.

### **Searching for previous research: A brief literature review**

There are only a few publications providing information about everyday life and socialization in the architectural studio, and none has the explicit goal to reveal the spatial aspects of studio life and the use of space. There are two distinct areas of study: design methods and pedagogy, and gender and minority issues. These research interests stem from the main concerns of contemporary architectural educators. Design education and its improvement is a major issue in every school of architecture. Gender politics

emerge as a result of the massive influx of women in the American workforce. No doubt these concerns are worthwhile and deserve the resources and attention of the architectural and sociological research communities. In regard to the use of space they are very important; they cannot, however, provide the canvas for building up behavioral rationale for shaping space. Powerlessness and empowerment are basic issues in analyzing the politics of space, but activities, values, needs, and interests constitute the social construction of space.

The everyday spatial behavior of students in a studio hasn't yet captured the interest of researchers, mainly because everyday life in the studio is not perceived as problematic. There are possibly several reasons for this. First, all faculty have passed through such an initiation and they find it a normal, if not an entertaining, experience. Second, the exotic nature of studio life is attributed to youngsters' eccentricity, as suggested by the photo competition mentioned above. Third, nobody sees severe social implications of spatial behavior patterns. And fourth, the current research fad is strongly influenced by power and dominance concerns, rather than with the mosaic of everyday life.

Probably the most illuminating article is "Sex, Plugs, and Rock & Roll: Students Talk About Life in Studio" (Ahrentzen, 1992). Most of the points made by the author reemerged in the context of the present investiga-

tion. Although strongly interested in the politics of sex and power, the author pays specific attention to the studio environment and the emerging spatial behavior patterns as antecedents of social relations. Many of the highlighted problems evolve directly from the social effects of human interaction with the physical setting. Sherry Ahrentzen (1992) mentions the shabby appearance in the studio, distractions of various nature, audio contamination, homey attitude, camaraderie, and intensive professional and social interaction and exchange.

Other illuminating accounts of studio rites and behavior patterns can be found in "Architecture: The Story of Practice" (Cuff, 1992). One chapter in her book is devoted to the making of the architect. The emphasis of the study is on the professional culture: beliefs, values, norms, rituals, strategies, and underlying motivations. Studio life is viewed as a major factor in this process. The mechanisms of the socialization process, highlighted by the author, are very important in understanding studio life. The behavior patterns and social attitudes of the young people are influenced strongly by the referent persons and groups who provide role models.

### The research agenda

The subject of this study is the cultural specifics of architectural studio life, particularly in regard to its spatial

dimensions. The area of inquiry is narrowed down by concentrating on aspects that are pertinent to the use of space in the architectural studio: everyday decisions, adaptation of behavior patterns, values that shape the choice of patterns, and modes of negotiating the use of space. This information forms the basis of the background knowledge used by architectural designers to envisage and reconstruct the social functioning of spatial patterns. The knowledge about the users provides an implicit frame of reference that directs architects in the process of organizing spaces and masses. In order to shape and "size" a space, designers need information about human activity systems, sociospatial interactions, and preferences.

The architectural studio can be studied through various aspects: educational, organizational, and psychological, to name just a few. Sociologists are interested predominantly in the social structure, power distribution, mechanisms for social control, role analysis, and socialization mechanisms. Social psychologists pay more attention to patterns of group dynamic, leadership, modes of interaction, formation of professional values and attitudes, etc. In general, social scientists are intrigued by the forces that drive groups and societies. Architectural educators are interested predominantly in improving teaching formats, the level of acquiring knowledge and skills, and classroom management strategies. From a facility development perspective, however, the studio is interesting mostly as a hu-

man setting, a micro-social world that needs and requires appropriate support from the physical environment. For the purposes of this study, the studio is viewed in regard to its setting and particularly its physical dimensions. For these reasons, some of the studio aspects that are central to architectural educators may not be envisaged here or may form only an interpretative background. The major focus of interest is the everyday life and its spatial dimensions. The phenomena most strongly underlying the organization of space have a much more mundane character - these are the routines and existential tensions of the individual, which create the mosaic of everyday life.

In the light of these considerations, the goal of the study is to create an animated "picture" of studio life regarding the emerging sociospatial relations. This research goal is formulated to support the broad informational needs and holistic thinking of designers when organizing human settings. The objectives are to reconstruct behavior patterns, to understand everyday values and preferences of students, and to unveil forces that shape everyday life in the studio. Because of restricted resources and time pressure, the study is limited to the overall structure of studio life and the general implications of student behavior regarding the studio setting. This level of generality may be disappointing for some very pragmatic and practical readers. However, the process of knowledge production involves several stages and each one of them makes a contribution and becomes a

springboard to the next level of concretization.

### The methodology

The research setting was one of the twelve 400-level (junior/senior) studios. A full physical description of the studio is presented later in this chapter. The setting was selected for several reasons. First of all, I decided to go along with the principle of "extreme case." The expectation is that an extreme case will contain, in its most developed form, features that are muffled or contaminated in more "traditional" cases. The initial observation and informal interviews showed that there is a phenomenon that can be tentatively called "studio syndrome." It can be described in terms of unique patterns of appropriation of the studio space, strange time schedules for the use of space, and its exotic environment. In particular, I chose this studio because of the multiple amenities introduced by the students. They created the impression of both a workshop and a shanty town environment. I interpreted this as an indicator for unusual and esoteric culture. "Studio syndrome" is most evidently demonstrated among juniors and seniors. Freshmen and graduate students are not affected by it.

In the process of the study, comparisons were made among the 200-level studios (sophomores), other 400-level studios, 600-level studios (graduate students with or with-

out baccalaureate degree in architecture), and 800-level studios (advanced graduate studios). In most cases the fieldwork with these studios was confined to casual observations and informal conversational interviews. This approach was used extensively to make the findings more obvious and clear by putting them in context or simply by comparison.

The sampling of students for in-depth interviews followed this pattern: one opinion leader (Teo), one very sociable student (Jeff), one who was not exposed to freshmen and sophomore architecture experience (Richard), a young female student (Ann), and an older female student (Amy). (All names are pseudonyms. Occasionally in the text different names may appear to assure privacy.) The intention was to interview representatives of different studio groups in order to catch the diversity and regularities of studio life. The sampling of students was performed after extensive observation and informal conversational interviews.

The basic data collection methods were observation, informal conversational interviews, and guided interviews. The observation was used for initial entry into the site and for gaining basic awareness about the processes taking place there. The observation was directed by personal experience in the studio, general sociological considerations, and informal interviews. The informal interviews were used throughout the entire study. Their purpose was to back up observations, to clarify immediate situations that might shape the future line of observation, and to check the



accuracy and validity of the observations. Guided interviews started after an initial understanding of the situation was acquired. The interview guide was developed on the basis of the issues that emerged in the preliminary investigations. Five interviews were conducted, ranging in duration from one to two hours.

The data analysis was performed by using open coding and selective coding. In addition, several techniques for enhancing theoretical sensitivity were applied. An analysis of phrases was performed in order to bring forth hidden meanings and attitudes. Special attention was placed on sentences and words that seemed important, significant, and/or interesting. The flip-top technique proved to be quite efficient in discovering the meaning of student experiences. Multiple comparisons were made with architecture students from all other levels (200-800). "Close-in" comparisons were made with the second sample studio, and with almost every other studio in the department. Comparisons were made with urban planning students, students from the masters program in architecture, and students who have developed identities in other programs or professions and have just commenced their graduate studies in architecture. Lofland's "thinking units" technique was used alternatively for exploring different possibilities for interpretation (Lofland & Lofland, 2003).



**THE STUDIO WORLD:  
SHOP, HOME, AND TUBE**

## THE STUDIO WORLD: SHOP, HOME, AND TURF

### The logic and the structure of the presentation

This section presents the information collected on the field together with analytical commentaries. The analysis, organization, and interpretation of the data in qualitative research is a holistic, syncretic, and forward-moving process. The first bits of incoming information were meticulously processed so that feedback could be produced for the collection of the next batch of data. The analysis of every interview and observation session was a prerequisite for designing the research behavior in the next round of interviews. The presentation of data in qualitative research could not be done independently of their analysis and interpretation. Most of the decisions about the presentation format were made in parallel to the development of the in-

terpretation options.

The narrative format that is chosen here follows the directions of a basic sociological matrix composed of several universal categories (subjects, activities, and relations) and their ramifications. Several themes are reconstructed and further developed in detail. First, the subjects (students) are depicted. Second, the setting (studio) as a physical environment is presented. Third, studio life is described: activities, daily rhythm, semester cycles, social life, and the personal meaning of the studio (hub of life, turf, home, and socialization ground). Fourth, issues of professional socialization are discussed, because they both constitute most of the studio activity, and also greatly influence studio everyday life. Fifth, perceptions about architecture students are described. Several viewpoints are considered: how the students in the studio view themselves, how the undergraduates in the school view the graduates, and vice versa, and how architecture students are viewed by other students, mostly the “newcomers” in the three-and-a-half year gradal bachelor’s degrees.

### The students

The particular studio that was studied consisted of fourteen students: ten were enrolled in the undergraduate program and four were in a three-and-a-half year master’s program. The educational and professional background of

the students was quite diverse. There were several people with considerable learning and some work experience in the field of architecture. Others had professional background in other areas, but were complete novices in architecture. This presupposed a wide range of ages, ranging from the early twenties to the early forties. However, age does not automatically presuppose greater architectural experience. On the contrary, younger people usually had had more exposure to and some kind of previous experience in other design programs.

Most of the students had part-time jobs on an hourly basis for 10-20 hours a week. Usually, this work required little skills and offered low pay and flexible work hours. It was hard to assess the social background of these people. One of the faculty had explained the high working spirit of the students (both in school and on the job) with the suggestion that most of them came from upwardly mobile, working-class families. The job engagements, although independent from the studio, had a profound effect on the thinking and lifestyles of these people, and will be shown later.

The students were dressed casually: jeans, T-shirts, and sneakers or Doc Martens-type shoes. According to the students, "This attire is most comfortable for studio life." They don't need to worry about black ink spots, blots of glue, or paint. In some ways, the dress code was not much different from the dress code of other liberal arts students -

convenient, simple, and inexpensive; there were no big statements and no standing out from the rest of the flock. Maybe the students were a bit more conservative in their classic jeans than the art majors who had started wearing bell-bottoms and wide-leg jeans. However, I hardly ever saw anyone in a blazer, except for a few very special occasions that will be mentioned later. It is interesting that the students in urban planning, who take classes in the same building, just one floor below, could be seen quite often in shirts and blazers. On the other side of the street, the business majors showed up even in suits.

### The setting

The studio space was a big (36 ft. by 30 ft.) barren room. The ceiling's concrete beams and lighting fixtures were like those in a factory or a workshop and were painted white. The walls were plain and white. They were made from a material that allowed students to pin up drawings and sketches. Three weeks after the beginning the semester, the walls were covered in all kinds of sketches, drawings, and memos, and the factory allusion began to shift towards an image of an artist's studio and improvised gallery. The floor finish reinforced the workshop-studio perceptions: it was dark gray vinyl. There were huge windows with glistening silver window shades. The shades were often closed,

shuttering the sun; curiously enough, the desk lamps were on even on sunny days. The workshop atmosphere was reinforced by two yellow electric cord reels hanging from the ceiling and providing electricity for the tables in the center of the space.

The room was cluttered with tables. At first, the dislocation of tables appeared haphazard and occasional. But after observing the situation for some time, it became evident that there was a common principle that persisted in the chaos - most of the students had oriented their drafting tables towards the center of the room, so that they could see and communicate with each other. This pattern persisted even when students had to turn their backs to the windows and the incoming natural light. Evidently, priority was on "community orientation" rather than natural light that seemed so important for drafting and rendering activities. In most cases, turning the tables toward the center of the room presupposed that students would have the wall behind their backs as a convenience for pinning up sketches and drawings illustrating the project ideas, informing others about the history of the project, and providing displays that would compare alternative solutions and observe trends in the project progress. The display opportunity was a necessity for most students.

The week after the semester started, students began to appear in school with their cars or borrowed trucks and vans, delivering all kinds of casual materials they needed to

accommodate their professional activities and daily needs. Vehicles lined up in front of the building entrance closest to the elevators and a continuous trail led upstairs to the studio rooms. Students brought boxes full of all different things, such as CD players, refrigerators, microwaves, ergonomic chairs, desk lamps, drawing appliances, small bookcases, and metal cabinets, and occasionally, couches, armchairs, or small coffee tables. At the end of the semester, this process was repeated, but it flowed in the opposite direction - carrying the stuff from the inside to the outside of the building. The official policy was to clear everything out of the studio rooms so that the custodians could clean the floors and prepare the space for the new semester.

The hustle and bustle was comparable to moving into a new apartment, and many people said that it was a pain. Some students managed to keep larger items, such as couches and refrigerators, stored somewhere in the school so that they did not have to repeat every semester the inconvenient and back-breaking procedure of transporting bulky furniture back and forth from their houses to the school. This brisk movement of people and their belongings indicated that a busy life was about to take place at school, and everybody was preparing to work around the clock; they evidently knew from experience or from the stories of older students what would be of use during such hectic times. Very often, the materials they brought in represented a big investment - ergonomic chairs, drafting



lamps with special functions, drafting instruments and materials, metal file cases, microwaves, boom boxes, occasionally a TV set, and other things - amounting to \$400-\$500, not including textbooks. Some people brought small metal file cabinets with locks to keep their property safe.

One can compare the studio "landscape" with an oriental souk, a barrio, or a shanty town. Students often barricaded themselves with tables, making narrow passages that would allow only one person to pass through at a time. These formed a serpentine narrow "street" among the tables, providing circulation and a connection with the public open space, a "square," which was marked by a couch and several armchairs. The square was reserved for informal socialization, chatting, and hanging out, as well as for the major studio rituals: pin-ups and critiques.

The scenery looked quite exotic, due to a myriad of objects that were quite unusual for a school environment: one couch, one loveseat, one futon chair, sleeping mats, an armchair, two microwaves, four dormitory refrigerators, coffee-makers, half a dozen boom boxes, several handmade bookshelves, milk crates used as file folders and storage boxes, and small file cabinets (sometimes metal, with locks, which presupposes the importance of the items stored and the necessity for security). Everything was in turmoil. Futons and sleeping mats were usually folded under tables. The floor was often covered with drafting paper, sketches, cardboard, and all kinds of discarded materials. The tables

were covered with drawings, stacks of books, instruments, and supplies.

The big heavy drafting tables, the barren white walls and ceiling, together with the "production process" waste, created the atmosphere of a factory. The lounge furniture and the kitchen appliances, together with the hand-made bookcases and milk-crate file cabinets, projected a strange sense of a shanty home. It was not uncommon to see a student sleeping on the sofa, at any time of the day. The hustle and bustle around him/her didn't affect his/her sound sleep. These conditions conveyed the feeling of a pre-industrial workshop where apprentices both study the secrets of the trade and carry out the chores of daily life; after work hours, they turn the workshop into living quarters.

The night hours produced a special "flavor." When all students were present, there was a great deal of light in the room. But in the early morning hours or on the weekend nights, only a few people remained. Then they preferred to switch off the ceiling lights and work only in the light of the desk lamps. One could observe two or three spotlights in the darkness of the studio. At such times the music was loud and reverberated in the school corridors.

Another peculiarity of the studio environment was the noise factor and the auditory atmosphere. Everyone wore headphones, like in a machine manufacturing plant. The reason was simple. If someone's boom box was on, all

the other students either had to like this music or run away. The "headphones on" policy guaranteed a comparatively normal acoustic environment and partial protection from musical excesses. There were moments when everyone was shouting, and also moments when students worked quietly with their headphones on. But there were also times when the music was off and all folks work silently, hurrying to catch up with a project deadline. At such times students seemingly live in their own private worlds, barricaded in their barrios.

In the same school building, one floor below, the studios of the students enrolled in the master's program in urban planning were housed. The contrast was amazing. Although the rooms were also occupied for long periods of time, the environment was much different. The tables were arranged in a traditional office pattern. There were a couple of textbooks scattered and some papers spread on the tabletops, but everything was within the limits of the office norms. The rooms contained office furniture and even a case with mailboxes. Sometimes there was a vase with fresh flowers. There were no couches; there might have been a microwave, but it was used much more rarely. Everything was in order and neatly organized. The floor was clean. Students read silently or quietly discuss their group projects. It was unusual to hear music in these quarters. Some of the students had just come from work in local government planning offices and other agencies - and bore the insignia

of office culture, white shirts and ties. Many of the women wore skirts rather than the torn jeans of the architecture students. The feel of downtown coming into the University was apparent.

One of the urban planning rooms was assigned to the master's level joint degree program for students who study both architecture and urban planning. This environment looked to me like a strange hybrid - some modular furniture, some white shirts, and some order. Suddenly, however, I would see a heap of drawings, a huge, six-foot model of downtown junctions, a student cutting chips of wood to fit into the model, and ... a boom box keeping the beat!

Students display two different daily schedules according to their personality types: early risers or owls. Early risers begin drifting in as soon as morning classes are finished. They work intensively in the morning, afternoon, and even at night, often staying at school until ten or eleven o'clock p.m. Such is the schedule of Ann, Alex, and Teo. A conspicuous majority of people emerge at noon; the owls are making their appearance. In the afternoon they are busy, and in the evening the presence is substantial. The owls socialize until the evening hours, and then become organized and concentrated. They sometimes work until 4 or 5 o'clock a.m., and eventually spend one or two nights a week sleeping in the studio. They often sleep in the studio

between morning classes. Amy and Jeff prefer this way of life. They say that they can accomplish more work at night, when nobody is around. Amy finds it more productive to work between 8 p.m. and 3 a.m. She seems to be a real all-nighter.

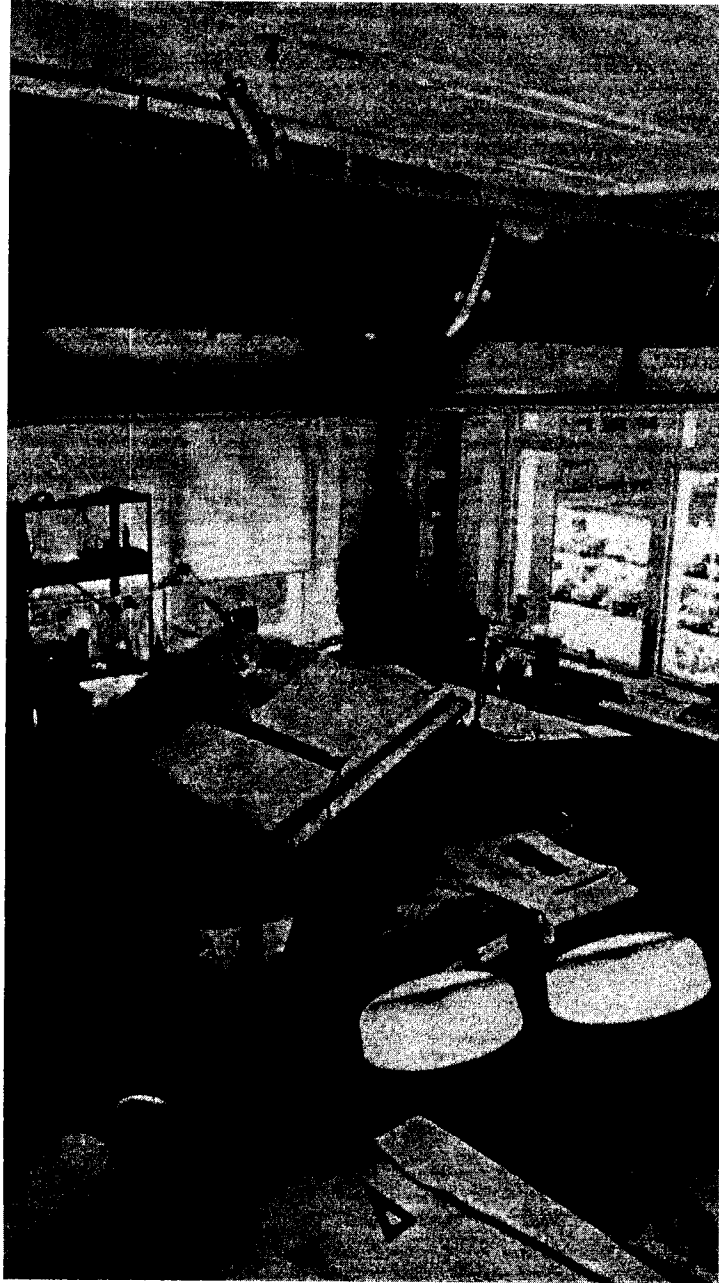
Contrary to the word of mouth that all architecture students are all-nighters, I found out that this was not the case. Although the constant all-nighters create the exotic aura of studio life, they are a minority in comparison to mainstream students. It is interesting that this smaller group creates the general impression and all the talk about all-nighting. These people may be in the minority, but they set the trend and are the role models for the rest. Students often measure their heroism and devotion to the art of architecture by their stamina to stay up late - a kind of macho way of self-expression.

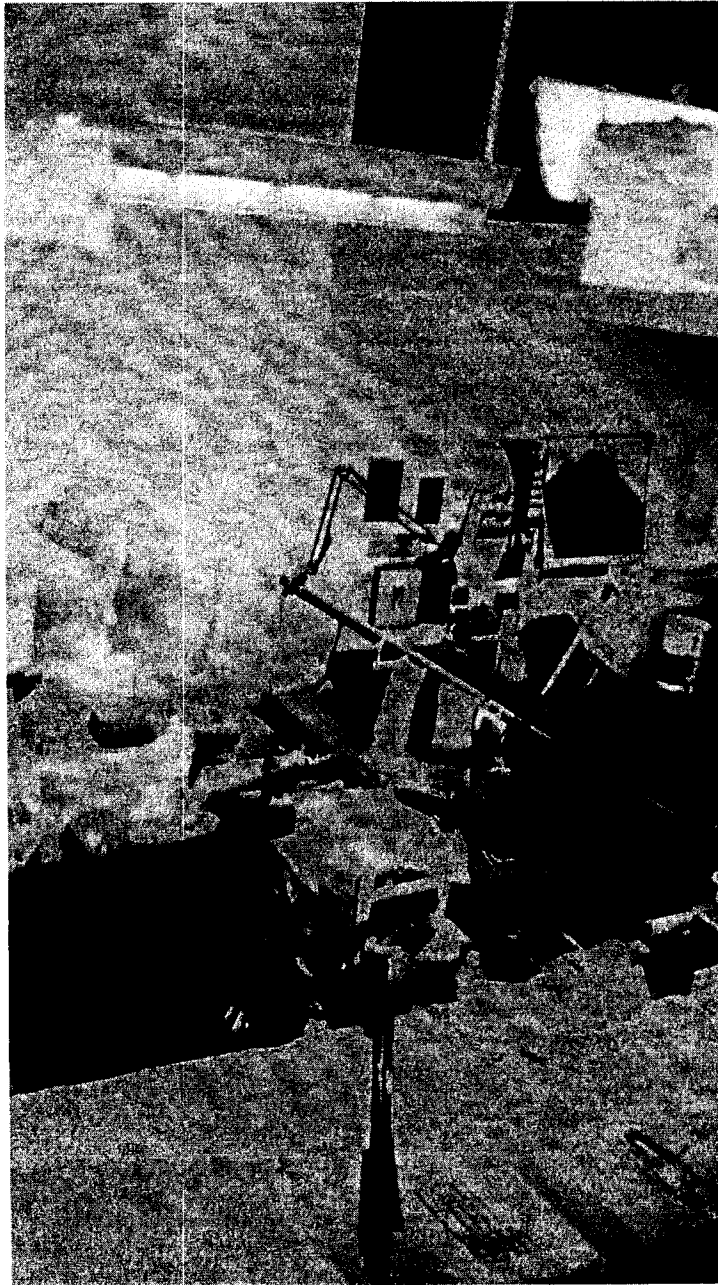
But even hard-core all-nighters prefer to sleep comfortably in their own beds any time they can. Everybody who has ever slept in a studio confesses that this is not a very rewarding experience and the day after is really ruined. For example, Teo usually goes home at midnight, and only occasionally stays until 2-3 a.m. Jeff sleeps about once a week in the studio. Ivon is married and after midnight has to go home. Before critiques she may stay until 3 or 4 in the morning, but otherwise family concerns are sending her home. A simple calculation shows that if each one of the 14 students stays one night a week, there will

always be 2-3 people sleeping on the couches. This coincides with the normal capacity of the sleeping “facilities” scattered around the room: one couch, one loveseat, one futon chair, and one sleeping bag.

In general, architecture juniors and seniors spend a lot of time in the studio room. Alex, Amy, Ann, Teo, and Jeff all say that they spend an average of at least 40 hours a week in the studio although the amount of time might increase during the final weeks before major presentations. Students also spend about nine credit hours a week in other classes, which adds nearly ten more hours in school. It is obvious that students work much more than the “trade union’s” 40-hour week.

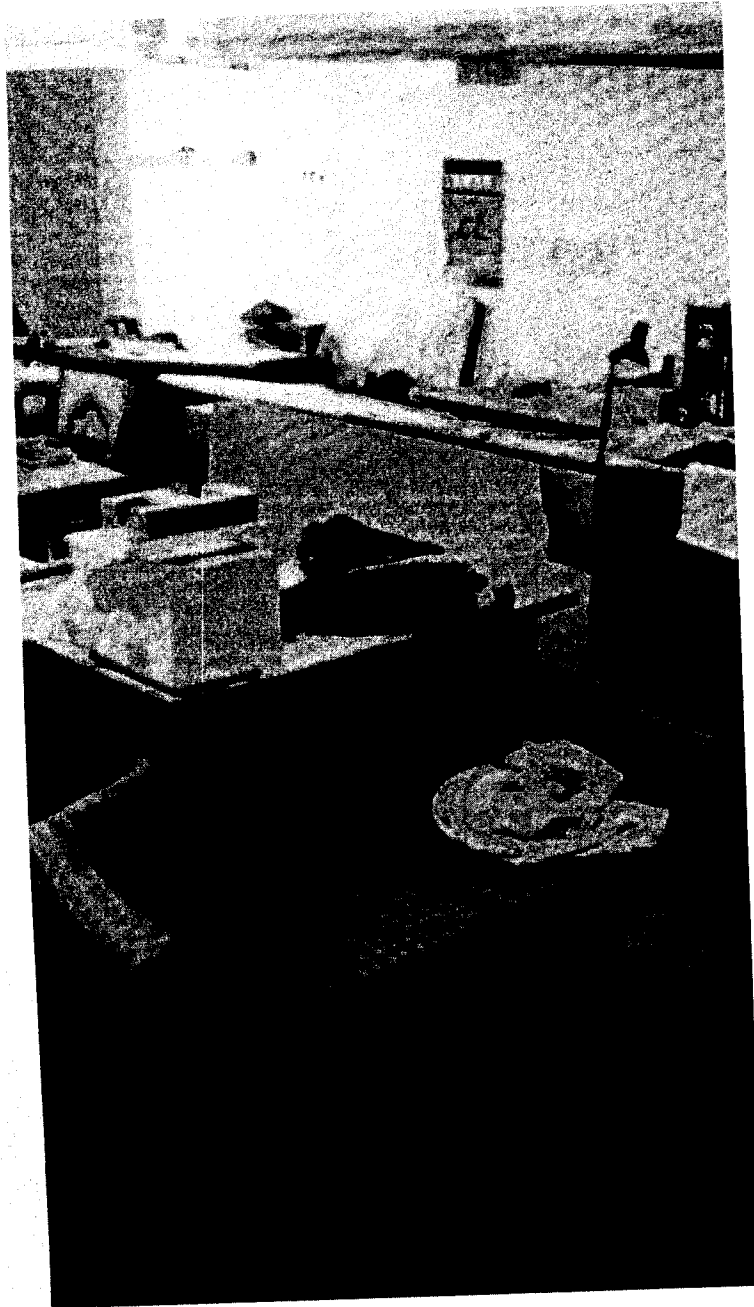
However, students confess that during the period they count as “studio time” they may run errands out of school, spend time with friends from other studios or simply relax and enjoy procrastination. (This word was the most common answer given when I asked someone how the day was going.) During regular semester days, socialization and procrastination often take up half of their time, while people work much more efficiently before presentations. This is also the opinion of at least two faculty.

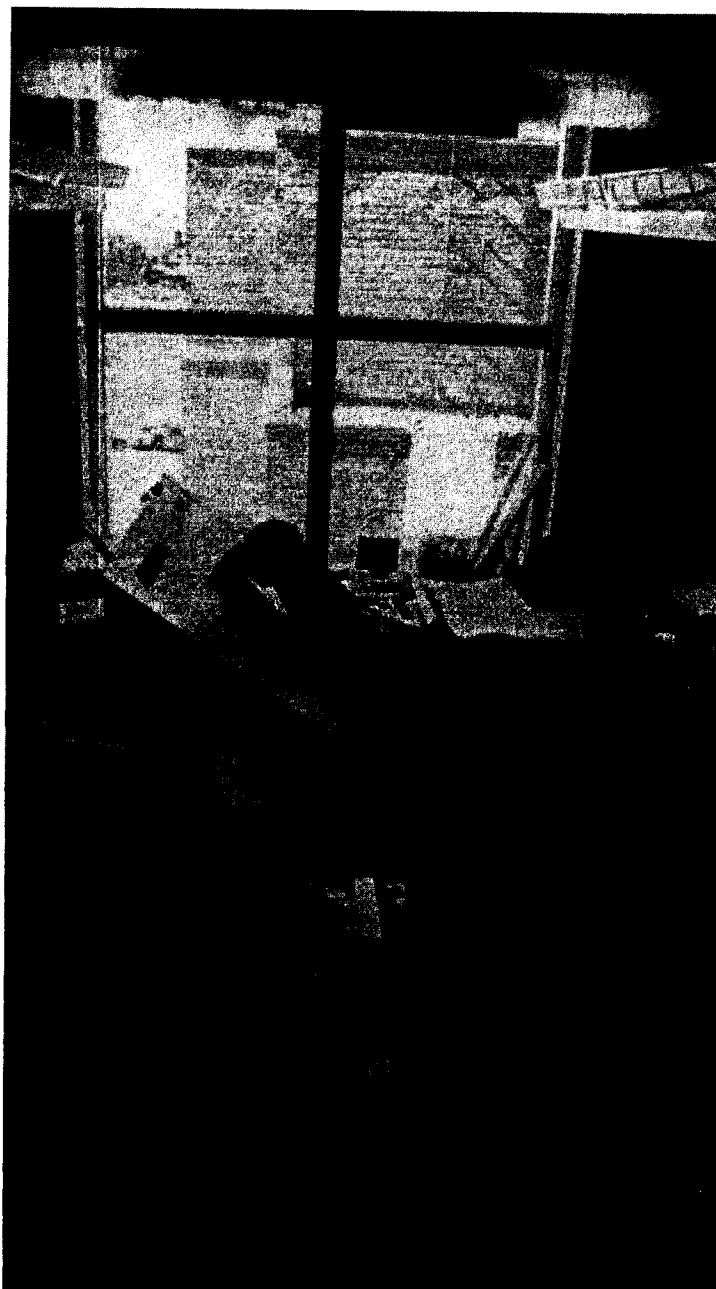


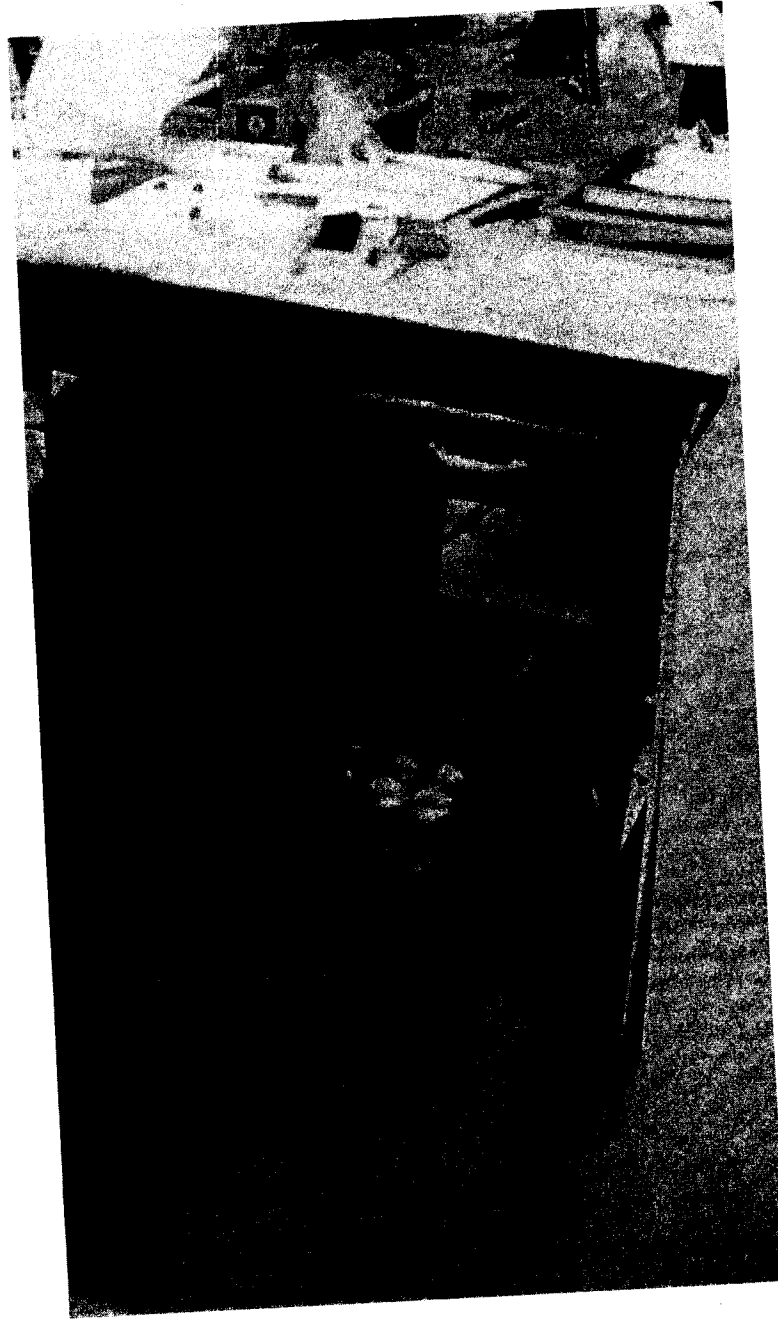












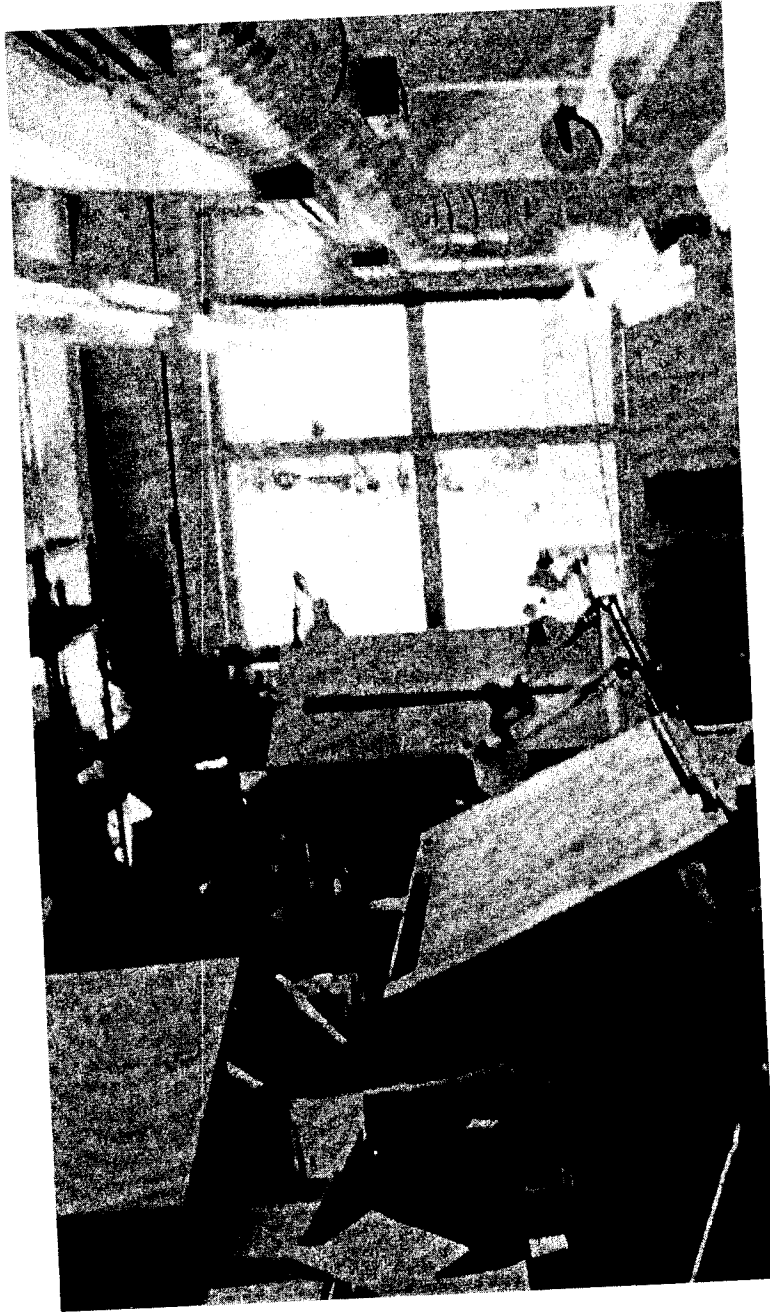


## The Studio World



## The Architecture Student Culture

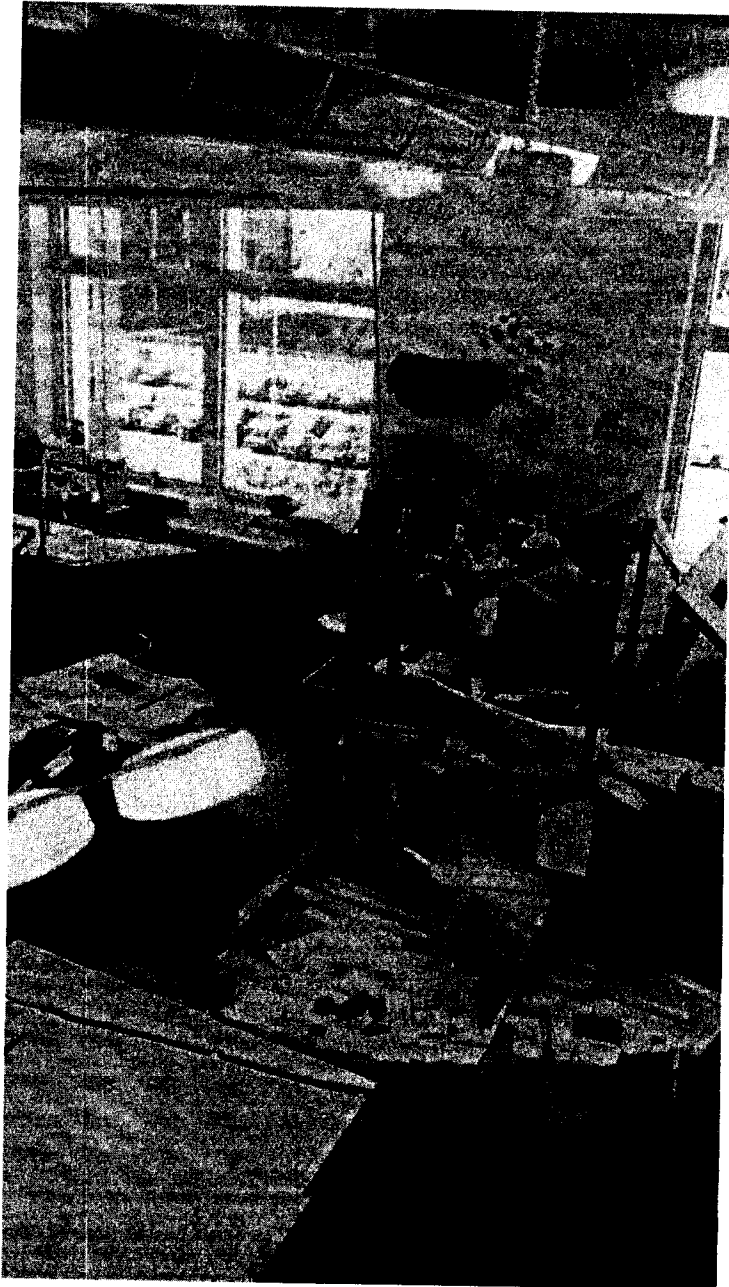


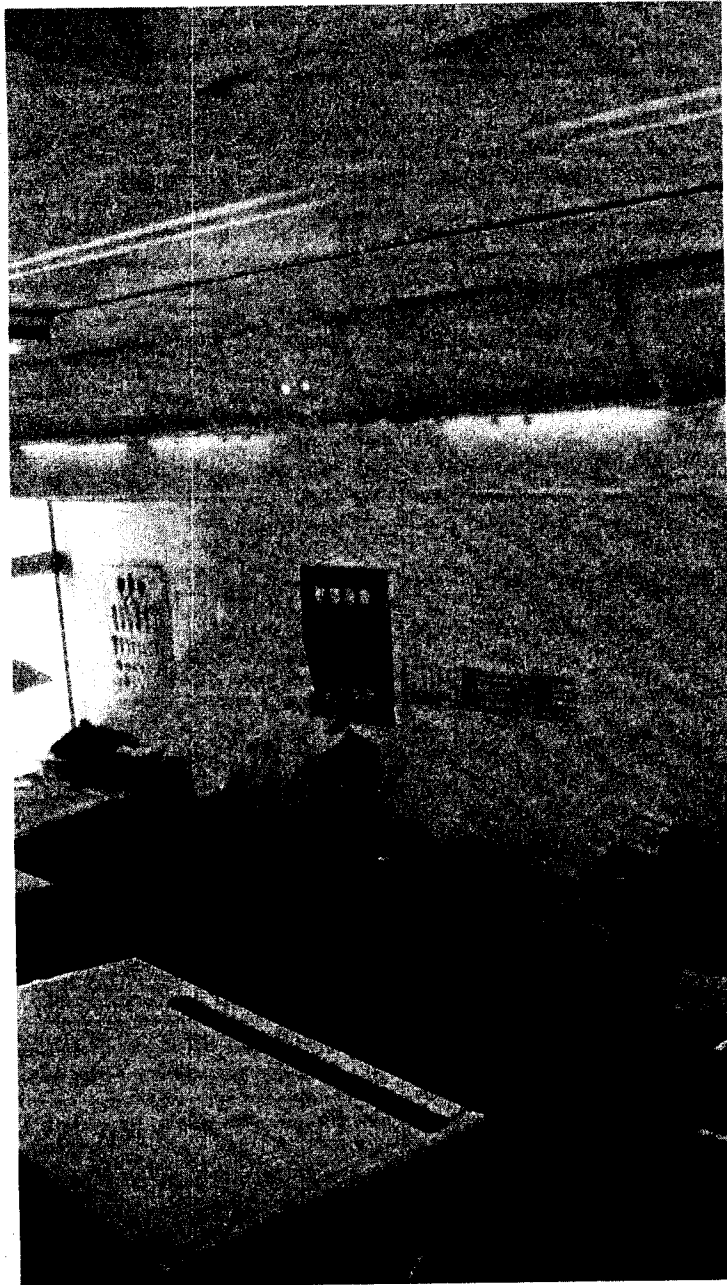












## The studio life

The studio world is comprised of a number of components. The major component in regard to the objectives of this study - the reconstruction of the sociospatial relationships - is the everyday life of studio occupants. This part of the description/analysis presents the activity core of the studio reality. First, a typical daily schedule is reconstructed; then a sample of the customary everyday activities is presented; next, the pattern of social interaction is construed; a brief highlight of students' out-of-school life is offered; and last, the personal meaning of the studio is explored. All these themes are conceptualized as elements and aspects of the everyday studio life.

### *The daily rhythm*

The studio has its own rhythm of life. At any time of the day there are at least two students in the studio. Usually they are five or seven at a time. Typically, students come to school for morning classes. They may drop into the studio just before class, leave their backpacks at their work stations, make coffee, and go to class. On the other hand, they may come into the studio after the first morning class and take refuge until the next class begins in an hour or so. These pauses between classes are used for relaxing, quick snacks, or doing some homework.

It is interesting to notice a second pattern of peak presence - a couple of days before critiques/presentations. At such times I have counted no fewer than 10 people (from a total of 14) at one time. The studio room is filled almost to capacity, if we consider that there is always a person who hates to work among other people, that someone can fall ill, and that somebody might have an emergency. These patterns of studio presence indicate two types of cycles: a daily cycle and a semester cycle. The daily cycle is a function of personality types, the official schedule of classes, and customary job hours. The semester cycle coincides with project due dates. It might be due to poor time management, or to deliberate time planning.

### *The everyday activities*

The activities that take place in the studio can be grouped into four basic areas: studying, socializing, eating, and resting. Each of these areas includes dozens of constituent behaviors. For example, studying includes two sub-groups of activities: design-related work and preparation for reading classes. Examples of the activities in the first sub-group are drafting, model-making, working with wood and cardboard, gluing, painting, consulting, and making informal pin-ups with friends to elicit their opinion and advice. The second sub-group, the lecture classes, includes reading, writing papers, and typing, to name just a few. Socializing is the most diverse area, but there are several typi-

cal activity patterns that most often occur: chatting, talking with friends, exchanging opinions, listening to music (with headphones or boom boxes), meeting with friends from other studios, and sometimes meeting friends/guests from outside. Eating involves the microwaving of food, eating, brewing coffee (probably the most common occurrence), drinking coffee or soda, and much more. Once I was astonished to discover someone boiling chili beans in an electric pot. Resting activities include sleeping, relaxing on the sofa, taking a nap during the day, or just sitting motionless in the armchair. Some of the activities expand and transcend the studio boundaries: the janitors' wet room is used for brushing teeth early in the morning and after lunch. Many students keep toothbrushes at school, and may use them as needed, whether after lunch or a sleepless night. The corridors become playgrounds for softball (mostly a symbolic behavior) or "hang out" places to meet someone from another studio.

The two most extraordinary activities in a school setting are eating and sleeping. There are a wide variety of options for managing the food issue, both institutionalized and non-institutionalized, and students use them in different ways. Regarding food, students may bring their own lunches from home and heat them in the microwaves. At lunch or dinnertime, it is not uncommon to smell various kinds of food, which are being microwaved at the other end of the building. The air-conditioning system obviously was

not designed to cope with such occurrences. Students also buy meals "to go" at the student union, nearby fast-food establishments, or one comparatively inexpensive hospital cafeteria, and go back at the studio to continue their work, placing the styrofoam containers on the drafting tables while reading lecture notes for an upcoming quiz. If time is really tight, or money is scarce, students use the vending machines or the student co-op vendor service on the first floor of the school. A more rare option is to call the pizza deliveryman. This may happen at peak workload times or before presentation when all the students are in the studio and look forward to enjoying a warm meal together.

Sleeping at school is not something that the administration is happy about, but it happens on a regular basis. It is not unusual, at any time of the day, to see somebody taking a nap on the sofa at the central "studio square." Some people go to great lengths and take off their shoes and cover themselves with a blanket. Meanwhile, a CD player may be on and several students may be discussing their projects or class assignments, or chatting and socializing, just a couple of feet away. The students who cannot stand the constant chatter may choose to curl up on the floor mat below their tables, or go to the most distant corner of the room. At night, it is not unusual to see somebody tucked into a sleeping bag. By this time, there are a handful of students present, the ceiling lights are off, and even the constant roar of the boom boxes may be reduced. It is a much more



serene and delicate atmosphere, which, when perceived by outsiders, creates a feeling for the romanticism of the profession. These represent the real nights, or actually, the wee hours of the morning, with the real all-nighters.

Some graduate students think that the intensive use of the studio for everyday activities is due to the “opportunity”: “Architecture students have keys for their studios. This makes the environment more secure. One can bring stuff. Studios become a mixture of the work and home environment.” Still other graduate students think that the extensive use of studio rooms “is more an initiation than a necessity.”

### *The socialization ground: Social life in the studio*

#### *The time constraints*

Before speaking about studio social life, I would like to mention again the heavy workload and the time pressure experienced by the students. Everybody talks about pressing deadlines and tons of work to do. To cope with the workload and to manage their responsibilities, students begin to cut down on their leisure activities and particularly those that are too time-consuming. This is both the typical and the easiest response to time pressure situations. But this strategy narrows down the social world of the students and pushes them to isolation and withdraw

Helga says that her colleagues do not really have a lot of time for activities other than study. She continues, "I am astonished how people can live basically with very little outside activities, only to study architecture. I have a family, I have a whole other life. They don't." Most of the students I observed really had a confined social life and geographical area. They did, however, manage to get all components of their social life together at school: friends and partners, socialization site, and possibilities for easy organization.

### *The social interaction*

There are intensive social interactions going on in studios. At the beginning of the semester most students do not know each other. But just a few weeks are enough to entangle all studio participants into a small life-world. This process is slow to develop in the first few days, but as workloads grow, and time spent in studios increases, connections form more readily. Teo noticed, "When people spend more time in the studio, there is more interaction, more friendship, and more camaraderie." By the middle of the semester, the studio space becomes a hub of activity. Winston says, "What I see is socializing, most of the time. There are some people who are always working and concentrating, but the majority of people use it (the studio) as an arena. ... At times it is frustrating, because the people who are socializing stay until 3 or 4 a.m. for days in a row, trying to get

their project done. Exhausted, they make bad decisions.”

Gradually the students establish relationships in their own studios and in the other studios in the school which are either next door, or on the same level of teaching. Everybody mentions that they have friends in the studio. Many people like Teo and Jeff sketch a picture of an emerging collective life and common brotherhood. However, Alex, Ann, and Amy think that with a closer scrutiny a person can notice that there are several small groups in which people obviously are much closer and more readily stick together. They call them cliques, and have mixed feelings about such developments. Teo and Jeff are reluctant to confess such developments. But when they think over some past and current events, they acknowledge that some of the students are closer to one another than others. There are obviously cliques, they confess. One can't expect, however, that fourteen students will always stick together; besides, they have friends in other studios, from previous semesters. Clinging together in cliques is more a function of common values and entertainment approaches than politicking.

Everyone believes that there are no major conflicts in studios. The consensus is that people are attentive and care about each other. Music is the source that sometimes makes people tense. It is more of a personality problem. For example, Lloyd does not bear the musical tastes of the rest. For him, the studio is “a New York Stock Exchange, a circus, a social arena.” But Teo and Jeff think that everyone is

happy with the musical choices. Evidently, personality features influence perception. People who are more delicate may easily be harmed even by considerate fellows. Observations made in other studios show that music may be the source of intense conflicts. In this regard the official school policy requires the use of headphones.

An interesting aspect of social interactions in studios is conflict management. It is comparatively easy to manage people's presence in short-term institutional environments, where everyone can suppress his/her needs for a short period of time and escape conflict of interests. But when people share a space for a long time, they begin to "appropriate" this space in order to accommodate their everyday needs. Many activities that are usually performed in home environments have to be carried out in the studio. When such activities (let's say, listening to music, talking, etc.) are displayed in shared environments, particularly environments like the 24-hour studio, many problems arise. It is almost impossible to reach a consensus about what to do and how to do it, so that everyone is happy. Sometimes the conflicts become so acute that institutional procedures are introduced. For example, problems with loud music and the thunder of boom boxes are resolved by mandating the use of headphones. This is obviously not the most delightful way to experience the moving rhythms. The compromise, however, is worthwhile because it makes it possible for all parties to coexist in one space without substan-

tial discomfort or sacrifice. People learn that the price for social peace is compromise and abstinence. Unusual solutions to such problems contribute to the emergence of the exotic picture of the studio: At any time of the day, it is possible to see a few people with their headphones on, making strange movements, sometimes rhythmically. Others just draw silently and do not pay attention, even if a stack of books falls on the floor with a loud banging noise.

The “social peace” in the studio is supported by a hierarchy of normative mechanisms. At the beginning of the semester the rules of conduct are negotiated. There are official departmental rules and semi-official instructor requirements, and lastly, some of the daily patterns are negotiated by the students alone. If they can’t come to terms, the instructor will intervene in favor of protecting the interests of the most vulnerable individuals. No one reported problems like these, although such situations are not uncommon in other studios.

*Tacos and beer: The studio extension*

The studio also serves as a meeting place to organize occasional out-of-school leisure events. This may be a tailgating party at the county stadium, a midnight walk to Axell’s (a nearby bar) for a drink, or the regular Wednesday pilgrimage to one of the local bars, Judge’s. Such fun may last a couple of hours. After that, students return to their drafting tables. Although these events take place outside the

studio space, they originate in the studio room, and the picture of social life in the studio would be incomplete without mentioning them. It would be difficult to understand the camaraderie and the mechanisms of bonding without observing the Wednesday night ritual at Judge's, the favorite bar of the studio. This is the weekly entertainment of one of the cliques, but it transcends group boundaries and attracts many other students from a particular studio and their friends from other studios.

*Is there another world? Dwindling out-of-school life*

To my astonishment students did not reveal much about their life outside of school. Usually they gave schematic answers and even probes did not stimulate their memories. Maybe the answers I got were solicited rather than stemming from reality. Of course, no one said that he/she had no friends outside school. But the descriptions were rather vague, and I got the sense that students simply do not spend much time outside of school. In most cases I gathered that students have a couple of friends they rarely see because they have no time. The exceptions are probably girlfriends/boyfriends. But even Ann, who is "married with children," claims that for several days before critique sessions she sees her children only at breakfast.

*The personal meanings of the studio*

The design studio coursework is the major focus of

architecture students. They understand very well that their professional capabilities are developed through design experience. Maggie told me that all lecture courses are treated as secondary. She continued, "In all other subjects I put in as much effort as I need to pass. If I get a "B," I am thrilled. But in the studio I put in all my effort." The non-design courses are a realm that many students pass through without much emotion.

The studio as a behavior setting has acquired a second cluster of meanings as well. All students agree that they use the studio as a base; it is a convenient meeting place to go anywhere. From the studio they go out on campus or even to town several times a day, just to run small errands, or to make dates and meet with friends. Some students feel that their studios are home because they spend all their active time there, while they use their rental rooms only to sleep. Teo said, "If not for my girlfriend, I don't need a room. I can sleep in the room of my apartment-mate and save some rent expenses." Other students still prefer to make the distinction between their daily operation bases and homes. Alex said that a studio can't be substituted for a home. He needs a setting to relax and rest from the hustle and bustle of the studio, this swarming arena where the gladiators struggle endlessly with the challenges of design. According to him, home is the place where a person can really relax in front of the TV.

### Drilling or initiation: Some issues of professional socialization

The purpose of this section is to provide a background for the interpretation of the everyday studio. Some people may see it as a digression from the focus of the study - the informal life in the studio - but it is essential to understand the professional culture in order to make sense of everyday life in the studio. Understanding the culture of the reference group is a necessary background for understanding the social phenomena in the studio setting. The learning activities in the studio outstrip the socialization events in both volume and importance. The professional values and learning goals strongly influence student strategies and behaviors. Keeping in mind the professional dedication of students, it is important to consider the influence of the architectural professional culture on student personality and behavior. In this regard, it is interesting to consider several themes: the nature of architectural work, the architectural problems/tasks, the seeds of professional socialization, the main agent of socialization, the role of the critique, and the influence of workaholism. The narrative that follows was created on the basis of fieldwork, personal experience, and literature sources, although publications on this subject are scarce.



*Art, craft, and science: The nature of architecture*

Architectural work combines elements of craft, art, and science. This trivial formula illustrates quite clearly both the skills needed and the types of activities in which architecture students engage. This may be one of the keys to understanding the “arkies” mentality.

The “craft” element becomes evident immediately when one enters the architectural studio. The interior is as barren and ascetic as a workshop. The floor is buried two feet deep with waste paper, cardboard, and other materials. There is a trash bin for each student, and in addition a big trash container stands right in the middle of the public space in the studio. The tables are cluttered with materials, instruments, paints, brushes, etc. Often the sound of an electric drill or a mechanical eraser can be heard. Students work in jeans and T-shirts, and are sometimes sprinkled with paint. When the due-date for a project presentation nears, everybody makes models, most often from wood. The room literally looks like a wood-shop.

The “art” element is closely interwoven with the crafts. The aesthetic problems in architecture make students think like artists. It is the art element that motivates these people to pursue excellence and work with dedication. The students more often see themselves as artists and consider the architectural studio as an artist’s atelier rather than viewing themselves as craftsmen and blue-collar intellectuals laboring in a workshop. They view the mess and

clutter in the studio room as an inevitable attribute of an artist's atelier - sketches and drawings are hanging on the walls, books with glistening color illustrations are spread all over the tables, and almost everywhere one can see sets of colored pencils, crayons, markers, and sometimes boxes with watercolors.

The "science" element in the architectural work clearly differentiates the architecture students from their peers in vocational schools, and from the eccentric personalities in the fine arts department. Students have to learn how to find out information by themselves in order to solve architectural problems. Also, they are taught to conduct research and analyze and critique theories and professional doctrines. Architecture students acquire more reflective and disciplined thinking than their peers in vocational schools. They display much broader interests and bridge a wider area of skills and expertise, ranging from technical craft operations to thorough theoretical analysis. The intellectual discipline they acquire in a number of classes makes them more organized, focused, and balanced in their lifestyles.

*Ill-defined and open-ended: The influence of architectural problems on student work-life styles*

The interviews I conducted with students who held bachelor's degrees in other majors revealed that architecture majors are busier with schoolwork than are non-architecture students. The reasons stem both from the nature of the

architectural program's educational traditions and from the nature of the design problems. Design problems are ill-defined and open-ended and there are no clear criteria for evaluating solutions. Because of this there is always the possibility of coming to a better solution. The pursuit of excellence becomes an endless venture - the architect's work is never done. Architecture majors who have undergone undergraduate work in the sciences have developed skills for coping with reading assignments, exams, and intellectual problems with well-defined bodies and clear criteria for appropriate solutions. They intuitively know how much work is needed for an exam and when to stop reading. But when these same students come to the architecture program, they face a completely new set of challenges - the ever-changing nature and redefinition of the problem, the dwindling and subjective criteria for the solution, and a thinking process that has more in common with juggling five balls at once than with a systematic pursuit of a problem solving.

Architecture students always experience the feeling that in the next hour or day they will conceive a great design, and in order to do so, they are willing to spend another sleepless night. Every design is the best one only for several hours. After that, students see a better solution and the process continues. So, when the time for presentation comes, students suddenly realize that their design needs one more improvement before they draft it in black ink and

make a wooden model. Even the most organized individuals have to spend the last several nights before presentation working in the studio.

*The rites of passage: All-nighting and studio crits*

*Emulating the office roller-coaster:*

*Work (not shop) 'til you drop*

In order to gain a better understanding of the patterns of studio life it is also necessary to consider the architectural studio as a school replica of the design office. Students learn about office rites by some invisible (and visible) channels and begin to prepare for the transition. "They are like cubs who learn about the real world by playing," as Ann mentioned. One example is the constant complaint that there is too much work and not enough time. In architecture, clients always recognize a building problem at the last moment, and urge designers to provide a solution as soon as possible. The urgency and ability to deliver quick services are crucial for obtaining a commission and earning a good reputation. The nature of the architectural profession involves short deadlines, peak workloads, and of course - sleepless nights. In a case study in her latest book, *Architecture: The Story Of Practice*, Dana Cuff (1992) presents the story of a young architect who is much more overburdened with design work than are the studio "cubs." Maybe the all-nighters are trying to imitate the ferocious struggle with deadlines in real practice. Lured,

however, by the overt conspicuous “picture” of the profession, students often see and imitate only the effects and consequences rather than the methods and approaches. One of the younger faculty said that he would rather close the school at midnight, so that students would learn to organize better, and do their work during the daytime.

### *The all-nighting*

The most spectacular symbol of the architecture student is the all-nighter. This word is a jargon commonly used in architectural departments to denote someone who works in a studio around the clock for several days and nights, drinking coffee and occasionally brushing his/her teeth, no shower, no razor, no change of clothes. The most dramatic experience is to fall asleep on the couch in the middle of the day, when all of the boom boxes are on, and fellow students are communicating by shouting. One can hardly say which is more important: to get an hour or two of refreshing sleep, or to show everyone (including the instructor) your heroic effort and devotion. This is almost the way architects do it in the office when a capricious client pays to have his/her project ready the very next day (something like the “Next Day Air” service of UPS).

Most of the students think that all-nighting is useless: what they gain at night, they lose during the day. They believe that it is more important and more professional to manage their time better than to stay up for several sleep

less nights in a row. Alex said, "They [students] wait until the last minute. ... A lot of procrastination." However, the all-nighter is the most exotic, the most spectacular, and the most formidable representative of the architecture student species. This heroic figure makes the dull daily life look more artistic. Recently, thesis students posted invitations for their thesis presentations. The poster featured a dramatic battle among the defenders of a medieval fortress and the assaulting warriors. This picture served as a background on which the names of the thesis defenders, the times, and the venues were announced. The allusion was clear: a tribute to all-nighters. The sleepless nights are symbols of heroism in a profession that is perceived only as artistic by the outside world.

*Playing the professional: The critique*

Another part of the studio experience are the crits. These are such important events that even the journal of the American Institute of Architecture Students is named Crit. There are two types of crits (or project presentations): intermediate, which are usually held in the studio rooms, and final, which take place in other rooms, thus emphasizing their significance. It marks the transition to a higher level of professional development, even if this new state is within the boundaries of the semester. The final crits for every project create the most tense and frustrating experiences. Everyone can imagine the emotions of thesis students when they stand before the jury. The same feeling exists

with the presentation of final crits. The learning atmosphere of the studio is replaced by the courtroom tension. Although the final crit as an event is usually an out-of-house happening that transcends the boundaries of the studio setting, it is important for understanding the phenomenon of studio life. The crit highlights the dialectic of the workshop and the office. The changes that take place with students and their behavior patterns at crits unveil the dualism of the architecture students' self-perceptions. These changes also indicate several phenomena: the tremendous tensions these students must learn to manage, the shifting norms and criteria for behavior in different situations, the presentation of self, and the complex relations with the environment, both social and physical.

When the students appear at the crit venue, they look completely different - more like downtown office clerks in sharp office attire than the apprentices they resembled just a few hours before. The blue-collar intellectuals or artists are transformed into would-be businessmen/women who are struggling to persuade clients and sell ideas. The immediate observation shows a dramatic change in the dress code: the T-shirts and jeans are replaced with white shirts and ties. The white shirt, the symbol of business and serious intentions, is very important, even if the shirt is not ironed! Women have to change their unisex jeans for skirts; some may put on makeup and nail polish, maybe for the third time since the beginning of the year. Against this

background, the shabbiness of the previous lifestyle becomes even more obvious.

*The team work imperative: Make or break*

Architectural projects involve a lot of work and require the joint efforts of a group of people. Because of this, design practice is based on teamwork. Teamwork is a hot theme in today's office world, but in architecture it is already a tradition. The architectural education philosophy emphasizes the development of teamwork skills. Students are encouraged to work in groups and the number of team projects is considerable. It is expected that students will learn to share resources and information, manage conflicts, learn to lead and communicate with associates, cooperate, and support each other.

To promulgate this philosophy and the corresponding teaching and learning objectives, the school administration requires students to work in the studio during official class hours, and encourages and facilitates student work in the studio after classes. Many schools have detailed policies and regulations and spend a lot of effort to administer them. The studio as an everyday setting is a product of these circumstances to a large extent. The influence of the teamwork philosophy is compatible with the time-saving imperative, the achievement rush, and the socialization ground syndrome (all to be discussed later in the text).



*Let them live their dreams: The studio instructor*

The major agent of professional socialization is the studio instructor. His primary activity is one-on-one desk consulting: criticizing student designs, reformulating problems, and suggesting better solutions. He evidently views studio teaching as a highly personalized process that will shape the minds and talents of the students into thriving architectural characters.

The instructor is an experienced designer and an erudite professor. His expertise and skills make him an idol, a guru, and an enviable role model for the students who aspire towards acquiring "divine" professional secrets. He is a master-professor, a charismatic informal leader, and a friend. He balances the scholarly discipline and the creative freedom most students need. The spontaneous build-up of the studio environment is not a consequence of lack of control. Rather, it is an outcome of a teaching philosophy that emphasizes respect for personal identity and exploration. Ann says her instructor is encouraging, cares about people, and never makes people ashamed of their work at studio critiques.

**The arkies: Images of architecture students**

An understanding of people and their culture emerges in the process of analyzing their activities. This

inquiry focused on reconstructing the major aspects of studio life: the actors, the studio setting, the studio life, and professional socialization. In order to achieve a complete understanding of sociocultural phenomena, it is beneficial to consider the perceptions of the actors who constitute the social situation. In the same way in which the self is shaped in a process of reflection over personal perception, mirror images, and the presupposed opinions of the significant others, the architecture student's personality will be further unveiled by studying student self-perceptions, peer opinions, and the images that the general student body holds.

### *Architecture students in the mirror*

Architecture students hold surprisingly consistent images about themselves. They have clear self-perceptions. The major points revolve around the professional commitment and the work ethic. Ann related that she sees architecture students as being committed, being completely absorbed by architecture, making a serious effort, and attempting to learn. She continues, "They live with very few outside activities and live only to study architecture." Teo said, "Architecture students are challenging and highly competitive. You don't really see it. They don't show it. Lots of ego." According to Betty, "Architecture students are a little bit crazy, dedicated, and competitive; they love architecture. They are people with great determination and commitment." Architecture students constantly compare their

designs with the projects of their colleagues and reflect on the progress they have made and their own standing in class. Jeff and Alex agree that architecture students are competitive, but they compete with themselves more than with their colleagues. It is a constant comparison with previous performances and a striving for development. Jeff said, "Everyone wants to achieve higher quality. Most people intend to gather portfolios with their projects. Portfolios are a prerequisite for applying to every M. Arch. program."

Architecture students seem proud of their tradition of camaraderie. The notion of camaraderie is loaded with meanings. Teo views it as "one big family," while Alex sees it as "little cliques" in the studio. Alex said, "I think this has to do with the studio environment. There is more camaraderie because of the studio environment. The other majors are just taking tests and reading. Students from other departments meet for a few minutes only before and after classes, and sometimes when they have group projects."

### *A comparison of undergraduate and graduate students*

Since graduate students have already passed through the flamboyant studio initiation, they now can reflect on their undergraduate studio lives with more maturity; this is especially true if they have faced the realities of working in architectural firms for at least a couple of years, and sometimes even longer. According to the graduate students, "Juniors and seniors do not have adequate profes

sional skills and knowledge, and they work too slowly. They constantly have questions and ask for advice. This makes them spend more hours on projects and more time in studios. They also need to work in groups, support each other, and have someone experienced nearby. On the other hand, graduate students ... are more time-efficient because they are more experienced and more focused. They have better work ethics and are more independent. They come to the studio, do their work, and leave. There is no need for sleepless nights."

*The "arkies" viewed by other students*

Students in the graduate program who hold BAs in other majors provide the most insightful impressions of studio culture. In the initial periods of architectural studies, these people are still novices in the department. They have not been enculturated yet. They have not acquired the habit of staying in school for more than eight hours, do not bring electrical appliances to school, and do not dream of showers and kitchens on school territory! They hold the view that such conditions will make school a shelter for homeless people.

A student with a BA in fine arts said, "Architecture students are dedicated and hardworking." In his previous program he recalled that faculty didn't demand as much. "In fine arts," he continued, "instructors are more interested in the concept, rather than in the material embodiment of this concept." He also felt that architecture students

worked in the studio more often because there were other people with whom they could bounce ideas around, and at home there were too many distractions. He further stated that in architecture, studio is the symbol of the program.

Most of the students with non-architectural undergraduate degrees share similar attitudes towards architecture students. "Architecture students work harder than their previous colleagues [from previous majors] because their program is more demanding," declared another student. Someone else chimed in, "Liberal arts programs are not so demanding. ... The major source of workload is the design class." Other comments included, "Because students have to spend more time in the studio, they develop camaraderie. They know each other better than in other majors. They know more people in school. ... (In other majors) students are not so devoted; their egos are not so strongly expressed."

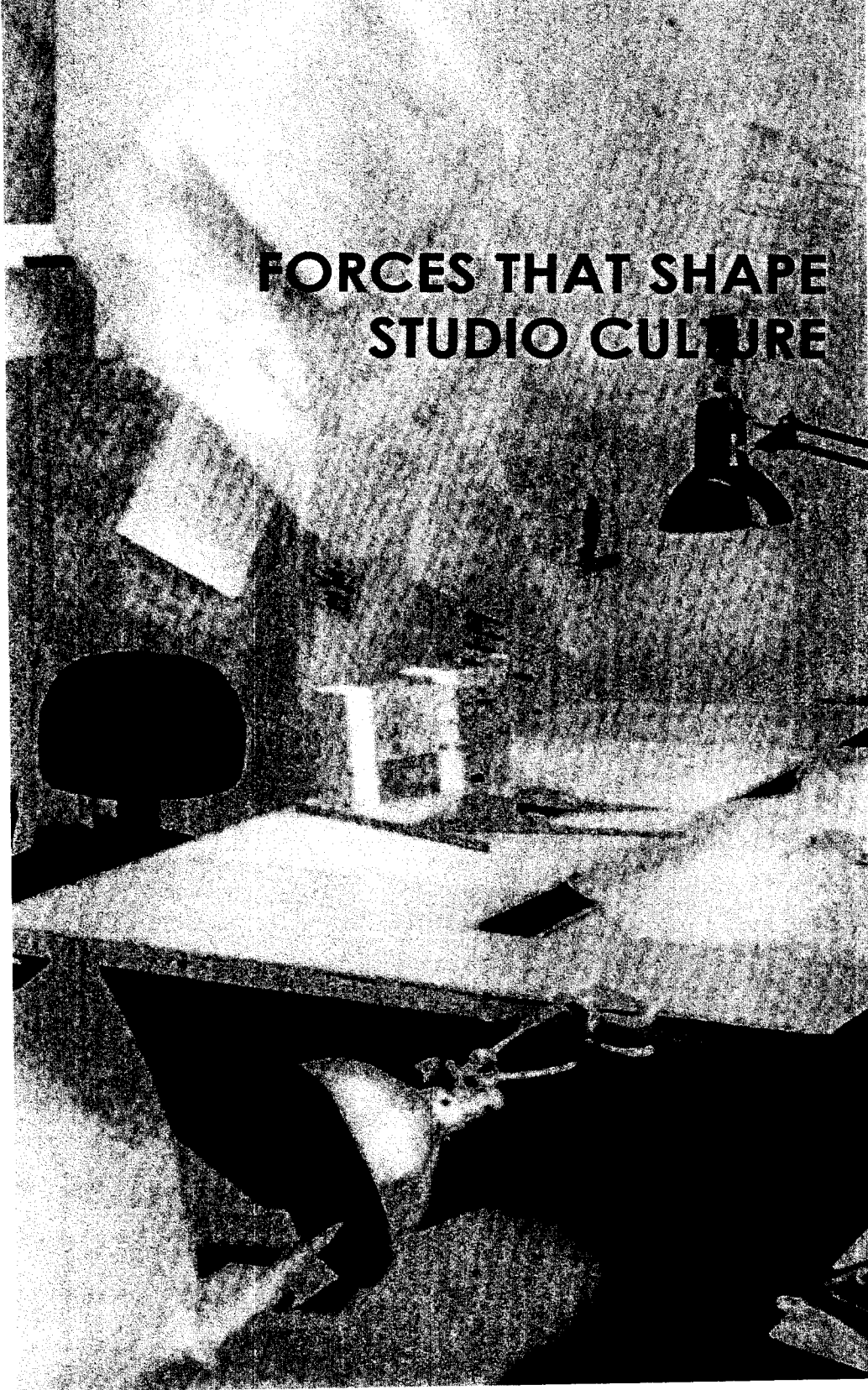
### *Hard work and no play?*

What emerges from these interviews is that intensive studio life is not only a result of deep dedication, but that it also reinforces the self-perception for devotion and aspiration. The studio setting is used by students as an arena to reconstruct a world in which they will be proud to identify and project the images they like. The perceptual differences of undergraduate and graduate students reflect the self-illusions that are diligently built by the juniors and seniors, and indicate that the undergraduate studio culture

is a product of a complex process of emulation, showing-up, and building self-identity.

While my first impressions from the observation period supported the notion that architecture students are totally overworked and have no preoccupation other than design and part-time jobs, and that their personal lives are quite modest, a careful scrutiny of studio life began to unveil a lot of procrastination, socializing, and superficial demonstrations of devotion and high work ethics. The truth may be somewhere in the middle (as usual): architecture students work hard, more than students in many other departments, but not as much as they pretend; they still have not become complete workaholics.

# FORCES THAT SHAPE STUDIO CULTURE



## FORCES THAT SHAPE STUDIO CULTURE

In order to reinforce the consistency of the presentation, I will reiterate the goals of the study - to unveil patterns of everyday life, adaptive behavior, values that underlie environmental choices, and models for negotiating the use of space. The interpretation aims at understanding the major influences that produce the specifics of studio culture and the behaviors reconstructed in the previous section, the meaning of the studio in students' everyday lives, and, most importantly, the nature of the relationships between these social actors (and building users) and their physical environments.

The interpretation unveiled two major forces that shape the everyday lives of studio occupants: personality traits and environmental conditions. The personality traits include the motivation and attitudes that students share.



The environmental conditions are defined in a very broad sense, and include the social, the professional, and the physical. They encompass the social status of the profession, the influence of the professional community as a reference group, and the opportunities offered by the ambiance and the management of a studio room. All of these forces interact to produce the specifics of the everyday life and culture of a studio.

### Personality traits

#### *The underlying motivation: In search of excellence*

The study indicates several major characteristics of serious architecture students: They are committed, devoted, and completely absorbed by architecture, and are workaholics who refrain from going out or engaging in entertainment and leisure activities. Professional success is probably their greatest satisfaction and happiness. The joy of learning and achieving is probably the most natural emotion in their lives. Competition is their habitual hobby. The urge for success is so compelling that competing with oneself displaces competition with fellow students. The quest for ultimate achievement leads to a continuous search for self-improvement. The intrinsic drive for mastery and the quest for a celebrated career are strong motivational forces. In this regard, the architecture student emerges as a super-

achiever. In other departments, overachievers sometimes become targets of mockery and contempt. The studio setting seems to be a safe haven for such people. The motivation to achieve is disguised by the demands of the institution, and these individuals do not have to hide this controversial impetus. The asceticism and sacrifice of leisure in the name of future success are concealed under the pretense of conforming with the high demands of the program.

One indicator of professional devotion is the time and resources architecture students invest in preparing their studio workplaces. In a previous section describing the studio setting, there is a detailed account of the large number of things students bring to the studio, the enormous efforts they make to move all of them into their "second home" in school, and the hundreds of dollars they invest for appliances, furniture, and drafting equipment. Most of these items are used during the semester, unlike textbooks that are returned by non-architectural majors to the university bookstore for refunds. There is no large-scale system for recycling architectural textbooks; there is not enough volume to support such an enterprise. Architecture students need their textbooks from their school days, through their licensing exam, and throughout their professional careers.

*Devotion as an ego-defense:**The psychology of insecure superachievers*

On the whole, architecture undergraduates are superachievers, extremely devoted and competitive. This strong motivation, however, and desire for self-actualization makes them feel unsafe and always under the threat of failure. The overt self-confidence and competitiveness they display are a means to conceal this fear of failure. The insecurity that superachievers experience makes them adopt a veneer to protect the integrity of their personalities. They attempt to attribute eventual failure to environmental sources. Students want to convince themselves that everything necessary has been done to successfully present their projects. The easiest ego defense is to say, "I work around the clock. I did everything possible within my power. Failure is not my fault." A logical consequence of the strategy to preserve one's self-esteem is all-nighting. Some people say that the "all-nighter" phenomenon is an initiation; others say it is a promulgation of the design office culture at school, as well as a way of attracting attention and expressing individuality.

Another psychological defense is to capitalize on the huge workload. In case of failure, the cause will be due to the tremendous amount of work. The dual images of work piles and hardworking would-be architects are promoted by the constant complaint, "I am running out of time." Everybody speaks about the workload and complains about time

shortage, but it must be noted that most students work as well. The truth is that they work more than students do in many of the other majors. The conspicuous busy schedule and the extensive work provide an excellent shield to protect the fragile egos of the students. Consistent with this self-suggestion and ego defense is the utmost concentration of architecture students and the tendency to minimize overt socializing and leisure. This also can be viewed as postponement of gratification. Usually, an instrument to achieve short-term goals and postponement of gratification can be viewed as a way of life, or rather, a major theme in the lives of architecture students. This ferocious abstention in the name of professional development resembles the stubbornness of medieval craftsmen and the asceticism of Puritans.

However, this is only one way of looking at the situation. There is enough evidence to believe that the problem of the shortage of time is not only a way to protect one's ego against possible failures, but also to project a desired image. It is also due to poor time management, inefficient work, or constant revisions of the solutions of ill-defined problems (as is the nature of architectural problems). No matter what will be the detailed explanation, the roots of studio culture can again be traced to the combination of achievement motivation and the feeling of insecurity.

### *Reducing anxiety: The instinct of flocking together*

Another complementary force that contributes to the patterns of round-the-clock presence in the studio room stems from the high level of anxiety that juniors and seniors display in studio classes. At this point in their education, they have more questions than they would like. Every time they draw a line they face the dilemma of which way to go next. They also have no idea of the exact criteria for grading their projects, the level of achievement of their peers, and how the principle of bell curve grading will be applied to this small group of people. Even when the instructor puts forward a consistent and clear set of criteria, many students still experience the anxiety peculiar to every novice. The combination of achievement motivation, narrow knowledge base, and an unclear prospect for the semester creates tremendous pressure.

Students follow their natural instincts and flock together. On the one hand, strength is in numbers. On the other hand, students can find information about their peers' progress and the difficulties experienced by other classmates; they can discuss project problems with friends, find answers to their questions, and discard other questions as unnecessary. Students become more relaxed when they see that everybody experiences similar problems, and that others cannot meet certain criteria, cannot come to satisfactory solutions, or cannot meet project deadlines. In this way, superachievers begin to view their problems not as

personal failures, but as objective states experienced by everyone. They are saved from frustration and humiliation.

In regard to the constantly emerging questions, working at the studio has several benefits. First, a student can get advice from the fellow at the next drafting table. Second, students gather and discuss the more difficult issues together. Third, they can see how other people solved the problem and construct a similar solution. Fourth, being at school they always have the chance of seeing the instructor or the teaching assistant for advice. Fifth, there is more available information. Students can monitor how their colleagues perform, how fast they move forward, and how their own progress compares with theirs. Students can also borrow ideas from each other. They often tour the drafting tables of their colleagues and sometimes smuggle out an idea. At least they can see how their colleagues solve similar problems and learn from the experience. Sixth, the timely advice has one very important advantage - it saves time! Students do not risk delving into the wrong direction; they do not have to deliberate or go through thick books. Most importantly, they will not stop their work until the answer is found. This translates into a much more efficient use of time and more productive work - a phenomenon that graduate students experienced years ago, although now they know the secret of managing time and getting the job done quickly.

## Environmental factors

### *The time-saving strategy: Functional synergism*

An important feature that has a big influence on shaping architecture students' everyday life, both in and out of school, is time pressure. Large workloads lead to reduced spare time and, consequently, to the necessity of abstaining from extended leisure activities. Socializing is a basic personality need and cannot be suppressed indefinitely. People devise different strategies to satisfy it. Architecture students have found a way to manage their scarce time for socializing by limiting their social interactions to the studio. This strategy may not offer diverse choices, but it saves time. Students don't waste time traveling long distances to meet their friends. They have everything they need at school: friends and partners, socialization sites, and opportunities for easy organization. They can socialize during every small break between classes or when they are resting and relaxing.

### *Functional synergism:*

#### *What makes students flock to the studio*

There are several reasons for residing in the studio around the clock. First, the official department policy encourages students to work at school. The mandatory studio class takes 12 hours a week. Additional presence is fostered. Such a policy helps students decide where to locate their permanent workplaces - at home, or at school. If substan-

tial work on the project has to be performed at school, it makes sense to set the major workplace in the studio. The more time students spend in their studios, the more support equipment they will need to bring and install there; then it becomes even more convenient to work permanently at that location.

Second, it is very uncomfortable to carry to and from huge drawings, drafting supplies, 48-inch-long drafting rulers, and other things of that nature. Also, every time drawings are dismantled and moved from one drafting table to another, there is a risk of deformations, which could compromise the quality of work.

Third, a drafting station takes up a lot of space: two big tables, a bookcase, a rotating chair, books, and drafting supplies including tracing paper, cardboard, wood and veneer for model making, paints, and glues. Model making often produces lots of waste, dust, and toxic fumes. The whole room becomes a mess. Students would rather have separate rooms for drafting and model making. Alex, Jeff, and Teo said that they rented small rooms near campus. Students cannot afford to rent an expensive \$500-a-month, one-bedroom apartment with space enough for all study activities.

Fourth, in the studio, everybody can readily seek advice and consultation from other colleagues. My investigations show that junior and senior students do not have enough knowledge and skills and are liable to get stuck at



any moment. If they are at home, they become intellectually immobile and cannot proceed. At school, they can get help from colleagues and go on with the design process.

Fifth, all students report more distractions at home than in the studio. Several things are mentioned as the most common sources of distraction: the family (Mary), the TV (all students), the ringing telephone (all students), and the "softness of the pillow" (all students). It is not clear whether these are real reasons or, to some extent, a rationalization of an impulse or necessity to "flock" to the studio. My observations and conversational interviews with faculty and older students show that the socializing process in school is much more time consuming. This leads to the sixth point.

Sixth, the opportunities for social interaction and socialization at school are better than at home. The students did not admit this; rather, it came from other sources and the analysis of the interviews. Socializing in the studio is an important function in regards to both professional goals and personality needs. Students feel and understand this and adopt strategies of extended use in the studio.

Seventh, the intensive utilization of the studio for everyday activities is fostered by the need for one's own territory. Architecture students have keys for their studios, they can control the access to their territory, possessions, and information. People develop a sense for place and ownership.

And lastly, after students commit so much effort to studio assignments and spend most of their working time in the studio room, they experience a snowball effect: It is more convenient to keep all books and notes in the studio, so that everything is ready and at hand for their classes. This means that their study week may pass completely at school.

*Catering to everyday activities:*

*The effects of studio confinement*

The nature of architectural work, the psychology of the achiever, and particularly the motivation for achievement lead to an activity strategy that presupposes extensive use of the studio environment. Once students work exclusively in a studio, this decision produces a number of implications. For example, the inconvenience of carrying tons of stuff to school is eliminated. There is no need to rent a larger apartment anymore; a person may prefer a smaller, cheaper room, near school. This saves both time and money. There is no need for a car, parking spaces, parking tickets, and maintenance. Of course, there are trade-offs - the size and quality of your living quarters is traded for proximity to school and lower rent.

*A sense of place: The home base*

When students spend a long day at the studio, they engage in most of the activities that usually are done at

home. This fact makes the studio a special place, a facility that offers opportunities for both work and home activities. The necessity of performing home activities in an institutional environment brings about the exotic appearance of the architectural studio. It also produces a number of problems, both for students and the school administration. Students have to create their own comfort with cheap materials, making use of worn-out and free stuff. The result is an unusual "shanty town" atmosphere. In some ways this astonishing picture becomes a symbol of the architectural studio culture. It reinforces the identity of the studio inhabitants, and the eccentric landscape boosts their egos.

The homelike experience is further reinforced by the shelter function of the studio during the night, and the base support it provides during the day. The studio is the refuge where students study, leave their backpacks, sip cups of coffee before going to lecture classes, or just rest between classes. This is the place where students leave their belongings while running small errands around campus. It is not unusual to see somebody coming from the library with two bags of books, leaving them in the studio, taking off a winter coat, and running to another class. The sense of territory, the base support, the shelter function, and the presence of a group of close-knit friendly people are factors that bring about the emergent sense of the studio as one's own place.

*The turf: A socialization ground*

A second consequence of around-the-clock studio attendance is the intensive social life in the studio. The reduction of out-of-school social contacts has to be compensated by more intensive networking and interacting in the studio. From a territorial perspective, this is inevitable. One can't escape contacts with people he/she spends all day with bound in a common space. From a time management perspective, it is beneficial to have friends sitting nearby. The studio becomes turf where everybody is hanging around in anticipation of meeting somebody else, gathering the gang, and socializing. It is much easier to organize a social life when all your buddies are around. For example, when students get tired of drafting, they easily and quickly organize a group right in the middle of the night and go for a drink at a nearby bar. Often such spontaneous entertainment helps relax and alleviate the enormous tensions of endless work.

*Brothers in arms: The camaraderie*

The long hours of work in the studio also presuppose that people have to satisfy their need for belonging and their need for preserving self-esteem. This spurs another phenomenon that otherwise may not have seemed so obvious: the camaraderie. The territorial bond strongly affects the socialization process, the social interaction, and the social structure of the studio. When the informal man-

agement of the studio is successful enough to prevent conflicts, the strong friendships that originate may easily interpenetrate to form a community spirit that makes people feel like an extended family. The differences and distinctions remain; the latent competition and rivalry may not diminish, but the overall atmosphere is relaxing and stimulating: happy faces, low-volume music, and frequent interaction in the "living room" quarters of the studio.

However, a group of fifteen people is too large not to break into several smaller ones. In the long run, the studio society cracks slightly along the line of personal likes and dislikes, and possibly personal interests, to form about three to four primary groups. Many of the students become very close friends by the middle of the semester and their friendship might continue up to graduation and even beyond. Their lives in the studio will become more intensive, and the time they spend in the room will be longer. They obviously satisfy their needs for social support and belonging in this way. So, the territorial bond amplifies the personality predisposition and catalyzes the formation of social bonds.

The interpretative process was based on the belief that the social world was constructed by goal-directed actors possessing a complex psychological frame of mind, the ability to set strategies and purposefully organize their actions, and the diligence to pursue their objectives. The motivation perspective provided understanding about the

forces that shape the studio strategy and behavior patterns, together with the underlying values and subsequent choices. The activity perspective used in this study implied that human activity was the medium that related social actors among themselves and produced the everyday phenomena, and that it also related the everyday life of these actors with the physical environment. The belief that the social phenomena could best be understood and reconstructed from an activity perspective resulted in the formulation of the interpretative concept "work around-the-clock in the studio." The metaphors of "workshop," "studio-as-a-home," and "socializing ground" provided an interpretative background for reconstructing the social dimensions of the studio habitat.



## CONCLUSIONS

## CONCLUSIONS

### Concluding comments on architectural studio culture

In general, architectural studio culture is a subtype of American college culture. The differences stem from the specificity of the architectural profession that permeates the academic program from the very first semester. The major traits of studio culture are the focus on professional excellence and the achievement motivation. These are the main forces that drive all architecture students in pursuit of mastery and lead to “around-the-clock” studio work which produces major implications for the everyday lives of these people. The relentless pursuit of professional development, the ensuing everyday strategies, and the limited resources of the students lead to the emergence of studios as unique places that merge the boundaries of a workshop, a home,



and a socializing ground and contribute to the formation of an exotic shanty town setting in an institutional environment.

### Implications for environmental design

The purpose of this study is to provide an understanding of the architecture student culture so that it can become a basis for developing background knowledge and a system of goals and requirements for the building designs for architecture schools. A study of this type, holistic and conceptual, has predominantly an intellectual and conceptual impact. The reconstruction of studio activity patterns and needs will help programmers and designers develop a richer image and profound understanding of the building users. This detailed description and analysis should stimulate and contribute to the formation of personal frameworks and implicit models of user behavior. This background knowledge is utilized indirectly in the process of conceptualizing design problems, appropriate solutions, and subsequent evaluations of the design alternatives. In this regard, the exploration of everyday life in architectural studios provides decision makers with information for deducing major goals and user needs that have to be supported by a school facility. The study also can be used for developing social criteria for the evaluation of architecture

school buildings. The information gathered may become a theoretical base for programming and planning such schools. The present stage of the inquiry into studio life can be continued with the intention of eliciting more detailed information, corroborating the general understanding, and developing jointly with the users a system of design requirements and considerations.

### *General implications and considerations*

On the grounds of the broad picture of everyday studio life, several major groups of social and design considerations emerge. At this point they will be stated in general and broad terms, allowing for elaboration and specification in other studies. The present study is more conceptual than technical. Very specific definitions require additional work, including additional interviews and workshops that focus on eliciting information for estimating dimensions, sizes, amounts, and so forth.

The character of architecture students suggests that they enjoy spaces projecting the image of artistic communities, imaginative personalities, professional approaches, concentration on professional developments rather than the small things in life, simple lifestyles, strong work ethics, assertiveness, and motivation for achievements. Translated into more specific sociospatial categories, these assumptions indicate that architecture students enjoy simple and functional environments with the looks of an artist's studio

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and airs of magic and mastery; they also disregard luxury and conservative and classy features. However, students readily rejected the apprentice and workshop metaphors, which reflect only the work ethics of the students' personality and self-identification. These conceptualizations also fell short of suggesting the right atmosphere an architecture studio should provide.

An important issue identified in this study is the shanty town atmosphere in the studios. Although students are very modest in their requirements, it is highly compromising to create such environments in a school of architecture. Designers should be capable of offering solutions to any problem in an artistic and imaginative way, particularly when it is about their "homes." Architects should go beyond the evident and the conventional and come up with unique solutions that will enhance even further the images they would like to project. How far a school will want to go in equipping studios with all of the furniture counted in this study is the question. It is difficult to offer advice, keeping in mind the financial difficulties of "beautification" campaigns. There might be, however, ways to solve the problem with limited resources by using the production capacity of the school training woodshop, the opportunities provided by the classes in furniture making, etc. Several years ago such an attempt was made in a sophomore studio with an enrollment of one hundred plus students. However, the solution was a kind of a hybrid - the design

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of the furniture was a studio assignment; students provided labor and cost of materials, and the school matched these personal investments with the woodshop facilities. As a result, the furniture remained private property and after the end of the semester the students took it home.

The architectural studio needs almost 24-hour logistical support. This also implies the need to facilitate student activities that are not directly connected to the curriculum. Since students spend most of their active day in school, their ultimate life goals and needs deserve to be considered. There are four major areas in which students evidently have set goals and objectives: professional development, personality development, social life, and everyday maintenance.

In regard to the everyday activities in the studio setting - eating, short rests and retreats, and occasionally night rests - students need a particular level of support. For example, students need backstage places, a lounge, new forms of food services, and a telephone connection with the outer world. The satisfaction of such needs, however, presents major administrative and managerial problems. It is difficult to promulgate the idea of a contemporary school as a boarding house. Students themselves understand the duality of the situation and many of them voice not only their wants and wishes, but also their concerns about possible repercussions and problems with the organization and management of studio situations that are heavily supported

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with everyday life facilities. Most students express a desire for other forms of logistical support that do not require burdensome institutional investments. Many students look at the logistical problems as a conundrum.

The personality development and social life goals of the students and the intensive socialization in the studio suggest the need for a variety of places for social interaction. These spaces may be arranged in a system that includes the studio itself with the drafting tables oriented towards a central focal point; the in-studio "living room," the informal public area in the studio; floor lounges designed as vestibule space for several studio rooms; and an all-school common lounge. This variety will lead to different types of social interactions and communication exchanges, thus contributing to both group formation and building an all-school community. There is an evident need for some furniture that can both improve the aesthetic qualities of the studio room and demarcate a special area for public use, socialization, and communication.

In summary, the results obtained may be used for considering some elaboration in departmental policies in regard to the professional socialization of students, introducing instruction on time management, and providing stronger support for the basic motivation of students. The studio-as-home metaphor may suggest possible avenues for institutional engagements in order to facilitate more efficient promulgation of departmental policies. School

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administrators may wish to discuss ways of delivering higher degrees of logistical support for student activities that are not directly connected to the curriculum. It is also worth considering the replacement of shanty town environments with well designed, but inexpensive, furniture.

### *Some design considerations*

In more specific terms, studio spaces need to be large enough to accommodate work stations for 10-15 people, and common spaces functioning as living rooms, guest rooms, and space for internal studio crits and lectures. It is quite controversial as to whether studios should have adjacent areas with sinks, microwaves, and refrigerators. There is a necessity for large waste paper bins and simple devices for sweeping the floor for cleanups after model making and paper cutting. The janitors do not always respond with the speed of an emergency crew. The work stations should be sized so that there is enough space for large drafting tables, smaller ancillary tables or desks, ergonomic chairs, bookcases, and small file cabinets, probably sized to fit under the tables, and small waste paper baskets. Students probably wish for a couple of couches or futons, several armchairs, small coffee tables, and small used TV sets for the living spaces.

A studio space of about 36 ft. by 39 ft. seems to accommodate 12-15 students with ease. This makes approximately 100-120 sq. ft. per person. A compact, deep, slight-

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ly elongated room configuration is conducive for arranging the work stations around the perimeter, so that everybody has a piece of wall for pinning drawings, and a view towards the center of the room and everybody else. With this arrangement, students feel as if they are a part of the community and can monitor and participate in studio life at a moment's notice. The center of the studio is convenient for organizing the common space with its living room and lecture functions. It is the "public space," the "village square," and the hub of life.

### Beyond this study

The information about architecture students provided by this study can serve as a background for finding and testing possible solutions. There are many factors that influence the programming and design decisions: school mission, goals, and policies; financial resources and feasibility; considerations of the broader university environment as a major provider of functional support; non-traditional solutions; and the experience of other schools that have gone to great lengths in supporting everyday student needs. The analysis will evidently go beyond the single studio, will encompass the school as a whole, and possibly will draw on university resources to achieve a delicate balance between what is needed, what is possible, and what is acceptable.

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The programmatic ideas sketched here may look too broad and ambitious, beyond the limits of conventional resources, too expensive for the effects they will provide, and generally not feasible. More concrete and practical advice, however, can be provided regarding only specific project situations and their context. Only in a real situation it is possible to decide how far to go in developing innovative forms of support for everyday studio life, based on the objectives, considerations, and views of all interested parties. This requires interactive sessions and workshops with highly motivated participants who carefully analyze and consider the implications of every decision in regard to financial limitations, social effects, efficiency of investments, and overall feasibility.

The current study is both broad and focused in its own way. The breadth comes from the intent to grasp holistically the everyday life in an architectural studio. The focus is introduced by the pragmatic underpinnings of this interest: to gain insight into the sociospatial relations of the studio. I am quite aware that social science researchers may be much more interested in the social structure of the studio, power relations and leadership, gender and minorities, oppression and empowerment, inequality, conflict management, and many other aspects. Architectural educators will probably focus upon the instruction situation of the studio, and exclusively for the developments that involve instructors. All these topics may become foci for future research.



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