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.
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
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.
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
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-
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.
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.