effects generally refer to the negative. The urban design concern is with the catalytic effect both have on future developments. Do they start trends in investment policies or not? Do they establish new aesthetic attitudes? Many of the case studies presented in this book show how specific buildings (e.g. the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao) and building complexes (e.g. Pioneer Place) have been successful in this sense (see Chapter 6).

A prime function of many urban designs is to enhance the quality of the urban environment by changing investment patterns. Unfortunately some urban design paradigms have been inappropriately applied and have had unanticipated negative impacts. The 'de-malling' of many streets that had been converted to pedestrian ways is an example (e.g. Oak Park, Illinois; see Chapter 5). Of great public concern nowadays is the impact of the built environment on the natural environment but it has yet to be reflected in urban design on any large scale. Although there have been some preliminary explorations, the paradigms for designers to follow have yet to be clearly articulated.

Buildings and other hard surfaces change the patterns of winds and breezes flowing through the environment, the processes by which water tables are created, and heat is reflected and absorbed. They, in particular, create heat-islands changing local climatic patterns. We are only just beginning to be conscious of these matters in urban design and in most localities the political will to deal with them has yet to emerge. In addition, our science is still poor on many dimensions. For instance, our knowledge of how winds move through cities flushing out pollutants is in its infancy. We are much better off in dealing with issues of energy consumption.

The Cultural Dimension

'All people have the same needs' Le Corbusier observed. Assuming that the models for designing the built environment can be reduced to a number of universal paradigms has proven to be a costly error. The ordering of needs, as Maslow perceived them, may be universal but the ways we strive to meet them show considerable variability. The activity patterns, from those of everyday life to the most obscure ceremonies, depend on our stage in life cycle, our gender, and our social roles, within specific cultural contexts. What we are accustomed to do and the environments we are accustomed to inhabit very much shape what we seek in the future. We are habituated to what we know. Departures from the norm, particularly major departures, can be highly stressful. Yet history is replete with examples of attempts, sometimes successful, sometimes not, to change the face of society through radical architectural and urban changes.

It is not only the activity patterns that vary from culture to culture, but also concepts of privacy and territoriality and attitudes towards public displays of status and wealth. In some societies there is considerable social dislocation and high crime rates and in others much less. Patterns of the environment, the materials of what they are made, their colouring and the whole manner in which they are