

Values and the Future of the Built Environment: A Conceptual Review of Cultural Drivers of Spatial Appropriation

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ABSTRACT

The built environment is undergoing rapid transformation under the combined pressures of globalization, technological innovation, environmental change, and sustainability imperatives. While these forces are widely acknowledged, the cultural dimensions that silently shape spatial appropriation remain insufficiently explored. This paper foregrounds values as the most fundamental component of culture, arguing that they anchor worldviews, lifestyles, and activity systems, and decisively influence how individuals and communities use, adapt, and transform space. Drawing on Amos Rapoport's framework, the study employs a conceptual integrative literature review to dismantle the broad concept of culture and isolate values as its pivotal driver. Findings reveal that values shape housing preferences, satisfaction, house form, and adaptation, while also guiding transformations and policy outcomes. They act as enduring determinants of behavior, even as globalization and technological change reshape the built environment. Recent scholarship highlights their importance for sustainability and demonstrates that values can be operationalized through participatory co-design, bridging the gap between theory and practice. The study concludes that embedding values explicitly within design and policy frameworks is essential to ensure housing and built environments are not only technically adequate but also socially meaningful, culturally resonant, and resilient to future transformations.

Keywords: Built Environment, Culture, Designing for Values (DfV), Globalisation and Technology, Operationalization, Spatial Appropriation, Values.

1.0. Introduction

Values are broadly defined as the deeply held beliefs, principles, and standards that individuals and societies use to determine what is important, desirable, and morally right. In spatial research, these values manifest across diverse dimensions. These dimensions include: social, cultural, environmental, economic, and political values, with each of these carrying distinct meanings and dictating different priorities for human living environments. While social values emphasize community cohesion, political values moderate issues on spatial equity, and economic values prioritize financial asset performance.

Cultural values, on the other hand, are the shared, enduring ideals and codes of conduct that anchor a community's worldview, lifestyles, and activity systems. Within the built environment, they serve as the operational tool for putting the broad concept of culture into practice, translating abstract heritage, identity, and customs into tangible spatial requirements. By acting as the foundational driver that defines people and guides behaviour, cultural values directly dictate how individuals and communities inhabit, adapt, and transform their surroundings. This specific set of values bridges the gap between a society's deep-seated heritage and its everyday spatial appropriation, establishing how meaning is assigned to physical form. Consequently, these multifaceted value systems, including social, economic, and cultural values, are central to how space is conceived, designed, used, and sustained, ultimately dictating the future trajectory of the built environment.

These make values central to the stability and future of the built environment. Just as the natural environment depends on latent systems to sustain equilibrium, the built environment relies on intangible yet powerful forces that shape how space is conceived and appropriated. The COVID-19 pandemic illustrated how the disruption of natural equilibrium by an invisible agent could destabilize global systems; economies, health, education, and social life. This analogy underscores the vulnerability of environments, natural or built, to unseen influences, while suggesting that the environment is also upheld by intangible forces in values for its stability.

In the built environment, equilibrium is similarly maintained by operational systems, but its intangible aspects are often overlooked. Culture has long been identified as a key influence, particularly in housing (Rapoport, 2008; Opoku, 2015; Brysch *et al.*, 2024; Choi & Choi, 2024). Yet culture, when treated holistically, is too diffuse to provide precise insights. Disaggregating it reveals values as the most pivotal component. It does so by defining people, guiding behaviour, and offering a clearer framework for understanding how environments evolve. Despite their significance, values remain underexplored in built-environment research, presenting a critical gap.

This paper therefore, guided by three objectives seeks, to trace the origin of values in the built environment, to examine the ways in which they influence its form and use, and to assess the role they will play in shaping its future trajectory. The discussion unfolds in three stages, corresponding to the three objectives of the study: first, by analysing and discussing the particulate nature of culture; secondly, by focusing on values and their centrality to, as well as exploring their implications across different contexts of the built environment; thirdly, it concludes by outlining how values can guide the way forward and define the future of the built environment.

2.0. Methodology

2.1. Materials

This study adopts a conceptual integrative review methodology to synthesize, critique, and reconceptualize the intersections of culture, values, housing, and wellbeing. In alignment with established frameworks for theory-building literature reviews, this design prioritizes the purposeful selection and qualitative synthesis of foundational ideas, competing paradigms, and theoretical models over statistical or quantitative data aggregation (Torraco, 2005).

While empirical reviews or meta-analyses utilize mechanical screening tools such as PRISMA-style flows or statistical coding frameworks to track data volume, a conceptual methodology focuses on evaluating the logical evolution of ideas, structural definitions, and theoretical gaps (Callahan, 2014). Although the design of this review is tailored towards thematic depth and conceptual landscape mapping rather than exhaustive statistical indexing, the study adopts the use of a PRISMA-flow chart, Figure 1, which is also highlighted in Table 1.

The boundary of this review is defined by a two-tier chronological and theoretical segmentation strategy, culminating in a focused analytic sample of forty-four ($N = 44$) high-relevance texts. This article size aligns with the principle of theoretical saturation, ensuring deep qualitative engagement with the literature:

- a. Foundational Literature: Seminal classic works establishing the historical trajectory of cultural constructs and value dimensions which were 15no in all (Tylor, 1871; Rapoport, 1969, 1987, 2005, 2008; Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992, 2006).
- b. Contemporary Literature: Recent peer-reviewed studies published between 2016 and the present (Opoku, 2015; Angel & Bittschi, 2019; Elsinga *et al.*, 2020; Al Husban, 2021; Brysch, 2024; Choi & Choi, 2024) to capture evolving modern paradigms linking built environments to socio-cultural wellbeing.

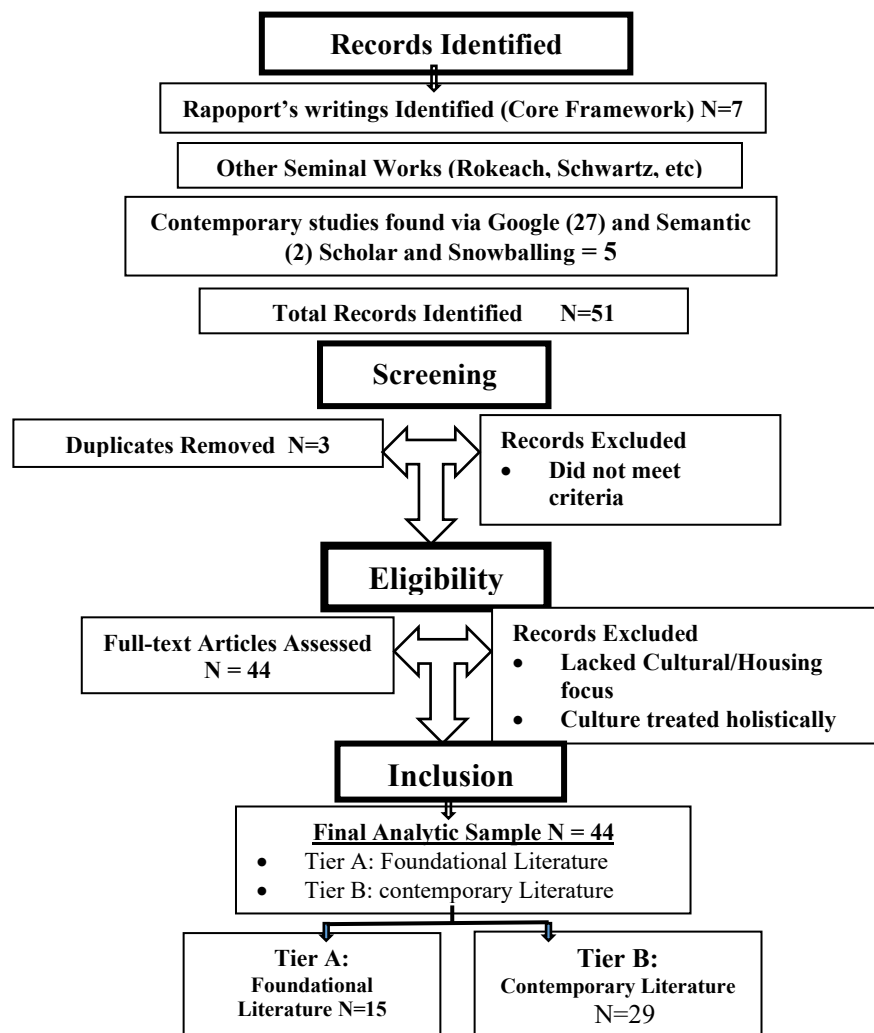


Figure 1: Conceptual PRISMA-flow Chart for the Literature Review

Table 1: Conceptual PRISMA-flow Chart for the Literature Review

Phase	Step	Description	Records (N)
Identification	Rapoport's writings	Core framework + selected works	7
	Other classics	Rokeach, Schwartz, etc.	10
	Contemporary sources	Peer-reviewed studies (2016–2024)	34
	Total identified	Combined pool	51
Screening	Duplicate removal	Removed overlaps	3
	Excluded	Not meeting conceptual criteria	4
Eligibility	Full-text assessed	Evaluated for depth & fit	44
Inclusion	Final analytic sample	Theoretical saturation achieved	44
	Tier A	Foundational classics	15
	Tier B	Contemporary studies	29

2.2. Methods and conceptual framework

To bridge abstract anthropological concepts with architectural realities, this methodology is anchored in Rapoport's (2005) framework for dismantling culture in architecture. Rapoport's framework serves as the core operational tool, allowing the review to systematically deconstruct static cultural definitions into

dynamic, latent variables, specifically localized values, lifestyles, and activity systems. By using this theoretical lens, the synthesis tracks how internal values manifest as physical drivers of housing morphology, space organization, and structural transformation.

2.3 Search, Selection, and Heuristic Strategy

Literature retrieval was conducted mainly via Google Scholar, selected for its broad, cross-disciplinary index across architecture, sociology, environmental psychology, and anthropology. This wide-reaching coverage is essential for capturing multifaceted conceptual frameworks that span multiple fields of study.

To complement this broad scope, the study utilized a heuristic search technique combined with backward and forward citation "snowballing" rather than automated keyword algorithms alone (Greenhalgh & Peacock, 2005). This approach began with core seminal texts and systematically tracked their conceptual lineages. This iterative process retrieved a total of 51-articles allowed, and a final sample to stabilize at 44-articles after screening, with the selection process concluding once additional texts yielded no new conceptual insights as data saturation was attained, definitions, or paradigms regarding the core variables. A few of the literature, precisely two (2), were retrieved from Semantic Scholar which mainly projects articles in the Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields.

To maintain theoretical rigor, explicit conceptual parameters were applied:

- i) Inclusion Criteria: Theoretical texts, peer-reviewed articles, and book chapters focusing directly on the active intersection of cultural value systems, housing forms, spatial morphology, and resident wellbeing.
- ii) Exclusion Criteria: Studies that treated "culture" holistically, purely as a broad demographic label without defining its structural variables, or papers lacking a direct relationship to architectural space and the built environment were excluded.

2.4 Analytical Synthesis and Thematic Clustering

These 44 identified materials were synthesized using an iterative thematic approach optimized for theoretical development. Rather than cataloguing findings linearly, the literature was organized into four interconnected thematic clusters to map recurring debates and theoretical conflicts:

- i) Culture and housing morphology.
- ii) Internal values, physical housing design, organization, and space appropriation.
- iii) Domestic space under the influence of globalization and technological change.
- iv) Housing preferences, satisfaction-gap dynamics, and user adaptation.

By juxtaposing historical theoretical frameworks with contemporary empirical realities, this synthesis explicitly identifies logical mismatches and conceptual boundaries. The final output provides the groundwork required to propose an updated, value-driven model of housing wellbeing.

3.0. Results and Discussions

This section presents the discussion and synthesis of the reviewed literature, structured intentionally around the three core research objectives of this study. Rather than acting as a passive, linear catalogue of sources, this section operates as a critical dialogue that evaluates, compares, and builds upon existing theoretical frameworks and empirical data. By juxtaposing foundational theories against contemporary findings, this discussion uncovers the conceptual shifts, systemic misalignments, and research gaps that define the relationship between socio-cultural realities and the built environment.

To ensure analytical clarity and logical progression, the synthesis is organized into three overarching thematic dimensions corresponding to the study's core objectives:

- i) Culture and Its Particulate Nature: The 'Origin' of Values (Section 3.1): Aligned with the first objective, this subsection traces the origins of values by dismantling the broad, generic concept of culture. It positions values as specific, ideational components within architectural discourse, utilizing Rapoport's (2005) model to move from abstract definitions to operational variables.
- ii) Values are Pivotal (Section 3.2): Addressing the second objective, this subsection examines how these internal, cultural values actively dictate house forms, user preferences, residential satisfaction, and spatial organization/appropriation. It details the practical implications of value-driven design and exposes the critical person-environment conflicts that emerge when policy frameworks ignore user values.

- iii) Values, New Technologies and Globalization (Section 3.3) & Values In the Future of the Built Environment (Section 3.4): Fulfilling the third objective, these subsections look toward the future of housing research. They relay how macro-societal forces, specifically globalization and rapid technological advancements, act as mutations on human values, altering how domestic spaces are conceived, adapted, and sustained.

By structuring the review in this manner, the discussion moves systematically from theoretical baseline definitions to spatial manifestations, culminating in a forward-looking perspective on how culture can be actively operationalized, as values, to create more responsive, socially sustainable housing environments.

3.1. Culture and Its Particulate Nature: The 'Origin' of Values

Culture is conceived of in different ways, and said to be one concept with varied conceptions, which accounts for hundreds of operational definitions (Rapoport, 1969; 1987; 2005; 2008; Zolfaghari et al, 2016). These varied definitions are given for culture across the different fields that exists. It is conceived of in the social sciences either as a group of people, or as networks of shared knowledge (Hong, 2013). However, Tylor's (1871) classic definition was the original definition, which has been widely accepted and referenced over the years, as *"that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society"*. Other definitions have expressed this concept in other ways, mainly building on the definition of Tylor. In this paper, culture is conceived of as *'what concerns a group of people who have a set of values and beliefs which embody ideals, and are transmitted to members of the group through enculturation'* (Rapoport, 1987). It is immediately clear from these definitions that other smaller concepts define culture, which directly suggest a particulate nature for it (Rapoport, 1969; 2005; 2008; Zolfaghari et al, 2016). Some of such concepts include 'way of life' or lifestyle, values, meaning and beliefs, which are culture's basic assumptions. Figure 2 expresses Rapoport's conceptualization of culture.

Culture is often undermined and given only a definition that portrays it as being only about race or ethnic differences (Kagawa-Singer et al, 2016), which reflects a *"...truncated conceptualization of culture which hamper our ability to understand the actual forces which inform behavior at the individual, group or institutional levels of society..."* (Kagawa-Singer et al, 2016). In consonance, Crang (1998) defines culture as *"sets of beliefs or values which give meaning to ways of life and are reproduced through material and symbolic forms..."*. This brings to bear that culture is ideational and although, mostly expressed through the concrete things we see, for example; peoples, dressings, food, and housing, there are other salient aspects that ground our understanding of the concept better. Some of these are values, lifestyle, and worldview.

3.1.1 Culture as Values

Culture as a concept is too generic and complex. Its complexity has been expressed in writings by scholars in cross-cultural studies, over time (Rapoport, 1969; 2005; 2008; Zolfaghari et al, 2016). One major contributor to its complexity is the wide gap that exists between conceptualizing it, and operationalizing it. The gap between its conceptualization and operationalization in fact is constantly widening (Rapoport, 1969; 2005; 2008; Zolfaghari et al, 2016). This is mainly owing to the very abstract, multifaceted and all-encompassing nature it has. The way to understand the dynamics of culture however is in dismantling it, as Rapoport advocates in his writings (Rapoport, 1969; 2005; 2008), that is, *in exploring the sources of values*, like Zolfaghari et al (2016) expressed it. From Rapoport (1969; 2005; 2008) the need and importance for dismantling the concept of culture to have a better understanding of it, is advocated. The Rapoport's conceptualization and operationalization of the concept of culture into an easily understandable form is captured in Figure 2 below.

According to Rapoport (2005) and illustrated in Fig. 2, culture may be operationalized in two ways: first as *more concrete and potentially observable social expressions*, and secondly as *expressions that are more specific*. As concrete expressions, culture can be expressed as identity, ethnicity, kinship, family structure, status, institutions, roles, and social networks. On the other hand, culture as more specific expressions may be operationalized as world views, values, lifestyles and activity systems. These are further explained by ideals, images schemata, meanings, and further still by norms, rules, standards, and expectations. Values are operationalized here as sets of rules or guiding principles that guide a group's conduct and decisions. All of these components of culture directly relate with and define the built environment which is itself is reduced

to: the organization of space, time, meaning & communication; system of settings; cultural landscape; and made up of fixed, semi-fixed, & non-fixed features.

Rapoport's dismantling of culture into concrete and specific expressions provides a valuable conceptual framework for understanding housing and environmental design. Yet, the framework leaves unresolved the challenge of operationalizing values in ways that can be empirically tested and practically applied. Rokeach (1973) emphasized that values function as enduring beliefs guiding action and judgment, but translating these beliefs into measurable design parameters remains underdeveloped. Jansen (2014a) similarly argued that values directly influence housing preferences and satisfaction, yet empirical pathways for embedding these insights into design practice are limited. More recent studies reinforce this point: Sadeghlou and Emami (2023) demonstrated how residents link housing attributes to values such as security and achievement, but noted the absence of systematic mechanisms for integrating these insights into design guidelines.

A persistent gap lies in bridging the conceptualization of culture with its operationalization (Rapoport, 2005; Zolfaghari et al., 2016). While values are central to Rapoport's model, the framework does not fully explain how they can be systematically integrated into housing design processes or policy frameworks. Evidence shows that values shape house form, residential satisfaction, and adaptation (Coolen & Hoekstra, 2001; Jansen, 2014a), yet more work is needed to connect these findings to design tools and decision-making models. Recent studies highlight this challenge: Elsinga et al. (2020) demonstrated how affordability and satisfaction are mediated by value orientations, while Boschman (2018) showed that neighborhood attachment is strongly linked to residents' cultural and value-based preferences. The dynamic nature of values, reshaped by globalization, migration, and technological change, requires further theorization and empirical validation (Eldemery, 2009; Dariush et al., 2021).

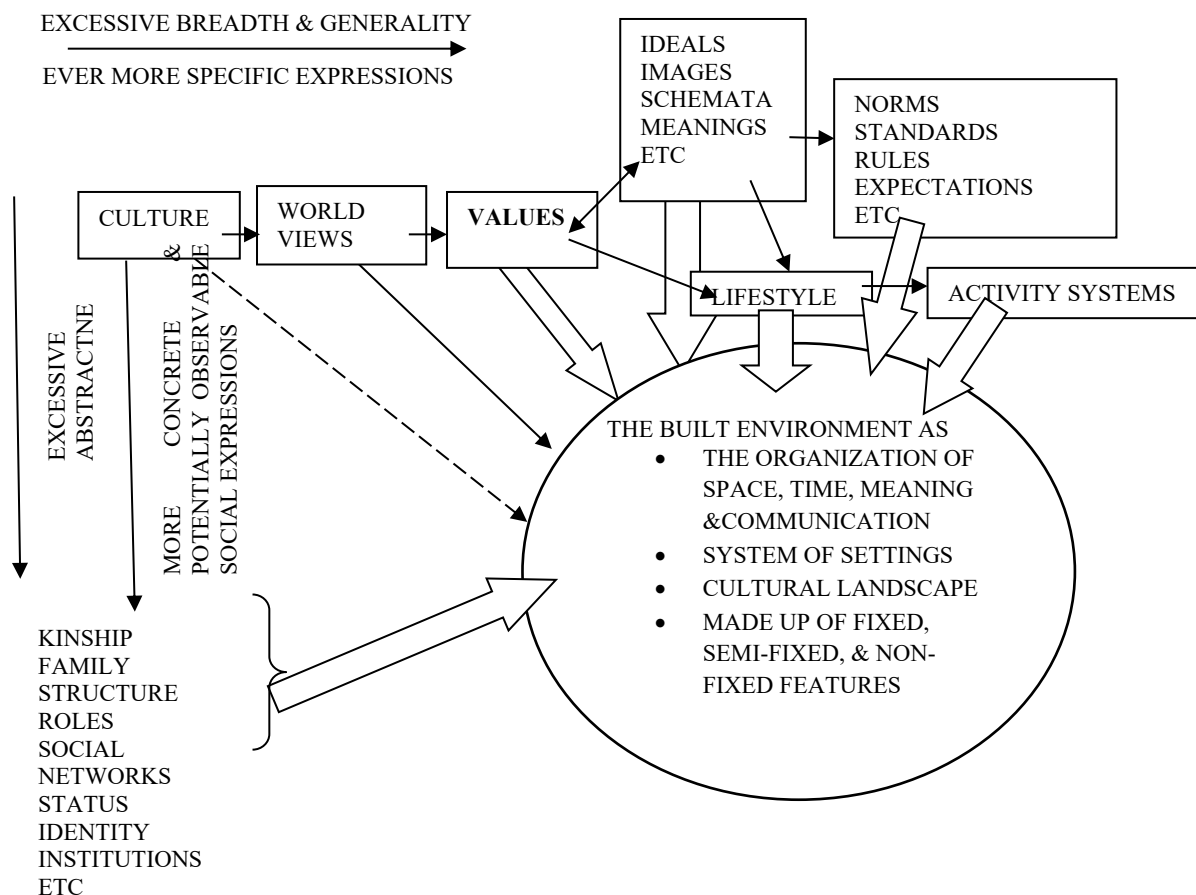


Figure 2: Rapoport's model for dismantling culture (Rapoport, 2005)

Empirical attempts to operationalize housing values, such as Adisa and Amole's (2021) adaptation of Cutler (1947) and McCray & Day (1977), identified thirteen housing values, with personal and family relations, leisure, and prestige strongly influencing residents' satisfaction with their housing. These findings underscore the importance of values but also reveal the need for more systematic integration into design practice. While the concept of Design for Values (DfV) offers a promising extension, Rapoport's framework does not provide concrete guidelines for embedding values into everyday decisions. Jansen (2014a) and Coolen & Ozaki (2004) highlight that values influence not only preferences but also long-term adaptability, suggesting that operationalizing them could yield more responsive and sustainable housing solutions. Recent work confirms this: De Paris et al. (2023) and Salama et al. (2017) show that resident-led transformations are strongly value-driven, while Opoku (2015) emphasizes the role of culture and values in achieving sustainability in the built environment.

Brysch et al. (2024) study provides a crucial advancement by demonstrating how values can be explicitly negotiated and embedded through co-design in the La Borda housing cooperative in Barcelona. This evidence directly addresses the gap between theory and practice, showing that values are not only theoretical drivers but can be operationalized in participatory design processes to produce socially responsive and adaptable environments.

The limitations of Rapoport's framework therefore lie in the bridge between theory and practice: how values, identified as the most pivotal cultural component, can be systematically measured, empirically validated across contexts, and embedded into design and policy. Addressing this gap would advance housing research by moving beyond conceptual dismantling toward actionable strategies that align built environments with socio-cultural realities, sustainability imperatives, and participatory design practices.

3.2. *Values are Pivotal*

Values are widely recognized as the foundational units of culture that decode complex societal constructs like worldviews and lifestyles (Rapoport, 2005). Rather than acting as passive ideals, values operate dynamically across cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions (Rokeach, 1973). They stimulate interests, motivate actions, and serve as strict criteria for justifying human behavior (Rokeach, 1973). Building upon this, psychological frameworks establish a consensus that values are ordered by relative importance and transcend specific situations to guide everyday actions (Schwartz, 1992, Jansen, 2014a). Consequently, measuring these cultural value orientations emerges as a highly efficient pathway to understanding complex societal behaviors (Schwartz, 2006). The following highlight the centrality of values to housing, house form, preferences and satisfaction, and in the design and organization of housing.

3.2.1 *Values and Housing*

Culture undeniably dictates the form and character of the built environment (Rapoport, 1969; Adisa & Amole, 2021). Within this nexus, housing operates as a fundamental human necessity heavily mediated by culturally rooted conceptions of the "good life" (Saegert, 1985). Moral and societal values play a substantive role in evaluating housing policies and design discourses (Elsinga et al., 2020). Furthermore, dwellings act as physical sites for acculturation; by dictating how individuals inhabit spaces, housing facilitates the transmission of values to maintain cultural and social cohesion over generations (Rapoport, 2008). This alignment of values frequently exposes a critical divergence between the spatial priorities of professional designers ("outsiders") and those of the actual building users ("insiders") [Rapoport, 2005]. Such mismatches heavily dictate whether a user remains satisfied or chooses to actively adapt a building to better align with their personal values.

3.2.2 *Values and House Form*

A direct causal relationship exists between internal cultural values and the physical form of housing (Ozaki, 2002). For instance, a societal shift toward privatized living directly manifests as a demand for physically segregated spaces prioritizing privacy within domestic layouts (Ozaki, 2002). While non-cultural factors such as climate, construction techniques, and materials undeniably influence architectural execution, they are strictly secondary (Ozaki, 2002). Aligning with foundational housing theories, these physical and economic constraints act merely as modifiers rather than primary determinants (Rapoport, 1969). They heavily dictate *how* a structure is built, but the cultural matrix ultimately determines *what* is built and *why* (Ozaki, 2002).

This causal link is not context-dependent but represents a global design parameter. For instance, evaluating contemporary domestic architecture in Jordan, Al Husban *et al.* (2021) demonstrated that deep-seated religious and social values regarding visual privacy and modesty dictate explicit spatial hierarchies and structural isolation within home plans. Their findings further reveal that these traditional spatial layouts are severely constrained by modern apartment blocks compared to detached housing forms, highlighting a critical structural tension between modern urban density and legacy cultural values.

3.2.3 Values, Preferences and Satisfaction

Human value orientations directly moderate residential preferences and long-term housing choices (Jansen, 2014a; Sadeghlou & Emami, 2023). For example, a resident's preference for private backyards over equivalent public open spaces is rarely arbitrary; it is driven by underlying values regarding boundary control and domesticity (Rapoport, 2010). Consequently, housing satisfaction is not merely a product of physical square footage but a reflection of the have-want discrepancy between a dwelling's attributes and the user's core values (Jansen, 2014b, Boschman, 2018). Even seemingly minor aesthetic choices, such as house colors or the ultimate intention to initiate home modifications, are fundamentally powered by these deeply ingrained user values (Rapoport, 2008, Jansen, 2014a).

3.2.4 Values, Design and Appropriation of Space in Housing

Shifting family values are directly mirrored in the internal floor plans and spatial appropriation of domestic settings (Ozaki, 2003). These space-use standards dictate acceptable norms, which can trigger severe friction in multicultural environments. During acculturation, immigrants frequently utilize domestic spaces according to their heritage values rather than host-culture norms, resulting in acute person-environment conflicts (Rapoport, 2010).

This mismatch is glaringly evident in public housing frameworks. In Nigeria, cultural values centered on extended kinship and physical security play vital roles in community planning, yet state-led public housing continues to ignore these parameters (Maina & Adogbo, 2015). Corroborating this systemic misalignment, a localized evaluation by Olayeni *et al.* (2024) demonstrate how contemporary mass public housing designs in Southwest Nigeria consistently trigger domestic dissatisfaction by disregarding deep-seated socio-cultural norms. Their findings reveal that when layout frameworks fail to accommodate gendered privacy boundaries, such as culturally defined private spaces for domestic routines within Yoruba communities, or scale dimensions to absorb extended family networks, a severe person-environment mismatch occurs.

This failure to capture local value orientations directly triggers project abandonment and forces residents to carry out unauthorized, value-oriented home adaptations (Maina & Adogbo, 2015; Adisa & Amole, 2021). On a global scale, the spectacular failures and subsequent demolitions of iconic mass-housing projects like Pruitt-Igoe in the US and the Bijlmer in the Netherlands expose a similar flaw (Elsinga *et al.*, 2020). These projects failed because policy and design frameworks neglected a broader set of human values, proving that excluding cultural realities renders mass housing unsustainable (Elsinga *et al.*, 2020).

Meanwhile as these gaps persist, a bigger challenge unfolds with external influences pervading and moderating happenings in the built environment. These forces are globalization and technology. They act like mutations on values to influence decisions.

3.3. Values, New Technologies and Globalization

This section examines the dynamic interplay between values, globalization, and technological advancement, and how these forces collectively shape transformations within the built environment. It argues that changes in values are not isolated phenomena but are deeply embedded within broader global and technological shifts that continuously redefine how space is conceived, designed, and appropriated.

3.3.1 Values and Transformation

One of the most profound consequences of globalization is its capacity to catalyze shifts in societal values, introducing new norms and redefining established patterns of domestic life. Because values and norms are the primary foundations of lifestyle formation, any transformation in these elements inevitably translates into tangible changes in housing forms, spatial appropriation, and usage behaviors (Rapoport, 2005).

Consequently, the built environment acts as both a passive reflection and an active medium through which evolving values are expressed.

This rapid value shifting is particularly pronounced in developing contexts, where socio-cultural transitions occur at an accelerated pace due to direct exposure to foreign global influences. While similar changes are observable in developed countries, they tend to manifest more gradually, mediated by established institutional frameworks and cultural continuity. Housing is an integral component of society and is therefore inherently subject to these volatile shifts (Elsinga et al., 2020). Shifting policies and value systems frequently generate severe frictions and spatial conflicts (Elsinga et al., 2020). This underscores the critical need to interrogate underlying values within housing discourse proactively. Rather than viewing values as peripheral considerations, they must occupy a central place in housing policy to successfully mitigate value conflicts and develop responsive, sustainable housing strategies (Elsinga et al., 2020).

Beyond the socio-cultural forces of globalization, severe macroeconomic disruptions also function as an additional catalyst that actively alters spatial priorities and structural real estate values. This dynamic is clearly demonstrated by Olakunmi *et al.* (2026) in their evaluation of the built environment in Lagos, Nigeria. Their findings illustrate how acute economic recessions trigger sharp declines in property values and destabilize occupancy metrics even within premium real estate sectors like Ikoyi. Within the broader framework of a conceptual integrative review, such economic shocks prove that physical structures cannot be insulated from macro-level market crises. When economic survival becomes a dominant constraint, it alters the 'have-want' gap of residents and developers alike, forcing a pragmatic renegotiation of design preferences, space utilization, and localized property investments."

3.3.2 Effects of Globalization and Technology

Globalization and technological advancement represent the two most significant external drivers of change in contemporary society, profoundly influencing both human values and the built environment. Through intense processes of acculturation, globalization has facilitated the borderless diffusion of ideas, lifestyles, and spatial practices. This borderless exchange has led to a growing convergence of housing forms, where residential designs in Africa increasingly mirror Western aesthetics and layouts (Dariush et al., 2021). Providing extensive empirical weight to this continental shift, Choi and Choi (2024) conducted a comparative spatial analysis of contemporary urban apartment designs in Kenya, Ghana, and South Africa. Their findings confirm that globalized, standardized open-floor layouts have widely replaced localized expressions, frequently generating severe socio-spatial friction by imposing Western circulation patterns onto African households that traditionally require strict boundary separation between public hosting areas and private domestic zones. In another instance, globalization directly contributed to the gradual erosion of traditional housing layouts in Iranian contexts, as foreign lifestyles and architectural expressions were rapidly adopted over indigenous spatial norms (Dariush et al., 2021).

While globalization intensifies social relations across distant locations, local spatial practices are heavily shaped by these global processes and vice versa (Eldemery, 2009). This interconnectedness raises critical concerns regarding the erosion of cultural identity. The proliferation of standardized, globally influenced built forms has frequently resulted in the dilution of local values and the homogenization of architectural expression. This condition acts as a form of "cultural malaise," where the loss of contextual identity actively undermines the socio-cultural relevance of the built environment (Eldemery, 2009). To counteract this, modern housing typologies must balance modern high-performance requirements with deeply rooted traditional values. This can be achieved by proving that embedding cultural values within design processes directly enhances the adaptability, relevance, and sustainability of housing (Sahabuddin & Gonzalez-Longo, 2015).

3.3.3 Impacts of New Technologies

Technological advancements have recorded unprecedented achievements across various sectors, and the construction industry has not been left out (Hong, 2008; Chippagiri et al., 2022; De Paris et al., 2023). Modern construction technologies have significantly improved project delivery by contributing nearly 40% to time-saving efforts and cutting costs by 27% (Chippagiri et al., 2022). Furthermore, green technological advancements have dropped carbon emissions by 30% and on-site wastage by 84% (Chippagiri et al., 2022).

Prefabrication and rapid assembly have been among the biggest contributors to these advancements, delivering dependable alternatives for meeting massive urban construction targets.

However, despite these undeniable positive metrics, technological advancements carry negative socio-cultural impacts that heavily influence policy decisions and human values. The push toward standardized, modular, and prefabricated housing often clashes directly with the need for organic, culturally specific spatial layouts. Therefore, while modern technology solves the quantitative problem of housing supply, it frequently worsens the qualitative problem of cultural value fit.

3.4. Values In the Future of the Built Environment

Emerging trends, rigid policy frameworks, and shifting societal expectations indicate that the built environment remains in continuous transition toward an uncertain future (Angel & Bittschi, 2019; Elsinga et al., 2020). Within this evolving landscape, values play a decisive role, see Figure 3. While some values shift with globalization and technological change, a subset of core human values remains relatively stable, continuing to shape housing preferences, satisfaction, and neighborhood attachment (Rokeach, 1973; Coolen & Hoekstra, 2001; Jansen, 2014a; Boschman, 2018). Recent studies confirm this persistence: Adisa and Amole (2021) found that values related to how much a household felt fulfilled as a family, those related to leisure, and prestige were central to residents's satisfaction with house. Sadeghlou & Emami (2023) found that values such as security and achievement consistently underpin housing choices, while De Paris et al. (2023) highlighted resident-led adaptability as strongly value-driven.

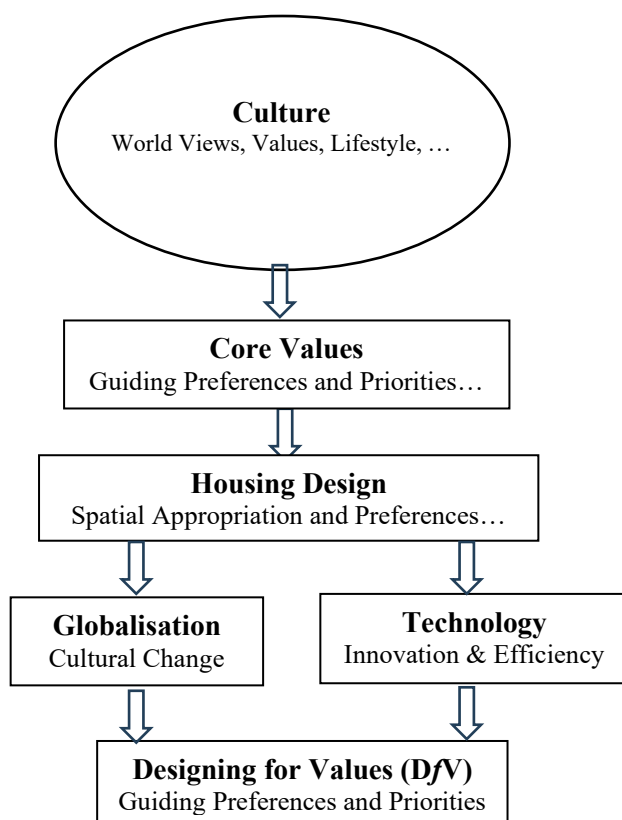


Figure 3 – Influences of Values and Designing for Values (DfV)

Despite this evidence, mainstream architectural discourse still privileges technical, economic, and aesthetic parameters, leaving value systems underexplored. Yet values are intrinsic to housing systems and significantly influence both design outcomes and policy formulation (Elsinga et al., 2020; Palacios et al., 2021). Repositioning values as a core component of housing research is therefore imperative. Explicitly integrating value orientations into future design and policy frameworks will foster more inclusive, adaptable, and sustainable housing futures, ensuring built environments remain socially meaningful and resilient to global change (Brysch et al., 2024). Table 2 summarises the review.

Figure 2 - Summary of Review

Stage	Core Idea	Key Thinkers/References	Implications for Design
Rapoport's dismantling of culture	Culture must be broken down into tangible elements—values, norms, spatial patterns, and behaviors.	Rapoport (1969, 1987, 2005, 2008)	Enables designers to identify how cultural components shape spatial organization/appropriation and domestic form.
Cultural influences on spatial organization/appropriation	Spatial layouts reflect cultural hierarchies, privacy norms, and social interaction patterns.	Ozaki (2002, 2003, 2005); Sahabuddin & Gonzalez-Longo (2015); Al Husban et al. (2021)	Guides culturally responsive planning of spaces—front/back regions, communal/private zones.
Values as cultural core	Values are enduring motivators behind housing preferences and satisfaction.	Schwartz (1992, 2006); Hofstede (2010); Jansen (2013, 2014b); Rokeach (1973)	Design must align with residents' value orientations to achieve satisfaction and identity coherence.
Lifestyle and meaning of dwelling	The dwelling embodies lifestyle, identity, and symbolic meaning beyond shelter.	Coolen & Ozaki (2004); McCray & Day (1977); Saegert (1985)	Encourages design that integrates emotional, cultural, and functional dimensions.
Globalization and technology	Global flows and digital technologies reshape cultural expression and housing expectations.	Zolfaghari et al. (2016); Maina & Adogbo (2015); Eldemery (2009); Dariush et al. (2021); Chippagiri et al. (2022)	Promotes hybrid designs that balance local cultural values with global innovations.
Empirical interdisciplinary grounding	Evidence-based, cross-disciplinary research validates cultural and value-driven design.	Jansen (2014b); Hong (2008); Adisa & Amole (2021); De Paris et al. (2023)	Ensures scientific rigor through data, charts, and figures rather than narrative description.
Designing for values	The culmination—housing that expresses and sustains user values amid cultural and technological change.	Schwartz (2006); Rapoport (2008); Brysch et al. (2024); Elsinga et al. (2020)	Future-oriented design that harmonizes tradition, innovation, and human meaning.

4.0 Conclusion

This review demonstrates that values are central to housing and environmental design, shaping preferences, satisfaction, house form, and adaptation even as globalization and technology drive change in the built environment. Extracted from the broader concept of culture, values emerge as enduring determinants of how people interact with space, yet remain underexplored in mainstream design discourse. Recent scholarship highlights their role in sustainability and shows they can be operationalized through participatory co-design, bridging theory and practice. Embedding values through a Design for Values (DfV) approach is therefore essential to ensure housing and built environments are socially meaningful, culturally resonant, and resilient to future transformations. Moving forward, the field must bridge the gap between theory and practice by developing robust frameworks for empirical application and refining the tools used to measure the concept.

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