Core Competency: Socio-Cultural Awareness

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Driving forces for development

SOCIETY

MARKET  SCIENCE  LIBERAL DEMOCRACY  CULTURE

CIVIL SOCIETY

PROFIT  TRUTH  FREEDOM  SPIRITUALITY
ID-SCA definition:

We want to educate unique opportunity creators for societal transformation through intelligent systems, products and related services. This educational objective puts an emphasis on societal embedding and cultural impact of design.

Industrial Design is inevitably part of the larger human society and culture. Global society develops at a breathtaking pace. Mega trends like ageing, globalization, new technology and issues like scarcity of resources, political power, economic and demographic development, play an important role in what the world will be alike in the future, and therefore inevitably influence each undertaking in higher education. Therefore competency development implies the development of attitudes, knowledge and related skills that integrates the awareness of different societies and cultures. In order to create culturally appropriate systems, products and related services, we need to understand how persons’ mindsets are based on their values, behavior, beliefs and ontological assumptions, and how to put these into design practice. Being inevitably part of society, ethical and philosophical questions become important for taking responsibility for society and the notion of “good” design. In order to be able to transform society and create future, one needs a clear understanding of the past, including design history, and taking a normative position into the future.
SCA-ASK: attitudes, skills, knowledge

ATTITUDES
- Openness to other mindsets and cultures.
- Sensibility for social, political and cultural implications of design.
- Sensitiveness to cultural differences and self-awareness of their own cultural background.
- Willingness to take a normative position based on own vision.
- Awareness towards the impact of technology and design on society at large.

SKILLS
- Ability to position design in a larger historical societal and cultural context.
- Ability to identify and shape societal and cultural trends.
- Ability to initiate and catalyze a societal discussion through design for debate.
- Ability to analyze, understand and communicate the social and cultural implications of design.
- Ability to articulate, organize, synthesize and communicate socio-cultural issues in compelling design briefs.

KNOWLEDGE
- Knowledge of historical social and cultural impact of design and technology.
- Knowledge of utopian, dystopian and topian future scenarios of society.
- Knowledge of the history, norms, values and beliefs of different cultures.
- Knowledge of culture, organizations, and cross-cultural communication.
SCA list of experts (underscored names are SCA team)

Antonelli, Paula (Design Curator MOMA)
Bleeker, Julian (Design Fiction initiative, Los Angeles)
Dunne, Anthony (Head of Designed Interactions, Royal College of Art, London)
Haring, Bas (Professor Public Understanding of Science, Leiden University)
Heimgaertner, Ruediger (Intercultural User Interface Consulting)
Hendriks, Arne (Lecturer ID, TU/e)
Hostede, Gert Jan (Associate Professor Cultural Modeling, Wageningen University)
Hummels, Caroline (Professor ID, TU/e)
Kelly, Kevin (Founder Wired, author What Technology Wants)
Kint, Johanna (Lecturer ID, TU/e)
Lu, Yuan (Associate Professor ID, TU/e)
Marti, Patrizia (University of Siena & TU/e ID)
Mensvoort, Koert van (Assistant Professor ID, TU/e)
Metz, Tracy (Design Critic, Journalist NRC Newspaper)
Rauterberg, Matthias (Professor ID, TU/e)
Rijk, Timo de (Professor, TU Delft)
Schot, Johan (Professor IE&IS, TU/e)
Sterling, Bruce (Science Fiction Author)
Tienhoven, Ronald van (Lecturer ID, TU/e)
Tosa, Naoko (Professor for Cultural Computing, Kyoto University & TU/e ID)
Vermeulen, Tim (Platform Director, Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam)
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Cross-cultural Communication
An Example of Different Meanings of the Same Gesture

UK & USA = O.K.
JAPAN = MONEY

RUSSIA = ZERO
BRAZIL = INSULT
What is culture?

Culture is the integration pattern of human behavior that includes
- attitudes,
- norms,
- values,
- beliefs,
- actions,
- communications and language
- institutions of a race, ethnic, religious and/or social group.

The word *culture* comes from the Latin root *colere* (to inhabit, to cultivate, or to honor). In general, it refers to human *activity*; different definitions of culture reflect different theories for understanding, or criteria for valuing, human activity. Anthropologists use the term to refer to the universal human capacity to classify experiences, and to encode and communicate them symbolically. They regard this capacity as a defining feature of the genus Homo.
Cultural dimensions

Geert Hofstede

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Culture and Design

9/30
Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) deals with a society’s tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity; it ultimately refers to man’s search for Truth. It indicates to what extent a culture programs its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations. Unstructured situations are novel, unknown, surprising, different from usual. Uncertainty avoiding cultures try to minimize the possibility of such situations by strict laws and rules, safety and security measures, and on the philosophical and religious level by a belief in absolute Truth; ‘there can only be one Truth and we have it’. People in uncertainty avoiding countries are also more emotional, and motivated by inner nervous energy. The opposite type, uncertainty accepting cultures, are more tolerant of opinions different from what they are used to; they try to have as few rules as possible, and on the philosophical and religious level they are relativist and allow many currents to flow side by side. People within these cultures are more phlegmatic and contemplative, and not expected by their environment to express emotions.

Power Distance Index (PDI) that is the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. This represents inequality (more versus less), but defined from below, not from above. It suggests that a society's level of inequality is endorsed by the followers as much as by the leaders. Power and inequality, of course, are extremely fundamental facts of any society and anybody with some international experience will be aware that 'all societies are unequal, but some are more unequal than others'.

Culture on different layers

- **Year-layer**
- **Century-layer**
- **Millennium-layer**
- **Universal-layer**
Most influential factors: location
Most influential factors: climate
Most influential factors: genome

Heritability of full scale IQ is

87% in the Netherlands (N=664),
83% in Australia (N=858), and
71% in Japan (N=606).

Marilyn Monroe suggested to Einstein:

*What do you say, professor, shouldn't we marry and have a little baby together: what a baby it would be – my looks and your intelligence!* 

Einstein replied:

*I'm afraid, dear lady, it might be the other way around...*
Most influential factors: language
Reading Directions

WEST
Left to right
Top to bottom

EAST
Top to bottom
Right to left

Individual for context

Context for individual

Most influential factors: religion

HORUS (2500BC)
Culture reflects in artifacts

What is design?

“A plan or drawing produced to show the look and function or workings of a building, garment, or other object before it is built or made.” 

Merriam Webster (2011) 

“Design is that area of human experience, skill and knowledge which is concerned with man’s ability to mould his environment to suit his material and spiritual needs.”

Archer, B (1973)
Most famous designer: China

Ieoh Ming PEI
Most famous designer: Finland

Alvar AALTO
Most famous designer: Germany

Dieter RAMS
Most famous designer: Japan

Tadao ANDO
Most famous designer: Korea

Andre KIM
Most famous designer: Netherlands

Rem KOOLHAAS
My favorite designer

Jacque FRESCO

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THE VENUS PROJECT
BEYOND POLITICS POVERTY AND WAR
Finally...

The following conclusions can be drawn:

(1) religion influences culture
culture influences society
society influences design

(2) Western societies suffer from aggression
Eastern societies enjoy entertainment

(3) Each culture has its own expression through design
Thank you for your kind attention.

http://www.idemployee.id.tue.nl/g.w.m.rauterberg/lecturenotes/DG000_SCA-intro.htm
Assignment:

1) search on internet for “Do's and Don'ts in the Netherlands/Dutch/Holland".
2) for Dutch students take at least one "Don'ts" and go out in public and try out why these "don'ts" may confuse other Dutch citizens.
3) for non-Dutch students take at least one "Do's" which is different from your own culture and try out in public.
4) ask another student to video record the reactions of the public.
5) send these video-clips to me.