

The rise of a modernist architecture rooted in the machine age and inscientific management has preoccupied numerous architectural historians and social scientists. I then explore in subsequent chapters the extent to which the explanatory variables put forward in the literature help sort out the origins and spread of modernism in different countries. Available explanations of architectural modernism make different assumptions about the role of architecture in society, and result in different arguments (see table 3.1). Finally, another group of social scientists assumes that architecture is primarily to be seen as a profession that rests on a claim to some body of abstract knowledge. Modernism in architecture is supposed to be based on the worldview and techniques that stem from an engineering model, one that includes scientific management as a key component. For many historians, architecture is primarily shaped by material and intellectual conditions, and thus modernism in architecture needs to be seen as an outgrowth of machine-based industrialization, of the new forms, materials, techniques, and ideas of the industrial age.