

Professional scientific sessions for art, architecture and urban planning Thursday evenings

Held in: Conference hall of Herampey Consulting Engineers

Date: 14.11.2019

Title: Academic Process of Teaching Architecture in Iran. 2. Shahid Beheshti.

Round Table Members: Mr. D. Diba, Mr. A. M. Sa'adati, Mrs. A. Lack, Mr. P. Talaie and Mr. M. M. Mahmoudi

At the beginning of the roundtable organized by Herampey Research Group, Mr. Mahmoudi briefly presented what the organizers and participants discussed during the precedent session, talking about the process that characterized the activities of Tehran University Fine Arts faculty. Mr. Mahmoudi reminded how for more than forty years there were only four universities that educated architects (the Azad University was funded only ten years after the victory of the Islamic Revolution and how today there are about one thousand universities and educational centers that teach architecture. Mr. Mahmoudi expressed his regret about the level of education and the poor academic knowledge level of the graduated students from such educational institutions. He continued his presentation saying that he asked Mr. Diba as one of the most experienced personalities in the field academic relationships and professor with the first Iranian universities where architecture was taught and as a person that participated to the corrective activities of the Iranian Council of Cultural Revolution, funded after the victory of Islamic Revolution.

Mr. Diba presented the principal arguments discussed during the precedent session, in order to remind the path that was designed to discuss and analyze what the Iranian academic course has realized during more than seventy years of its activity in teaching and promoting academic architecture in Iran.

After a brief presentation of what happened in the first Iranian universities of Faculty of Fine Arts, Shahid Beheshti and Elm-o-San'at, to create the necessary conditions for a cultural transition from Qajar era to modern era, Mr. Diba talked about the newly funded Iranian Council of Cultural Revolution, its aims and activities. The principal goals followed by the mentioned Council to minimize or exclude political tendencies, reduce the cultural inclinations toward West and initiate a return to the national roots. The main goal was to pay more attention to spiritual and Islamic views. Mr. Diba believes that unfortunately after thirty years the mentioned movement hasn't reached the fundamental goals and compared to other universities, the Iranian School hasn't be able to trace its own cultural and academic route and character.

Continuing the talks Mr. Mahmoudi introduced Mr. Talaie that is one of the Shahid Beheshti graduated persons. Beginning his talk Mr. Talaie talked about the changes that occurred in Europe during and after '68. In his opinion the University of Shahid Beheshti understood and accepted the content and message of the European movement more easily, because it was newly

funded and the staff was composed by the representatives of young generation. Mr. Talaie presented in brief the manners and policies that the University of Shahid Beheshti followed, stressing more on the scientific approach that the students had to obey and follow. Mr. Talaie talked also about the historic process of the foundation of the University of Shahid Beheshti and the role that the former Iranian had in this process cooperating with American academic spheres. This process of modernization, renewal and change is realized in various spheres of Iranian educational system, pushing forward the growth and development of the Iranian society in a direction that can be seen also in other societies and countries that adapted and followed this process.

Another participant to the roundtable was Mr. Lack. He expressed the idea that in the strategic formation of educational centers that include also different faculties and universities programming is more effective than the geographical positioning, even though we can't ignore the role that national believes and heritage can have in the educational process of a country. Talking about the base of formation of Shahid Beheshti university, Mr. Lack expressed the conviction that the educational base and direction of the university was "Italian" and the entire sphere of the academic was influenced by. Comparing what happened during the late '60s and what had to happen in the newly funded university, Mr. Lack thinks that the managing board of the university tried to avoid the mistakes that the Europeans committed in the field of architecture, trying to follow a cultural based policy. In order to reach a faster judgment he expressed the idea in order to see the positive result of Shahid Beheshti university activities, it would be enough to see and follow the architectural production of the present generation that is operating in Iran. In his opinion the technological and social needs of the society were considered, in order to satisfy these needs, in a country that during the process of development and westernization had to consider and follow.

Mr. Mahmoudi stressed on the fact that this university was the first university that the students had to pay for their studies, so it means that this was a university established for the rich layers of the society. In this regard Mr. Talaie added that in the formation of the academic staff there were two manners of admission, and some of the persons were nor really prepared to teach and realize educational serious plans and projects.

The next speaker was Mr. Sa'adati that in our country in many spheres the result of various programs is based on the activity and formation of a specific person and in many cases what is programmed at the beginning usually has few chances to be realized. This means that even though a university like Shahid Beheshti could have had a manifesto to follow, but it can be changed when the rector is replaced by another person. He also added that even though the educational formation of the university had an important role in their professional preparation, but at time other external factors were also influent regarding the level of the formation of a university student. He also talked about the exchange of students between Iran and European countries, that had a very positive effect on the formation of the students of both sides.

Continuing the speech Mr. Diba talked about a phenomenon that only at the first glance could be considered negligible and that was the spirit of cooperation and strong friendship between the students, creating a sense of solidarity and human noble sense.

Completing the assertions of other participants, Mr. Lack added also another important factor that distinguished the activity and essence of Shahid Beheshti university, that was the sense of order and discipline in all the layers of the university's activities. an important change that has occurred in the faculties of architecture is that different matters like urban programming, urban design, landscape architecture, arguments related to the building technology have been added to the educational program, creating new conditions and opportunities for the renewal of architecture teaching in the universities. The introduction of these matters helped to widen the professional approach of the future architects.

The roundtable was concluded by an assertion made by Mr. Mahmoudi regarding the approach of the authorities in the University of Tehran and Shahid Beheshti. In his opinion meanwhile the approach adopted in the University of Tehran was mostly political, in the University of Shahid Beheshti has been from the beginning based on order and professional approach. Mr. Mahmoudi expressed the idea that if the policy of nominating the rectors continues there will be few chances of change and if the rectors are elected by the council of students may be the situation can have a better course.