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Research Paper

Explaining Social Injustices in Iranian Architectural Education based on Critical Pedagogy*

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ABSTRACT

Critical pedagogy is the application of critical theory in education. In other words, this is the understanding of critical theory in schools. Experts in critical pedagogy explore who, including individuals, classes, and institutions, control the education process and determine its priorities and goals. According to them, education, school institutions, and curriculum are beyond academic affairs and have political, social, economic, and educational aspects. Applying lessons of critical pedagogy in architectural education investigates the relationships between knowledge, power, and education in the field of architecture. This type of architectural education aims at emancipation from cultural hegemony and believes that the practice of architectural education is a political and cultural one. Thus, it examines education concerning the larger community to advance democracy through the development of the critical architecture profession. In this regard, the current research is an attempt to search and interpret the examples of injustice in Iranian architectural education by relying on the theories of critical pedagogy and raises the question of whether it is possible to apply the lessons of critical pedagogy in Iranian architectural education. This research follows the emancipatory paradigm and relies on library resources to explore the injustices in Iranian architectural education in three sections: "Injustices in the process of acceptance and entrance into architectural education", "Injustices in the process of architectural education" and "Injustices in the purpose and content of architectural education". It is concluded that despite the differences in the cultural context, some discussions of architectural critical pedagogy can be proposed in Iranian architectural education and can be criticized through an emancipatory approach.

Keywords: Critical Theory, Critical Pedagogy, Iranian Architectural Education, Social Injustices.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Injustices within architectural education are deeply rooted in critical educational issues, which themselves stem from the critical theory of the Frankfurt School. Horkheimer views critical theory as a branch of the human sciences driven by the tension between rationality and reality. Critical theory refuses to accept social reality at face value; instead, it perpetually interrogates its legitimacy and justification, posing the question of whether social realities must inevitably remain unchanged or if it's conceivable to envision and comprehend a more humane, equitable, and liberated society (Heynen 2007, 48). Horkheimer argues that traditional theory[1], particularly within the positivist paradigm, with its emphasis on "value neutrality" in science and its avoidance of value judgments in social sciences and humanities research, has stripped "theory" of any social mission, notably emancipation, reducing it to the dry formulas and rules of laboratory and experimental sciences. Consequently, social and human sciences have been reduced to stereotypes, serving the interests of capitalist society (Nowzari 2019, 162). Critiques by Frankfurt School thinkers of technical rationality lead to the conclusion that the domination of nature through science and technology inevitably results in a new form of human domination. Marcuse argues that society increasingly reproduces itself through a technical framework of objects and relations, which include the technical exploitation of humans. This manifests in intensified struggles for survival and exploitation of both humans and nature, under the guise of scientific rationality, thereby perpetuating the legitimacy of domination (Bottomore 2014, 43-44).

In the history of education, critical education is a new theory that is influenced by the teachings of critical theory by educational thinkers such as Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux, Stanley Arnowitz, Peter McLaren, Douglas Kellner, and others (Dinaarvand and Eamaani 2008, 146). Critical theorists in the field of education pay attention to who, including individuals, classes, and institutions, is responsible for controlling the processes of education and determining its priorities and goals. They believe that important educational matters are formed based on the power of a certain group to dominate other groups (Gutek 2006, 474). Critical education analyzes the relationship between the center and the margin of power in schools and seeks to participate in the huge project of identity and power reconstruction in discourses such as class, gender, ethnicity, and race (Marjani 2006, 75-76). While inventing terms such as hegemony, social control, hidden curriculum, conflict theory, etc., critical theorists have presented new interpretations of society and education in the discourse of contemporary education. According to them, education, school institutions, and curriculum are beyond academic affairs and have political, social, economic, and educational implications (Gutek 2006, 485-486).

Critical pedagogy of architecture emerges from the application of critical theories within architectural education. Giroux asserts that it aims to challenge the assumptions that underpin certain relationships between knowledge[2], power, and education within the architectural field. It questions the notion that architects can remain detached from the broader societal issues that shape our environment. Advocates of critical pedagogy in architecture, as part of a broader discourse on social responsibility, seek to redefine the moral legitimacy of architectural theory and pedagogy within a society heavily influenced by capitalist and market-driven logic (Giroux 1991, ix). Topics within the critical pedagogy of architecture encompass a diverse array of voices[3] aimed at understanding and practicing architectural education in liberating ways. This educational approach urges educators to critically reflect on their practices within political contexts, recognizing that education is inherently a cultural and political endeavor. Viewing the teaching profession through a cultural-political lens enables teachers to analyze pedagogy concerning broader societal structures and contribute to the advancement of democracy (Dutton 1991, xv-xvi).

This research aims to identify instances of injustice within academic architectural education in Iran through the application of critical pedagogy principles. While the history of critical pedagogy in the West traces back to the late 1960s and entered architectural education discourse in the late 1980s, these themes have recently gained attention in Iranian architectural education research. Shahamat et al. explored the positive and negative aspects of the hidden curriculum in architecture using a non-critical approach and qualitative content analysis (Shahamat et al. 2017). In another study, they introduced five components of the hidden curriculum through quantitative content analysis (Shahamat et al. 2019). Sardashti et al. investigated critical education as an instructional method, demonstrating statistically that its application in architecture education enhances student motivation (Sardashti, Mozaffar, and Shafaie 2020). This research stands out by addressing inequalities within Iran's architectural education system through a critical lens under the emancipation paradigm. Furthermore, it highlights the use of critical architectural education not only in teaching methods but also in educational content and macro-planning policies.

Although critical pedagogy addresses issues such as classism, racism, discrimination against ethnic and sexual minorities, and sexism, and critiques the politics of neoliberalism and neoconservatism in capitalist societies, it should not be confined solely to Western contexts, even if some of these issues may seem unfamiliar to Iranian society. The critical theory of the Frankfurt School has found resonance in educational theories in countries like Brazil and

Mexico. Additionally, policies such as privatization and outsourcing in education have created platforms for the study of critical pedagogy within Iranian architecture education. This research explores injustices within Iranian architectural education through the lens of the emancipation paradigm, drawing on library sources and utilizing topics from the critical pedagogy of architecture. It presents examples of injustices within university architecture education in Iran across three dimensions: the acceptance, process, and content of education. Ultimately, it concludes that the presence of such injustices can catalyze the application of critical education within contemporary Iranian architecture.

2. INJUSTICES IN ADMISSION AND ENTRY IN ARCHITECTURE EDUCATION

Gaining entry to and admission to architecture education poses significant challenges. On one hand, the high demand for architectural engineering, coupled with the proliferation of architecture schools and an increase in graduates, postgraduate studies, and various architectural education businesses, has led to certain injustices within the field of architecture.

2.1. Quantitative Expansion of Architectural Education

Excessive growth is a prominent issue in the pathology of architecture education in Iran. James Mayo argues that success as an architect not only relies on artistic skill but also entails a constant struggle for survival amidst economic crises. Architects often find themselves navigating between construction booms and development downturns. Central to capitalism is the concept of private accumulation - the generation of surplus value or profit. The accumulation process is integral to labor construction, with the development of the built environment reliant on economic capital circulation (Mayo 1988, 46-48). David Harvey, in "The Urbanization of Capital," outlines three interconnected capital flows that enable entrepreneurs to accumulate capital: financial capital (such as monetary investments), fixed capital (investment in the built environment), and investment in science and technology (Harvey 1985, 8-10). Architects, navigating the currents of capital circulation, must resist the fluctuations of construction cycles and utilize critical awareness to decolonize their profession from capitalist forces. However, accepting the quantitative expansion of architectural education amidst development fluctuations can hinder the realization of critical architecture, a core goal of critical architecture pedagogy. Therefore, critical education in architecture in Iran should align its scale with the genuine needs of society, rather than false demands. The periodic construction booms, real estate market saturation, and subsequent market stagnation in various regions underscore this capital circulation phenomenon in our country. Instances such as unregulated urban density, construction of new cities, urban expansions, large-scale commercial projects, and rural urbanization have fueled occasional market booms within the architectural profession. Concurrently, the volume of architectural education has significantly expanded in recent years, particularly since the late 1370s.

When discussing the quantitative expansion of architecture education, two crucial points must be addressed. Firstly, this growth often outpaces the demands of the current labor market, resulting in phenomena such as limited job opportunities, unemployed graduates, or individuals seeking work in alternative professions. Alai aptly analyzed this issue, accurately predicting that over half of architecture graduates would face unemployment within a decade (Alai 2010, 46). This valid critique sheds light on the uncertain career prospects for both aspiring students and practicing architects. Secondly, determining the scale of architectural education solely based on market demands and developmental criteria, such as the total area covered by building permits in the architectural field, fails to provide a comprehensive solution to this challenge. Tailoring the volume of architectural education to align with the profession's needs is essentially acknowledging the very issues that critical architecture aims to confront. This includes architecture's passive stance towards capitalist forces, which often exploit construction development for maximum profit, resulting in the demolition of historic structures to make way for new buildings. This indiscriminate approach not only erases culturally significant landmarks but also homogenizes landscapes, stripping them of their natural allure and unique charm.

2.2. Gentrification of Architectural Education

The monetization of education, initiated by the establishment of Gheir-e Entefa'i schools in general education[4] and Islamic Azad University in higher education, has the potential to entrench market logic in education, resulting in the erosion of educational justice and widening class disparities and social inequalities. This trend isn't confined to non-state universities; even state institutions have begun offering courses such as Shabaneh, Nowbat-e Dovvom, and recently Pardis campuses. In 2015, only 15% of undergraduate course capacity, 13% of master's course capacity, and 26% of doctoral course capacity across all fields were designated as free courses, with the remaining capacities allocated to paid courses including Shabaneh, Gheir-e Entefa'i, Payam-e Nour, Azad, and Pardis (Talebian 2017). Critical questions emerge regarding the introduction of Shabaneh and Pardis courses in state universities and their integration[5] with free education courses. To what extent do these actions align with the goals of

educational justice? What are the ramifications for the motivation of students enrolled in Rouzaneh courses? How affordable are these courses for the public? And to what extent can economically disadvantaged individuals access Rouzaneh courses? This narrative partly originates from post-revolution educational policies rooted in neoliberalism, which have driven the marketization of public and higher education (Zibakalam and Mohammadi 2014, 103). The aim of raising these issues is to scrutinize the stance of architectural education concerning these challenges and strategize how to resist or mitigate their impacts.

One consequence of the unchecked growth of architecture education is the transformation of architecture education into a market-driven enterprise. The inclination of students to pursue further studies has led to the proliferation of various educational institutions offering master's and doctorate exam preparation, sketching classes, and more. Moreover, the surge in the number of universities offering architectural education, many of which lack adequate facilities and provide subpar education quality (Taghi 2008, 133), has given rise to supplementary classes. Students enroll in these classes to address educational gaps, contributing to inequality in architecture education. This trend underscores the commodification of architecture education, wherein students encounter purchasable products promising educational advancement at different stages of their academic journey.

2.3. Admission and Entry into Architecture Education

In seeking to identify injustices within the process, content, and objectives of architectural education, such an inquiry may appear illogical within an educational system where the selection of both students and faculty members lacks fairness. While injustices in bachelor's course acceptance, determined through the national entrance exam, fall outside the scope of this discussion, inequalities persist in the admission process for master's degree programs. For instance, a notable example of inequality in master's degree acceptance involves the administration of practical exams (Sketch) centrally in Tehran. This means that students from provinces outside Tehran must travel to the capital to participate in these exams, creating an inherent disadvantage for non-local applicants.

Similarly, in the acceptance process for doctoral programs, disparities are evident in the written exam section. Despite the varied orientations within master's courses in architecture, each with its own set of exam materials and coefficients, all doctoral program applicants are required to take a standardized exam without consideration for their specific expertise. For instance, a graduate in landscape architecture or Architectural studies of Iran must extensively study sources in the field of technology and energy to meet the interview requirements for the theory test. Furthermore, in the interview section, concerns arise regarding the fairness of the selection process. While the subjective nature of architectural judgment complicates the establishment of clear grading criteria, questions remain about the extent to which professors' personal preferences influence interview outcomes compared to objective criteria such as academic performance and research experience. Additionally, the influence of external factors on selection outcomes raises questions about fairness. Do factors such as familiarity with interviewers, access to external consultations, age, marital status, and employment status impact applicant selection? Furthermore, inquiries within university application forms about applicants' financial support during the doctoral course raise concerns about bias towards financially secure candidates. Some inquiries in the forms provided by each university for candidates to answer, such as "Where will your education and living expenses be covered during the doctoral course?" Do they not convey the impression that individuals who are financially stable and do not require part-time employment are more favorable candidates through this approach?

3. INJUSTICES IN THE ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION PROCESS

The preceding section delved into the injustices preceding the onset of architecture education, particularly related to educational macro-planning. However, this section scrutinizes injustices occurring during the educational process itself, directly impacting architecture students and professors.

3.1. Promotion of Belief Systems

Referring to the evolution of architectural educational programs from an apprenticeship system to a studio-based educational environment, Glasser posits that the design studio serves as a learning laboratory where skills and values can be explored in an open-ended manner. Whether this notion permeates most architecture schools, and to what extent, remains a subject of inquiry. Glaser observes that many architectural education programs tend to propagate a specific set of ideologies, whether overtly or covertly, to their students. For instance, those familiar with the University of Pennsylvania would notice the enduring influence of Louis Kahn. His perspectives on materiality and geometry are conveyed as quasi-religious doctrine and are largely unquestioningly embraced by Pennsylvania's students. Similarly, students at Cooper Union, often influenced by figures like Eisenman and Libeskind, are implicitly encouraged to either deconstruct or reconstruct the world according to their viewpoints (Glasser 2000, 250).

While it's preferable for architecture education to adopt an appropriate approach grounded in theory

and reason, promoting a singular viewpoint can stifle students' critical thinking and limit discourse beyond established norms, even if unintentionally. This issue can manifest in various ways, such as articles, narratives, research sources, and the language used by students or professors within a course. Over time, this may lead to unwitting discipleship. The promotion of a belief system can also influence young faculty members. As Glasser notes in many programs, there's an almost cult-like adherence to architectural concepts among junior faculty members. In the programs I've been involved with, new faculty quickly realize that promotion and tenure are contingent on tacitly accepting the prevailing beliefs of senior board members. Few young professors possess the intellectual fortitude or audacity to challenge the entrenched beliefs regarding the educational mission of their programs. While individual differences may be tolerated, the fundamental approach to education remains unchallenged (Glasser 2000, 250-251).

Hence, the propagation of belief systems, both within the dynamics among professors and students and professors themselves, can establish new boundaries, ultimately resulting in injustices for those who dare to challenge prevailing norms. Giroux emphasizes the importance of "crossing borders" as a critical educational objective, advocating for a critical examination of social constructs that delineate social classes and boundaries (Zibakalam and Mohammadi 2014b, 24-25). While this phenomenon may be evident in the underlying layers of architectural education, its repercussions are palpable, particularly in instances such as doctoral program admissions interviews, faculty recruitment processes, project evaluations, and thesis assessments, where it can exacerbate injustices.

3.2. Power Hierarchy in the Architecture Education Process

Paulo Freire advocates for the dissolution of the teacher-student dichotomy, emphasizing a symbiotic relationship where both parties simultaneously serve as teachers and learners. Conversely, in the banking model of education, which contrasts with Freire's emancipatory approach, this dichotomy persists, with the teacher wielding authority derived from knowledge, often at the expense of student autonomy (Freire 1980, 60). Education, according to Freire, should foster critical thinking and emancipation, necessitating a teacher-student relationship devoid of domination (Dinaarvand and Eamaani 2008, 158). Thomas Dutton argues that while hierarchies are commonplace in studio organizations, they impede genuine dialogue. Dialogue, he contends, requires equality among participants, a principle inherently absent in hierarchical systems. Consequently, authentic dialogue is rare, especially within vertically structured relationships like those found in design studios. In such settings, teachers, often unconsciously, assert their power through speech, while students conform to approved norms. Here, persuasion, even if subtle, typifies the prevailing discourse, contrary to Freire's vision, where successful teaching is marked not by persuasion but by mutual dialogue (Dutton 1987, 18).

In his transformative pedagogy for the architectural studio, Dutton attempts to balance the improper distribution of power between students and professors in several ways to democratize the studio. He believes that any attempt to democratize without redistributing power will be a sham. His efforts for redistribution take place in the form of facilitating equal participation in all areas of studio life: working conditions, program considerations, project orientation, field of study, required lectures, planning and scheduling, selection of studio site, and especially student grading (Dutton 1987, 19).

In our architecture education, design studios have such hierarchical settings according to the West. Although in the past decades, this hierarchy of power was more visible in architecture education, even today, its traces can be found in architectural workshops. For example, Shahamat et al., by evaluating the lived experience of architectural engineering undergraduate students at Ilam University, state that the superiority and uncriticism of the professor and his look from above can destroy the spirit of questioning and commenting in students and lead to humiliation and their isolation and reduction of class efficiency (Shahamat et al. 2017, 81). In some architectural design workshops, an attempt has been made to eliminate unequal power relations, and we see the participation of students in the process of architectural workshop education. But it should be noted that if the correction of these hierarchical relations is done only at the level of the education process and without regard to other concepts of critical education and education, especially at the level of content, then we will have a pretense of critical architecture education, which inwardly, it takes steps towards maintaining the existing situation; For example, a situation in which the selection of the design topic, site selection, project delivery schedule, grading, etc. are all done in a democratic process and under equal power conditions, but the content of the education and what the students do in the design workshop, don't get involved in basic issues in critical architecture such as the relationship between architecture and power, collaboration between architecture and the existing order, property law, etc.

3.3. Competition in Architectural Education

In a critical examination of architectural design studios, Dutton discusses the concept of competition within the framework of the hidden curriculum. He argues that competition is often viewed as the primary driving force behind studio work, akin to the competitive dynamics of an economic market where improvement is spurred by pitting producers against one another.

However, Dutton contends that competition yields negative outcomes. Not only does it foster emotional pressure and unnecessary animosity among peers, but it also reinforces the notion that ideas are proprietary, to be nurtured individually, and safeguarded against theft. This mentality portrays ideas as personal rather than communal, for fear that others might gain a competitive advantage. Consequently, students may feel compelled to work alone or exclusively with like-minded individuals to safeguard the purity of their ideas. This perspective legitimizes design as a self-centered pursuit, eschewing collaboration and consensus-building as essential components of effective design. Such competitive environments often breed rigid hierarchies among students, stifling any inclination towards collective work (Dutton 1987, 18). Chris Argris similarly observes that students are hesitant to utilize each other as resources due to the fear of idea appropriation. An unwritten rule dictates that students refrain from engaging with each other's work until authorship is established. While discussions may occur, they typically revolve around technical and engineering aspects rather than creative endeavors. Students tend to work in isolation during their moments of creativity (Dutton 1987, 19).

Glasser echoes these sentiments, asserting that studios predominantly foster a competitive environment rather than one conducive to collaboration, prioritizing dissociation over consensus. Moreover, the prevailing emphasis on innovation exacerbates concerns within the broader social context (Glasser 2000, 252). This competitive atmosphere also permeates Iran's architectural education system, exacerbated by the practice of selecting top-performing students based on GPA for advancement to higher courses without entrance exams. While ostensibly aiming to identify the best candidates, this method undermines the quality of education and interpersonal interactions within the current cohort and breeds dissatisfaction and inequality in resource allocation for future courses.

3.4. Evaluation of Student Projects (Judgement or Review)

In this section, we will delve into the injustices inherent in the evaluation process of architectural design projects. Part of these injustices pertains to the manner of assessment and the criteria used to evaluate and compare students' projects. However, our primary focus will be on the nature of this evaluation process and its relationship with architectural education.

Michel Foucault, in "Discipline and Punish," regards educational institutions as pivotal sites for shaping modern subjects in the 19th century. Through meticulous archival research, he elucidates how the emerging disciplines of that era—such as medicine, law, prisons, and education—exercised power to transform individuals in accordance with specific disciplinary norms and values. Foucault identifies a set of tools—surveillance, normalization, and examination—termed "micro-technologies of power", through which these new disciplines asserted their disciplinary authority. Hence, schools, colleges, and universities, as exemplars of the burgeoning power institutions of the 19th century, employed these micro-technologies of power to effectuate the transformation of students (Webster 2008, 66). Influenced by Foucault's theories, Helena Webster contends that contemporary architectural education can be understood as a system of micro-technologies of power—comprising rules, examinations, scheduling, spatial arrangements, educational encounters, etc.—that effectively mold students into architects, altering their cognitive, emotional, and physical attributes to conform to disciplinary norms (Webster 2008, 66).

Donald Schon posits that the design studio and jury (review, discussion, or critique) remain central to architectural education worldwide, epitomizing a student-centered learning model. However, Webster, drawing on ethnographic research, critiques the architectural review from the perspectives of students and professors, portraying it as an educational event used to evaluate student design projects, often perceived as a liberal celebration of student creativity. Nevertheless, her findings present architectural review as a significant symbolic ritual wherein students repeatedly submit their habitus—a concept encompassing cognitive and physical aspects of identity—to their teachers for validation. This portrayal underscores a contradiction: while professors regard the review as a valuable forum for collective discussion and impartial evaluation, students perceive it as an instructor-centric pseudo-mystical ritual inducing fear and failure (Webster 2005, 265-267). Dana Koff further characterizes architectural review as potentially the most demanding and demeaning educational experience for students, where criticism is sometimes delivered without consideration for students' growth, with renowned educators and experts showcasing their verbal prowess (Webster 2005, 268). Webster contends that student-centered learning necessitates educational events that facilitate students in constructing and reconstructing their habitus through open critical dialogue with peers, instructors, reviewers, the architectural community, and society at large. She argues against conflating education that perpetuates specific patterns with student-centered learning, advocating for the reconceptualization of architectural review in alignment with such educational goals. Failure to do so raises questions about the place of architectural review in architectural education (Webster 2005, 280-281).

Considering the review of designs as a legitimate, historically entrenched practice without critical examination undermines the efficacy of this educational tool. Moreover, it can contribute to injustices within the architectural education process, such as unequal workload distribution in project

delivery times compared to the length of the semester and scheduling project submissions during university closing times, leading to subsequent challenges for some students, among other issues.

4. FORMS OF INJUSTICE IN THE CONTENT AND PURPOSE OF ARCHITECTURE EDUCATION

In this section, various instances of injustice within the context of architecture education are explored; namely, what is imparted as accepted architectural knowledge in universities and how it may lead to injustices. While the previous sections focused on injustices concerning those directly involved in architectural education—students, professors, planners, etc.—the injustices discussed here are directed towards the general public and society, who stand to benefit from the outcomes of architectural education in the future.

4.1. Architecture as a Commodity (Commodification of Architecture in Education)

This critique of architecture education's content centers on its heavy emphasis on building design. Taghi outlines the expectations for graduates of bachelor's programs in architecture, emphasizing the need for proficiency in architectural design and the ability to create small to medium-sized buildings, alongside social development and adherence to professional ethics (Taghi 2008, 129). Awan, Schneider, and Till, in "Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Practicing Architecture," highlight that architects are predominantly occupied with designing and detailing buildings. While not inherently problematic, this focus on building design as the primary output of architectural practice imposes certain limitations (Awan, Schneider, and Till 2011, 27).

The first limitation lies in the association of architecture solely with the physicality of buildings. Architectural discourse, as reflected in magazines, awards, and literature, tends to prioritize static aspects of objects—visual, technical, and non-temporal—such as aesthetics, style, and form. This emphasis suppresses discussions on the dynamic aspects of buildings, including production processes, occupancy, temporality, and their broader societal and environmental implications. By defining architecture solely in terms of built objects, architects overlook aspects of the world that defy control, opting instead to focus on aspects that are predictable and manageable. Awan, Schneider, and Till argue for a shift towards recognizing buildings and spaces as integral parts of dynamic networks, necessitating a departure from conventional aesthetic and construction-centric approaches (Awan, Schneider, and Till 2011, 27-28).

The second limitation arises from equating architecture solely with building design, which exacerbates the commodification of architecture and subjects buildings to market forces. By aligning architecture with market value, alternative modes of thinking and action are stifled. Moreover, this paradigm raises concerns regarding the fate of architecture in economic downturns, where professionals in the built environment face job insecurity alongside construction workers. To mitigate this vulnerability, Awan, Schneider, and Till advocate for approaches that prioritize social, environmental, and ethical values over purely economic considerations. They propose expanding the scope of architectural practice from the confines of buildings to the broader realm of spatial interventions. This shift does not entail abandoning traditional architectural skills but rather deploying them in contexts that transcend conventional building projects (Awan, Schneider, and Till 2011, 28).

Another consequence of architecture's commodification is the production of goods tailored to specific socioeconomic classes, thereby limiting access to architectural benefits for the general public. To address this, architecture education should not only explore alternatives to building-centric design but also select topics and contexts in a manner that broadens the audience to encompass a wider societal spectrum in educational settings where building design remains unavoidable.

4.2. Architectural Specialization

Architectural education is inherently professional, fostering a dialogue between the profession and academia regarding the requisite skills, standards, and competencies needed for professional practice. Specialized skills, both technical and theoretical, constitute a significant portion of the curriculum (Dutton 1991, xvii). However, the alignment of architectural education with professionalism—wherein education content is linked, albeit incompletely, with professional practice aimed at producing expert practitioners—raises questions regarding social justice and service to the broader public. In George Bernard Shaw's play "The Doctor's Dilemma," dating back to 1906, every profession is depicted as a conspiracy against the common people, illustrating professionals' pursuit of prestige, power, and wealth (Ashton 2003, 160). Similarly, in "Disabling Professions," Illich et al. scrutinize professions like law, medicine, education, and architecture, traditionally thought to serve the vulnerable and unconscious segments of society. They question the altruism of these professions and whether society truly benefits from their activities or falls prey to their dominance. Professions, with their rigid organizational structures, tend to prevail over individual desires and behaviors, rendering individuals passive consumers susceptible to economic deprivation and psychological harm (Illich et al. 1977, 9-11).

Schnicklot and Shibli attribute architecture's historical failure to address broader societal concerns to the entrenched methods within its specialized culture. They argue that contemporary culture undervalues the activities that sustain everyday life, prioritizing extraordinary architectural works. According to them, transcending this specialized culture does not diminish specialists' responsibilities or the importance of specialized knowledge. Instead, it entails contextualizing and integrating them into a broader framework termed "place-making"—the everyday practice of shaping and transforming our environment (Schneekloth and Shibley 2000, 130). Place-making encompasses various human activities, from routine tasks like maintenance and renovation to significant events such as designing new buildings or neighborhoods (Schneekloth and Shibley 1995, 1). To overcome the disabling aspects of architectural practice, Schnicklot and Shibli advocate moving beyond specialized culture towards a more inclusive and boundary-crossing approach. By engaging with the diverse constituents of a place, architectural expertise can be harnessed to address specific conditions and empower community participation in inclusive, democratic projects. This shift places architecture at the forefront of critical social and cultural conflicts, fostering a more inclusive and responsive profession (Schneekloth and Shibley 2000, 130-131). Failure to consider alternative approaches in architectural education and practice may marginalize non-specialists and invalidate non-specialist knowledge, including indigenous and rural architectural traditions.

4.3. Heroic Training

Spiro Kostof argues that architectural professional education perpetuates a myth known as the "Fountainhead Syndrome" glorifying architects as victorious geniuses akin to Prometheus, credited with creating visual or structural wonders that enrich the historical landscape with greatness and grandeur. While acknowledging the cultural significance of iconic architects and their monumental achievements, Kostof underscores the limited scope for such sublime works within the broader context of urban and rural development. He contends that the built environment, shaped by thousands of incremental actions over generations, reflects the collective ethos of a society. However, the emphasis on heroic architects and monumental designs often comes at the expense of more modest, everyday structures, which constitute the majority of the built environment (Kostof 1986, 4).

In major cities like Paris or London, the urban fabric comprises predominantly nondescript yet harmonious buildings, representing a balance between functionality and aesthetic appeal. The ability to execute modest projects with discretion and sensitivity to the context far surpasses the skillset of many architecture graduates (Glasser 2000, 252). This elitism in architectural education, which prioritizes innovation and avant-garde designs, tends to sideline disciplines such as restoration and reconstruction, which require less formalistic approaches.

4.4. Exclusivity in Architectural Education

Despite the boundless growth of architectural education as described in the first section, this exclusivity in architectural education is concerned with its primary goal of training future professionals for the architectural profession. Kostof laments the missed opportunity for architecture to become a focal point of public discourse, akin to food or politics, as architecture schools are primarily viewed as training grounds for aspiring architects. However, architecture transcends the realm of architects, and its study should not be confined solely to professionals. Architecture schools have the potential to serve as centers for general education, welcoming individuals interested in exploring architecture's multifaceted dimensions. Architecture encompasses diverse human experiences, accessible to all, regardless of their career aspirations, similar to how one might enroll in a literature class without aspiring to become a professional writer (Kostof 1986, 4-6).

In the context of architectural education in Iran, it's essential to recognize that current programs predominantly focus on technical and professional aspects, neglecting broader literacy and foundational learning. The emphasis is on training skilled personnel for the construction industry, including painters and technicians.

In pursuit of critical architectural pedagogy, aiming to cultivate architects committed to social justice and public empowerment, enhancing public architectural literacy becomes imperative. Educating the public about architecture, whether through university initiatives or mainstream media platforms like magazines and newspapers, can foster a more informed and discerning society. For instance, Bruno Zevi regularly contributed articles to the newsweekly L'Espresso to engage a wider readership (Muschamp 2000, 11). Similarly, Leopold Eidlitz utilized popular literary formats in Crayon magazine to demystify architectural complexities for non-professionals, exemplifying the potential for architecture to engage and resonate with diverse audiences (Holliday 2007, 32).

5. CONCLUSION

In this article, utilizing critical theory, various instances of injustice within Iran's contemporary architectural education were examined. While some aspects of critical education critique the educational systems prevalent in Western societies and highlight social issues that may not be as prominent in our own, the influence of market logic on architectural

outcomes, the privatization of education, and the commodification of certain architectural subjects are examples of injustices observed in this study that transcend cultural and social contexts, including economic ones. These findings lay the groundwork for applying theories of critical pedagogy to Iranian architectural education. Despite differences in societal structures, Iran's architectural education cannot be exempt from critical pedagogical scrutiny simply because of the lack of overt forms of discrimination based on race, class, gender, etc. Today, there is a growing imperative for architectural education to interrogate the relationship between architecture and social injustices at broader societal levels and to reassess its role in perpetuating existing inequalities.

This research delineated aspects of injustice within Iran's architectural education across three levels: entry and acceptance, the educational process itself, and the goals and content of education. Issues such as the exponential growth of architectural education paralleling construction and higher education development, the gentrification of architectural education, and admission practices at various levels were diagnosed through the lens of critical architecture education. The educational process was further scrutinized, revealing injustices such as the promotion of belief systems, power hierarchies, competition, and the evaluation of students' designs. In terms of educational goals and content, injustices were evident in the commodification and specialization of architecture, hero-centric education, and the monopolization of architectural education.

It is important to acknowledge that these findings are not exhaustive but represent a partial exploration of critical education categories within the scope of contemporary architectural education. Future research in this area is recommended to assess the initial formation of architectural education as an academic discipline and its relationship with social justice. Additionally, critical historiography, both in theoretical research and in the teaching of architectural history courses, can provide a broader understanding of the relationship between architecture and social justice by examining alternative narratives and marginalized perspectives. Exploring the category of critical architecture, which focuses on the nexus between architecture and social justice, has the potential to inform the content of architectural education towards social reconstruction. Lastly, by examining the characteristics of a critical profession for architects, adjustments can be made to align architectural education and the architectural profession with a social justice-oriented approach.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

MORAL APPROVAL

The authors commit to observe all the ethical principles of the publication of the scientific work based on the ethical principles of COPE. In case of any violation of the ethical principles, even after the publication of the article, they give the journal the right to delete the article and follow up on the matter.

PARTICIPATION PERCENTAGE

The authors state that they have directly participated in the stages of conducting research and writing the article.

ENDNOTE

1. In this context, traditional theory refers to the antithesis of critical theory, as interpreted by Horkheimer in his article "Traditional and Critical Theory," where it signifies the implicit or explicit stance of modern natural sciences.
2. Knowledge is not a neutral entity; rather, it is produced and distributed according to specific voices within asymmetric power relations. Therefore, discussing knowledge equates to discussing power, whereby the legitimacy of certain forms of knowledge over others stems from their association with particular forms of power (Dutton 1987, 17). Giroux posits that the production, teaching, and validation of knowledge are intertwined with human interests and ideology. Like Foucault, he views power and knowledge as two sides of the same coin (Zibakalam and Mohammadi 2014, 24).
3. coming to voice as an act of resistance is not to speak ordinarily. Communication serves as both a means for self-transformation and a process through which individuals transition from being objects to subjects. Only as subjects can we speak; as objects, we remain voiceless, defined and interpreted by others (Hooks 2015, 12). However, speaking out as an act of resistance differs from ordinary speech—it entails challenging oppression and domination, articulating struggles, and striving to establish a libertarian voice capable of transitioning us all from object to subject (Dutton 1991, xxiii).
4. Within five years of the revolution, discussions surrounding free education emerged within various circles. Some regarded paid education as unconstitutional, citing Article 30 of the Constitution. In August 1363, the Guardian Council deemed the Cultural Revolution Council's endorsement of paid education invalid until the government could furnish free education facilities, deeming it contradictory to the constitution. Eventually, in 1367, the law permitting the establishment of Gheir-e Entefa'i schools was ratified by the Islamic Council (Hosseinzadeh 2019, 15-16).
5. In the past, Nowbat-e Dovvom or Shabaneh courses were conducted separately from the Rouzaneh courses. However, in recent years, there has been a trend towards integration, and in some universities, international Pardis courses are now being conducted concurrently with the Rouzaneh courses.

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